



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

**Yr Is-bwyllgor Datblygu Gwledig  
The Rural Development Sub-committee**

**Dydd Iau, 17 Ebrill 2008  
Thursday, 17 April 2008**

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

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

**Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**  
**Committee members in attendance**

Mick Bates	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Alun Davies	Llafur (Cadeirydd yr Is-bwyllgor) Labour (Sub-committee Chair)
Alun Ffred Jones	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Brynle Williams	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives

**Eraill yn bresennol**  
**Others in attendance**

Linda Badman	Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid y Ganolfan Byd Gwaith, Cymru Customer Services Director, Jobcentre Plus, Wales
Lorraine Barrett	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur Assembly Member, Labour
Hayley Dunne	Rheolwr Datblygu Busnes, Chwarae Teg Business Development Manager, Chwarae Teg
Jonathan Edwards	Swyddog Materion Cyhoeddus, Cyngor ar Bopeth Cymru Public Affairs Officer, Citizens Advice Cymru
Suzanne Gainard	Rheolwr, Cyngor ar Bopeth Caerfyrddin Manager, Carmarthen Citizens Advice Bureau
Simon Harris	Prif Weithredwr, Canolfan Cydweithredol Cymru Chief Executive, Wales Co-operative Centre
Dr Brec'hed Piette	Cyfarwyddwr Prosiect Cael Gwaith, Addysg a Chyngor mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig, a Phennaeth yr Ysgol Dysgu Gydol Oes, Prifysgol Bangor Director, GWLAD project, and Head of Lifelong Learning, Bangor University
Ian Thomas	Swyddog Ymgrychoedd Polisi Cymdeithasol, Cyngor ar Bopeth Social Policy Campaigns Officer, Citizens Advice
Iain Walsh	Cyfarwyddwr Is-adran Polisi yr Economi a'r Farchnad Lafur, yr Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau Director, Economy and Labour Market Policy Division, Department for Work and Pensions

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

Joanne Clinton	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 1.12 p.m.*  
*The meeting began at 1.12 p.m.*

## **Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Alun Davies:** Galwaf y cyfarfod i drefn. Hoffwn ddechrau drwy ymddiheuro am yr oedi cyn dechrau'r cyfarfod hwn. Buom mewn cyfarfod ar y cyd â phwyllgor Gogledd Iwerddon a gymerodd dipyn mwy o amser na'r disgwyl, felly ymddiheuraf am hynny.

**Alun Davies:** I call the meeting to order. I would like to start by apologising for the delay in starting this meeting. We have been in a joint meeting with the Northern Ireland committee, which took a little longer than was expected, and so I apologise for that.

## **Ymchwiliad i Dlodi ac Amddifadedd yn y Gymru Wledig: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth ar yr Economaidd Anweithgar Inquiry into Poverty and Deprivation in Rural Wales: Evidence Session on the Economically Inactive**

[2] **Alun Davies:** Yr ydym yn parhau â'r ymchwiliad i dlodi yn y Gymru wledig. Croesawaf ein tystion i'r cyfarfod y prynhawn yma. Fe'ch gofynnaf bob un i gyflwyno eich hun ar gyfer y Cofnod, ac, os dymunwch, i roi cyflwyniad byr i ni o ryw ddwy neu dair munud am y materion yr ydych wedi'u codi yn eich papurau. Yr ydym wedi cael eich papurau ysgrifenedig ac wedi cael y cyfle i'w darllen, felly nid oes angen eu darllen, ond codwch unrhyw faterion yn y papurau yr ystyriwch eu bod yn bwysig. Diolch yn fawr am yr amser y byddwch yn ei dreulio gyda ni y prynhawn yma. Yr ydym yn ei werthfawrogi'n fawr. Felly, a wnewch chi gyflwyno eich hun a'ch papur?

**Alun Davies:** We now continue with our inquiry into poverty in rural Wales. I welcome our witnesses to the meeting this afternoon. I will ask each of you to introduce yourselves for the Record, and, should you wish, to give a brief presentation for two or three minutes on the issues raised in your papers. We have all received your written evidence and have had an opportunity to read through it, so you will not need to read out that evidence, but please raise any issues from the papers that you think are important. Thank you very much for your time this afternoon. We greatly appreciate it. Therefore, I now ask you to introduce yourselves and your papers.

[3] **Mr Walsh:** Thank you for inviting us here this lunchtime. I am Ian Walsh from the London office of the Department for Work and Pensions. I head the economy and labour market division. Broadly speaking, that involves two responsibilities, one of which is providing advice and analysis on how the labour market is operating in the United Kingdom, and the second of which is to have an overview of the department's welfare-to-work policies, seeing that they are coherent and hang together. I will speak briefly about the main issues, as we see them.

[4] The first thing to say on the issue of poverty and work is that the core principle underpinning the activities of the department that I work in is that work is a good thing and so, as far as possible, anyone who is able to work should be encouraged to do so, not just because of the economic benefits that that brings to society, but because of the benefits that it brings to the individual, particularly in addressing poverty issues. Much of the focus of the department's work is on those people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market, for one reason or another. So, in essence, we operate according to the principle of focusing on individuals and their needs, regardless of which part of the country they live in.

[5] Increasingly, over the past 10 years or so, we have looked to provide support and policies that encourage people to take up work, even if, traditionally, they are seen as being the people furthest away from the labour market, such as people with disabilities, lone parents or others with caring responsibilities. Those have been the main principles underlying the

work of the department in the past 10 years or so.

[6] On developments going forward, there is a particular emphasis on trying to increase partnership working, particularly at the local level, and to try to ensure that our support mechanisms are tailored to individual needs as much as possible. Another focus is on getting people into work but also trying to increase their retention rate and their progression.

[7] On rural Wales, the paper probably indicates the broader picture as we see it, which is that, over the past decade, there has been a general narrowing of the gap between those in employment on average in the UK and those in employment in rural Wales. There is still some way to go towards trying to fill in that gap completely, and we are hoping that the current raft of policy initiatives will continue to work towards that. I will stop there, Chair.

[8] **Alun Davies:** Diolch yn fawr. Yr **Alun Davies:** Thank you. I appreciate that wyf yn gwerthfawrogi eich cyfraniad. A contribution. Would you like to add anything hoffech ychwanegu rhywbeth at hynny, Ms to that, Ms Badman? Badman?

[9] **Ms Badman:** I echo my colleague's comments about thanking you for the opportunity to present today. There is no written evidence provided by Jobcentre Plus on this occasion. You may know that Jobcentre Plus is an operational arm of the Department for Work and Pensions, so the evidence provided is the policy by which Jobcentre Plus delivers its business in Wales.

[10] I am the customer services director for Jobcentre Plus in Wales, so I am responsible for the end-to-end customer experience of those claiming working-age benefits, those looking for work and the employers who advertise vacancies using our services. The work of Jobcentre Plus in Wales is to take the DWP's policies and make them happen on the ground. I believe that I am accompanying my colleague today to give practical examples in response to committee members' questions about collaborative working and delivering the policies in a practical sense.

[11] Much of what Jobcentre Plus does is connected to the individual customer rather than where they live, but the paper describes some of the geographically targeted initiatives of Jobcentre Plus. If there are any specific questions that the committee needs to address about activity, I hope that I can supply you with some information.

[12] **Alun Davies:** Diolch yn fawr. Yr **Alun Davies:** Thank you. We appreciate that. ydym yn gwerthfawrogi hynny.

[13] **Ms Dunne:** Diolch yn fawr, a diolch **Ms Dunne:** Thank you, and thank you for the am y gwahoddiad i siarad. Yr wyf yn gallu invitation to speak. I can speak Welsh, but I siarad Cymraeg, ond yr wyf am gyflwyno'r will present my paper in English, if that is papur yn Saesneg, os yw hynny'n iawn. okay.

[14] From Chwarae Teg's perspective—and you have seen the paper—the single biggest obstacle to work for those living in rural areas is still childcare, and the demand for childcare places in rural areas is higher than it is in urban areas, as a ratio. We also know that transport remains a barrier to entering the workforce, particularly to women. We know that the public transport system in rural areas is not as robust as we might like it to be, and fewer women living in rural areas have access to cars than those living in other areas in Wales.

[15] Over the past six years, and, before that, on a more informal basis, one initiative that Chwarae Teg has been involved in is the flexible working agenda and how that can help to reduce barriers to entering, staying in and progressing in the workforce. There is clear

evidence to suggest that there are clear business benefits to flexible working and I have outlined some of them in the paper that I submitted to the committee.

1.20 p.m.

[16] Also, with ever-changing legislation in relation to flexible working and work-life balance, and the likelihood of even greater changes, we are encouraging employers, large and small, to look beyond compliance. Compliance does not change cultures, it does not develop organisations and it does not develop people. What we are looking to do, and what we have been doing, is working with businesses around that agenda, particularly the home and remote-working agenda for rural areas, and emphasising how organisations are introducing initiatives in that regard and how that could help people into employment.

[17] **Alun Davies:** Diolch yn fawr am hynny. Dr Piette, a wnewch chi gyflwyno eich tystiolaeth ac, os yn bosibl, rhoi ychydig o gefndir i'r prosiect yr ydych yn gweithio arno ym Mhrifysgol Bangor? Credaf y byddai Aelodau'n gwerthfawrogi hynny.

**Alun Davies:** Thank you very much for that. Dr Piette, will you present your evidence and, if possible, give a little background to the project that you are working on at Bangor University? I think that Members would appreciate that.

[18] **Dr Piette:** Diolch yn fawr. Fy enw yw Brec'hed Piette ac yr wyf yma fel cyfarwyddwr prosiect a ariannwyd drwy EQUAL, am fod ysgol dysgu gydol oes y brifysgol yn brif bartner yn y prosiect. Fodd bynnag, yn fy ngwaith bob dydd yr wyf yn gyfarwyddwr dysgu gydol oes ym Mhrifysgol Bangor. Rhof grynodedeb o'r gwaith yn Saesneg gan fy mod wedi'i baratoi yn Saesneg.

**Dr Piette:** Thank you very much. My name is Brec'hed Piette and I am here as the director of a project that was funded through EQUAL, as the university's school of lifelong learning was a senior partner in the project. However, my day job is as the director of lifelong learning at Bangor University. I will give a summary of the work in English because I have prepared it in English.

[19] GWLAD—Gaining Work, Learning and Advice in rural areas—was a project funded by the European social fund's EQUAL 2 programme, so we have just come to the end of it. The project finished in December 2007. We worked as a development partnership with a range of partners, from education, statutory, community and voluntary agencies, with partners being involved to different extents within the course of the project, which took place over three years. We worked under what are seen as the four pillars of EQUAL, which are employability, empowerment, innovation and equal opportunities. Those were the four themes that were addressed in the work that we were trying to do. We were funded with £1.2 million over three years, with a 50 per cent ESF intervention.

[20] The aim of the project was to focus on developing lifelong learning opportunities, particularly for those currently excluded from them in rural north Wales. We were interested in looking at innovative approaches, so our aim was not necessarily to deliver on a large scale, but to try out new things in a fairly small-scale way and to see what worked best and what did not work. We looked at quite a wide range of different approaches and some of those are indicated in the paper. Quite a lot of the learning that we delivered was informal and non-accredited. It was very useful to have funding through ESF and EQUAL to be able to provide those kinds of opportunities that are normally quite difficult to provide under normal funding arrangements. We aimed to move people on towards other learning provision, work or volunteering opportunities as the project came to an end.

[21] We also did some research as part of the project and we looked at current barriers in rural areas. I make no apologies for saying what we all already know, but which came out in our research as well, that the main barriers continue to be transport and childcare. It is kind of

boring, because we all know that the barriers are transport and childcare, but the barriers still are transport and childcare. Those issues are still very real, particularly for women. To pick up on Hayley's point, there may often be a family car, but the woman in the family may not have access to that family car during the day in order to be involved in part-time work or training. Childcare is an issue, and it is slightly more complex than a simple lack of childcare, because it is also about the right sort of childcare and what is funded. We found, for instance, that people quite often prefer informal childcare, yet the project's regulations did not allow us to pay for informal childcare, so that became an issue. Welsh-medium childcare was also an issue in parts of our patch. There was also a lack of information. People just do not know what is out there and that is a much bigger barrier in rural areas, where you have a dispersed population, in terms of getting information through.

[22] I will now refer to some of the main findings, but I am happy to add to them, if you want to ask questions. Some of our main findings were that to be effective, particularly with groups of people who have not been involved in employment, you have to take the learning opportunities into people's own communities. That is high cost and the numbers that you get on courses, and so on, are quite small.

[23] You cannot get some people out of their communities to go to things, for practical and also psychological reasons. So, to be successful, we often had to take provision right into people's communities. The internet is often seen as useful for delivering learning and training in rural areas. It is a useful tool, particularly for higher levels of learning, but it certainly does not answer all the questions and meet all people's needs and it can only be relied on as a partial solution. We have found that it takes quite a long time to get people's trust and to get activities going, so short-term funding is not helpful.

[24] By the end of the project, we felt that concentrating on learning for employment is not the only thing that it is important to emphasise, particularly in rural areas, where the quality of jobs available is poor. There is no point in training people up for jobs when the jobs available are not really at the level that people want. Our project felt that we were also using learning and training to develop social cohesion, to get people involved in volunteering and to look at entrepreneurship and micro-enterprises in a much broader sense of employment rather than slotting people into jobs, because the jobs were not available in the local communities.

[25] Finally, partnership working is very important and the voluntary community agencies often have the best access to the potential learners of the unemployed population, but the capacity and skills to develop the programmes may need to come from other members of the partnership. So, partnership working is a valuable part of the project.

[26] **Alun Davies:** Diolch i bob un ohonoch am y cyflwyniadau. Byddaf yn gofyn i Lorraine Barrett ddod i mewn mewn munud i drafod y rhwystrau sydd yn atal pobl rhag dod o hyd i gyflogaeth yng nghefn gwlad, ond, cyn hynny, hoffwn ofyn cwestiwn i swyddogion yr Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau. Darllenas eich tystiolaeth chi a thystiolaeth Cyngor ar Bopeth—a bydd cynrychiolwyr Cyngor ar Bopeth yn rhoi tystiolaeth ar eich ôl chi y prynhawn yma—wrth baratoi ar gyfer y cyfarfod hwn, ac yr oedd yn ddi-ddorol iawn gweld bod eich papurau yn dweud dau beth tra wahanol. Yr ydych chi yn sôn am sut yr ydych yn cyflawni eich gwasanaeth yng nghefn gwlad

**Alun Davies:** Thank you all for the presentations. I will ask Lorraine Barrett to come in in a minute to discuss the barriers that prevent people from finding employment in rural areas but, before that, I would like to ask a question of the Department for Work and Pensions officials. I read your evidence and that of Citizens Advice, representatives of which will be giving evidence after you this afternoon, when preparing for this meeting, and it was very interesting to see that your papers said two different things. You talk about how you deliver your service in rural areas and about the steps that you take to ensure that each individual can access your services, and the fact that you take

ac am y camau yr ydych yn eu cymryd i sicrhau bod pob person yn gallu cyrraedd eich gwasanaethau, a'r ffaith eich bod yn cymryd camau go sylfaenol i sicrhau bod gan bob un fynediad i wasanaethau Canolfan Byd Gwaith, ac ati. Fodd bynnag, mae'r papur yr ydym wedi'i dderbyn gan Gyngor ar Bopeth yn rhoi darlun gwahanol. Mae'n dweud bod pobl yn teithio'n bell ac nad ydynt yn derbyn y gwasanaeth y maent am ei gael ac, wedyn, mae'n rhaid iddynt deithio yn ôl. Mae'n dweud bod pobl ddifreintiedig yng nghefn gwlad yn cael llawer o broblemau wrth dderbyn eich gwasanaethau. A yw hynny'n deg? Sut y byddech yn ymateb i'r hyn mae Cyngor ar Bopeth wedi'i ddweud?

fundamental steps to ensure that everyone has access to Jobcentre Plus services, and so on. However, the paper that we have received from Citizens Advice gives a different picture. It says that people are travelling long distances and that they do not receive the service that they want and, then, they have to travel back. It says that disadvantaged people in rural areas face many problems in accessing your services. Is that fair? How would you respond to what Citizens Advice has said?

[27] **Ms Badman:** We have talked to Citizens Advice colleagues about access and we often agree to differ on it. There is a requirement, certainly for jobseeker's allowance customers, those actively seeking work, to attend a job centre every two weeks. We closed a number of rural offices two to three years ago, so people have to travel longer distances. We pay costs for some of those interviews but not for others. However, these are people who are looking for work and in general in rural areas there is an expectation that you have to travel that bit further for work. I know that Citizens Advice has issues with it and, in trying to address that, we are making far more services available over the phone and internet. So, you can conduct your business with Jobcentre Plus for a great many things, via the phone or via the internet. We do ensure, however, that we have a face-to-face service within what we consider to be a reasonable distance. I know that we are at odds with Citizens Advice colleagues on this particular issue, however.

1.30 p.m.

[28] **Alun Ffred Jones:** What is a 'reasonable distance'?

[29] **Alun Davies:** Dyna'r cwestiwn yr **Alun Davies:** That is the question that I was oeddwn i am ei ofyn. going to ask.

[30] **Ms Badman:** It depends entirely on the location. For some places, a reasonable distance would be shorter because of public transport issues. If there is a bus route, you might have a longer physical distance between some offices than in another part of Wales where 'reasonable' would be a shorter distance, because the public transport link does not exist. As much as that might sound like weasel words, the issue was looked at in every particular geographical instance where we shut an office.

[31] **Alun Davies:** I would like to come back on that. Mick Bates and I are going through similar questions with regard to the post office, which has used almost the same formulation of words. Mick and I have spoken to constituents to whom the post office has said, 'You have a certain mileage or travelling time.', when the reality is that there is a three-hour round trip, with a four to five-hour wait for the return bus. So, although the actual distance might not be that great, people's ability to access those services is reduced by the amount of time it takes and the amount of disturbance that travelling those distances causes. How real is this for people?

[32] **Ms Badman:** The criteria that we would generally apply—we have something called 'postal signing' for customers who sign in every fortnight with Jobcentre Plus—mean that we



would make a claim postal if a customer has to travel more than an hour on public transport to get to the office. That would be the general rule of thumb.

[33] Coming back to the original question, as you know, transport has already been mentioned, and it does vary across the piece. So, a decision made about an office closure in one place might seem at odds with a decision elsewhere.

[34] **Alun Davies:** Did you want to come in on this, Mick?

[35] **Mick Bates:** Yes. I do not think it satisfactory just to have this word 'reasonable' and then say that it fits every situation. Although you mention an hour, the frequency of the bus service is a critical factor. Who undertakes the work of examining the local situation? Who does that, and who evaluates your conclusion?

[36] **Ms Badman:** There is a process for closing an office. That means that, in Jobcentre Plus terms—and I can only talk about Jobcentre Plus—permission is sought from the Secretary of State to consult. A consultation period follows, during which senior management within a district will consult with stakeholders, MPs, Assembly Members and local authorities. In general terms, however, all of that information about access to local transport and costs would be presented to the Secretary of State before any permission would be given to consult.

[37] **Mick Bates:** So, as a result of consultation, how many offices threatened with closure have been kept open?

[38] **Ms Badman:** There have not been any. What has changed as a result—

[39] **Mick Bates:** So they just get closed.

[40] **Ms Badman:** What has changed as a result of the consultation is whatever services are put in in terms of, possibly, job points, access, phones through to services and, in some cases, manned services—although, if I am being completely frank, wherever we have put in a manned service, an alternative service, I have not yet seen an example where we have retained it, because there has not been enough business to warrant keeping the staff out in non-Jobcentre Plus offices. You are, however, entirely right—there has not been an example of a consultation that has reversed a request to close.

[41] **Alun Davies:** It changes the definition of consultation somewhat, does it not? However, you are not the first person to come here who has said that.

[42] **Brynle Williams:** We have highlighted the lack of transport or the distance to travel in rural areas. However, we are also seeing—I do not believe that this is unique to north Wales—that many families, including some inner-city families, are being relocated to, or are deciding to come to live in, rural villages, and that they simply cannot get jobs, for obvious reasons. Is this on the increase, or is it possibly that I am just seeing it in villages in north Wales? These families need work, and want to work, but, physically, because of where they are being housed, there is a shortage of housing, and, in particular, affordable housing. Is there any evidence that this is exacerbating the rural employment problem even further?

[43] **Ms Badman:** I must be frank: there is no evidence of which I am aware that it is a growing problem. This comes back to my colleague's comment about our services being built around the individual. Therefore, if individual families are in those circumstances, they would be working with their employment advisers to try to overcome the barriers. Solutions tend to have to be individually built up. However, I am not aware of it being a growing problem, and I have not had any feedback from my senior team about it becoming an issue. We would be

grateful to hear of any instances of where you believe we should be doing something to address specific geographic hot spots.

[44] **Alun Davies:** Taking this forward, you say in your paper that your programmes are targeted at the individual. My argument would be that the place where that individual lives creates a context for that individual's needs. I believe, Mr Walsh, that you touched on one of the issues that you address in your written memorandum, namely how you provide services in rural Wales, which is what we are discussing here. One issue that you discuss is holding surgeries in third-party premises, partnering in local authority outlets. Could you give us examples of where that has been successful in rural Wales?

[45] **Ms Badman:** As far as I am aware, the examples that I would look at surrounded deprived-area funding, which is mentioned in the brief. The issue around deprived-area funding, and the Want to Work programme, is based on the ethos that my colleague mentioned about operating in the local community. We do not have many examples in the rural communities, but in Valleys communities we have people operating in community centres, where there are high concentrations of worklessness. We operate the Want to Work programme in several rural wards, and people tend, again, to work in community centres to try to engage. However, we have not operated wholesale in rural communities, because when we focus our resources, the criteria will tend to be the deprivation index, and where there are pockets of extreme deprivation.

[46] However, Assembly Members may be aware that we have been invited as an organisation to develop a second Want to Work programme in the new round of European moneys. We are looking at extending activity in several rural wards, as they would be categorised. In particular, there are communities in Ynys Môn, I believe, where the deprivation index is creeping up. However, community centres would be the short answer.

[47] **Alun Davies:** Short answers are always good answers. [*Laughter.*] Could you provide us with a written note, explaining in more detail where exactly these different ways of working have been effective, and the different partners with whom you have worked in order to deliver and tailor your services for a rural population?

[48] **Ms Badman:** Yes.

[49] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Hoffwn ofyn cwestiwn i bob un o'r tystion. Yr ydym wedi clywed gan Dr Piette am yr hyn a ddarganfuwyd ynglŷn â natur amddifadedd mewn ardaloedd gwledig. A oes gan unrhyw un arall ddiffiniad o natur amddifadedd yng nghefn gwlad? Gan eich bod wedi codi dau fater, dechreuwn gyda chi, Dr Piette, a chawn weld a oes gan dystion eraill unrhyw beth penodol i'w ychwanegu at hynny.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** I wish to ask a question to each of the witnesses. We have heard from Dr Piette about what has been discovered regarding the nature of deprivation in rural areas. Does anyone else have a definition of the nature of rural deprivation? As you have raised two issues, we will begin with you, Dr Piette, and we will see whether or not other witnesses have anything specific to add to that.

1.40 p.m.

[50] **Dr Piette:** Yr ydym wedi sôn am drafnidiaeth, gofal plant a diffyg gwybodaeth fel problemau. Maent yn broblemau mewn llawer o leoedd, ac nid dim ond yng nghefn gwlad, ond maent ychydig yn wahanol ac yn fwy cymhleth yng nghefn gwlad, yn enwedig o ran trafnidiaeth. Maent hefyd yn broblemau

**Dr Piette:** We have mentioned transport, childcare and a lack of information as problems. These are problems in many areas, and not just rural areas, but they are a little different and more complex in rural areas, especially in terms of transport. They are also problems that go hand in hand; if you have a

sy'n mynd gyda'i gilydd; os oes gennych broblemau gyda thrafnidiaeth a phlant ifanc, mae'r ddau yn mynd gyda'i gilydd, ac felly nid ydych ond yn gorfod cael y bus i fynd â chi o un lle i'r llall—mae hefyd yn gorfod cydweddu ag oriau gwaith, oriau ysgol ac oriau gofal plant. Mae rhoi'r darlun at ei gilydd yn aml yn trechu pobl o ran chwilio am waith.

transport problem and young children, those problems combine, and so you do not just have to get a bus to take you from one place to another—it must also fit around work hours, school hours and childcare hours. Putting that jigsaw together can often be too much for people who are seeking employment.

[51] Yr wyf hefyd wedi canfod fod diffyg gwybodaeth yn fater sydd yn achosi rhwystredigaeth. Mae pobl yn dweud nad yw pethau ar gael pan fo'r pethau hynny, mewn gwirionedd, wedi cael eu cyflwyno; yr oedd pobl fel pe na baent yn ymwybodol o hynny. Mae canfod gwybodaeth yn fwy o broblem yng nghefn gwlad, ac, er bod hyn ychydig yn annelwig, mae disgwyliadau pobl yn aml yn eithaf isel. Efallai fod traddodiad o bobl yn bod yn hunan gynhaliol ac yn peidio â disgwyl pethau, bron. Mae fel pe baent yn dweud nad ydynt yn cael unrhyw beth, gan eu bod yng nghefn gwlad. Gan ein bod yn gallu gwneud pethau drwy'r prosiect, yr oedd pobl yn aml yn synnu. Felly, mae disgwyliadau pobl yng nghefn gwlad yn gallu bod yn eithaf isel; efallai fod rhesymau hanesyddol am hynny, ond mae hefyd yn golygu nad yw pobl yn ymwybodol nac yn edrych am y pethau sydd ar gael.

I have also found that a lack of information is an issue that causes frustration. People say that things are not available when they have, in reality, been introduced; people did not seem to be aware of that. Accessing information is more of a problem in rural areas, and, although this may be a little vague, people's expectations are often quite low. There may be a tradition of people being self-sufficient and almost not expecting to receive things. It is as if they are saying that they do not get anything because they are in a rural area. As we are able to do things through the project, people were often surprised. So, people's expectations in rural areas can be quite low; there may be historic reasons for that, but it also means that people are not aware of the services that are available or look for them when they are available to them.

[52] **Ms Dunne:** We concur with Brec'hed, because childcare and transport are major issues, from a woman's perspective, in the work that we do. One thing that has happened over the years is decentralisation, which is fantastic for people across Wales. What has not happened is organisations taking on board what that actually means in terms of offering opportunities to people within those areas, and how they could deliver their business differently to reach the best talent pool in that area. Flexible working and homeworking can facilitate that. Employers need to think more carefully about how they can change the way that they work to grow their business and employ people from across Wales, therefore also avoiding the brain drain.

[53] **Ms Badman:** From a Jobcentre Plus point of view, childcare and transport are issues due to a lack of connection between public transport and employment opportunities. Public transport may be provided, but without a connection with the hours of work for where people need to go. Until fairly recently, there was also not a willingness from an employer's point of view to make accommodations in the type of work and hours offered, which we are starting to address through the introduction of local employer partnerships, which is outlined in the paper of the Department for Work and Pensions. We are starting to see good examples of how local employer partnerships can operate in rural Wales, such as the Bluestone project in Pembrokeshire. So, a few more role-modelled examples would be extremely helpful. I am working with the National Assembly as an employing organisation, because, as Hayley said, with decentralisation, the public sector has a significant role to play as an employer in this area.

[54] **Mr Walsh:** I do not have much to add to what others have said. I would emphasise the issue around information and people being aware of what is available. We are increasingly trying to engage more frequently with people on income support and those on disability benefits. People will often find out that support is available that they were, perhaps, unaware of or that assistance can be given to try to get around the barriers that those individuals might face. Speaking more generally about the employment side, a good thing about the labour market in the UK, as compared with many other countries, is that it offers more flexible working opportunities to people through part-time work and other types of arrangements; continuing to press for that to be applied in as sensible a way as possible in order to meet the needs of individuals is something that we favour.

[55] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yr ydych yn sôn am ddatganioli swyddi, ond dyna un peth mae'r canolfannau gwaith wedi methu â'i wneud. Mae'r canolfannau wedi'u canoli, fel popeth arall, felly nid ydych yn cyflawni'r hyn yr ydych yn dweud y dylai pobl eraill ei wneud.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** You talk about decentralising jobs, but that is one thing that job centres have failed to do. The centres are centralised, like everything else, so you are not practicing what you preach.

[56] Ar fater yr ydych yn cyfeirio ato yn eich tystiolaeth, sylfaen polisiâu gwrthamddifadedd Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru, yw'r mynegrif amddifadedd lluosog ar gyfer Cymru. Mae polisiâu'r Llywodraeth wedi canolbwyntio, drwy'r rhaglen Cymunedau yn Gyntaf, ar ardaloedd poblog. Yr ydych yn sôn yn eich tystiolaeth bod gennych rai cynlluniau, fel timau cysylltu â'r gymuned ac yn y blaen, sy'n gweithredu yn yr ardaloedd hyn. Felly, beth yr ydych yn ei wneud i geisio helpu teuluoedd mewn ardaloedd gwledig sydd yn yr un sefyllfa â theuluoedd mewn ardaloedd Cymunedau yn Gyntaf heblaw am y ffaith bod llai ohonynt yn byw yn yr un lle? Beth yw eich strategaeth i geisio helpu'r bobl hynny i waith, ac i waith sy'n talu?

On a matter that you referred to in your evidence, the Welsh Assembly Government's anti-deprivation policies are based on the Welsh index of multiple deprivation. The Government's policies have concentrated, through the Communities First programme, on more populated areas. You mention in your evidence that you have some schemes, such as community engagement teams and so on, which operate in these areas. Therefore, what are you doing to try to assist families in rural areas who are in the same position as those in Communities First areas but who live in areas where there are fewer of them in one place? What is your strategy to try to assist those people into work, and into well paid work?

[57] **Ms Badman:** The strategy would be based on help for individuals rather than the work that is happening in the wards that are higher up the index of multiple deprivation.

[58] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Presumably, you have a team of advisers working in outreach in some of these Communities First areas.

[59] **Ms Badman:** Yes, we do.

[60] **Alun Ffred Jones:** So, what are you doing for rural areas where people, presumably, suffer the same sort of deprivation and difficulties?

[61] **Ms Badman:** Where the numbers are not as high as in some of the other wards, we would make contact with individuals and families. We would target only those who claim a working-age benefit, like income support or incapacity benefit. Considerable progress has been made over the last three years. All those who claim jobseeker's allowance, income support and incapacity benefit now go through a work focus and a series of interviews. It is not the answer for long-term benefit customers, but we do not have a case in rural areas, or

anywhere in the UK, where someone who claims one of the three benefits for which we are accountable does not have a requirement and opportunity to come in to talk to a personal adviser and take advantage of all the help that is available to them. However, there is not the same focus as in areas with significant numbers.

[62] **Lorraine Barrett:** We have already started to cover some of the areas that I wanted to ask you about, such as barriers to work and higher-paid employment. I have a few questions that I will merge into one for everyone on the panel. I wanted to know a little about the main problems and barriers for people in rural areas in terms of getting a job—or a better-paid job—and training and support for those who are already in work to help them move up the ladder.

1.50 p.m.

[63] However, before you answer, looking at the paper from the DWP, we heard from another of its representative a while ago, who was mortified about the plans for lone parents who can work, and have a youngest child aged 12 or more from this October, aged 10 or more from October 2009, and aged seven or more from October 2010. I honestly cannot believe that that is a policy that will be implemented. I cannot imagine what it is like to be a single parent or to live in a rural area, but I know how difficult it is to juggle life and work in a two-parent family in a densely populated, urban area, so the thought of someone with a seven or eight-year-old, or a 10 or 12-year-old being forced to go to work, in effect, is just beyond me. We have already heard of the difficulties with transport and childcare. How on earth can you leave your place of work at 3 p.m., which could be half an hour's bus ride or car journey away from the school, to pick up your children at 3.30 p.m., and what do you do over the long holidays? In a rural setting, all those problems are magnified compared with my experience of similar problems in an urban setting, so I am really worried about that policy. I know that it is a political policy and that I should take the matter up elsewhere, but I have real concerns about the policy and about the children. I am just thinking about lone parenting in rural areas, let alone other situations, and of one parent trying to keep the family together.

[64] Having said that, it is important for people who want to work and can work to be able to train, and thereby to improve life for their family. I remember Linda Badman from the early days of the new deal for lone parents in St Mellons, which did great work. However, my concern is that this policy seems very prescriptive and I am not sure how much flexibility there is. So, could you say something about that and also about getting a job, and a better paid job, and training and support if you are in work?

[65] **Ms Badman:** I accept the comment. However, the change of policy brings us in line with other European countries. It is difficult to allay any fears that you may have, and that I know that colleagues in Citizens Advice have, because the policy has not yet started to operate. However, there is no intention to achieve the impossible, and so lone parents will be moved into the jobseekers' allowance regime, which mandates you to look for work that is reasonable in your circumstances. If there is no childcare or transport, it will not be the job of the DWP to push people towards options that are not achievable for them. It is difficult for me to give you any reassurances, but there is sufficient flexibility in the application of jobseeker's allowance to take into account what is reasonable for a lone parent.

[66] **Lorraine Barrett:** Thank you for that. What about partnership working with the Welsh Assembly Government? A lot of the support mechanisms will have to come from the Welsh Assembly Government, and the two departments need to be talking, so I wonder whether that work is ongoing and will continue.

[67] **Ms Badman:** Indeed it is.

[68] **Mr Walsh:** I will just add a couple of things to that, if I may. First, on the flexibility around lone parents going to work, there has been a further series of consultations over what the regulations will say about the jobseeker's allowance as it applies to lone parents. We have taken account of the responses and further draft regulations should be tabled in the next two or three weeks. Although I cannot give specific details about that yet, I hope that you will find that the Government listens to various concerns about the flexibility. As you appreciate, it is a political decision to reduce the age limit for lone parents, but the motivation behind that is not to make life impossible for lone parents; it is simply because the evidence shows that having parents in work makes a great difference to child poverty rates, and to a family's chances of success in moving out of child poverty. Of course, there are people in low-paid work whose children may still be in poverty, but, generally speaking, you are five times less likely to be in poverty if you are in work. So, that is the motivation behind it.

[69] As Linda Badman just said, virtually every other country in the European Union, as well as places like America, Canada and Australia operate a system whereby you are expected to work. If your child is aged around five years old, it can be done with the right level of support, but you are right to say that we have to get the correct arrangements in place.

[70] **Alun Davies:** Would you like to add anything to Lorraine's original question about problems and barriers for people who experience difficulties getting a job or getting a better paid job? That was the first element of Lorraine's question.

[71] **Ms Badman:** Specialist advisers are deployed, certainly for lone parents and for incapacity benefit customers. It is difficult to comment on the question on skills and developing skills in work. You will be aware that it is a devolved activity. However, colleagues in the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus are talking about integrating employment and skills. So, you can rest assured that a lot of discussion is going on as we speak.

[72] **Mr Walsh:** I would like to add a couple of things to that. I hope that this does not come across in the wrong way, but on the issue about who is in work, one of the starting points is for people to think about seeking work. There can be an initial barrier when someone might undeniably want to work, but may think that it is not possible because of the difficulties. Simply overcoming that mindset is the starting point for much of this. For example, if you look at unemployment rates across the country—unemployment in this context being those people who are actively seeking work but are currently unable to find it—you see that the rate for rural Wales is somewhat lower than it is for the United Kingdom as a whole. On the other hand, the proportion of people who are economically inactive—that is, those who are neither in work nor actively seeking work—is higher. Part of that could be that people feel that there are barriers stopping them from getting to work.

[73] Going back to one of the earlier points, people need to be given information about it and that needs to be followed up with childcare support for lone parents, condition management for people with disabilities, and help with transportation issues, and so on. So, if you were able to engage people and have the services to back that up, it would address one of the biggest issues preventing people from working.

[74] On people staying and progressing in work, there are some areas that will be relevant, and not solely to do with training. Some of our new deals for lone parents and pathways work for people with disabilities are not just about getting people into work, but about continuing to provide support, such as someone to speak to once people are in work. If they have concerns about what is happening, particularly in the first few months, they will have someone to turn to. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, there is quite a lot of work going on in England and Wales, given that skills are devolved, and there is an increasing focus on retention and progression. That is clearly a big focus of the Government at the moment.

[75] **Alun Davies:** Diolch yn fawr, Mr Walsh. A hoffech ymateb i gwestiwn Lorraine?  
**Alun Davies:** Thank you very much, Mr Walsh? Would you like to respond to Lorraine's question?

[76] **Ms Dunne:** We still need to address the childcare and transport issues, and we have heard quite a lot about that this afternoon. We also need to work with employers—which is what we do—to change cultures and to present the business case, for flexible working in this instance, and to talk about how they can improve their business. You will have seen some of the evidence in my paper about what various organisations have achieved through adopting such initiatives.

[77] Women's progression in employment continues to be an issue. We propose a European structural funds convergence project to help to address that. That will provide training for women who are in employment to progress their careers. It will also work with employers to ensure that they are in tune with those career-progression routes. So, it will work with both parties to ensure that that happens.

2.00 p.m.

[78] **Dr Piette:** I have already talked about the barriers that we came across. One of the problems that we have come across quite frequently is the quality of jobs; people cannot progress because the quality of the jobs is not that good. The answer to that is that it is not necessarily in the hands of the individual, but it may be in the hands of the Government or employers to improve the quality of jobs that are available in rural areas. There are quite a lot of examples of individuals who are looking at work in a more imaginative way. Work does not necessarily equate to a job; it may mean self-employment or developing some sort of local enterprise or micro-enterprise. I think that quite a lot of people in rural areas are looking in that wider way at how they can be citizens who support themselves. However, that does not necessarily mean stepping into a job in a traditional way.

[79] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae gennyf ddau gwestiwn, a'r cyntaf i Mr Walsh a Ms Badman. Bu ichi sôn fod y cyfraddau anweithgarwch yn uwch yn y Gymru wledig nag ym Mhrydain ar y cyfan, er eu bod yn is nag yng nghymunedau'r Cymoedd wrth gwrs. A ydych yn gwybod pam fod y cyfraddau anweithgarwch yn uwch yng nghefn gwlad? A oes rheswm am hynny? A oes rhyw gategori o bobl sy'n gyfrifol am y ffigur hwnnw?  
**Alun Ffred Jones:** I have two questions, the first of which goes to Mr Walsh and Ms Badman. You mentioned the fact that inactivity rates are higher in rural Wales than in Britain as a whole, although they are lower than those for the Valleys communities, of course. Do you know why the inactivity rates are higher in rural areas? Is there some reason for that? Is there a category of people that is responsible for giving rise to that figure?

[80] **Mr Walsh:** We have one or two ideas, although I would not say that we are 100 per cent certain about it. One thing to say is that inactivity rates are somewhat higher in rural areas in England as well as in Wales, so I think that it is partially a rural versus urban factor. One possibility that we have thought of—and this is a generalisation—concerns older people who have not yet reached pension age, but are in the age bracket of 50 or above, as there may be a slightly higher proportion of those people in rural areas than urban areas. They may have taken the decision that they do not want to work any more or do not think that it is realistic, and so they may move to rural areas from urban areas. That could tilt the statistics somewhat and might explain some of the difference. The inactivity rate for Wales as a whole is 24.8 per cent, because of the Valleys impact, and is 24.1 per cent for rural Wales, so, from the figures, I do not think that there is a great disparity. As we mentioned, inactivity rates are slightly higher in Wales as a whole compared with Great Britain, and therefore in rural Wales

compared with Great Britain.

[81] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yr wyf am gyfeirio fy ail gwestiwn at y ddau dyst yn y pen draw, gan eu bod wedi sôn am y rhwystrau rhag cael gwaith mewn ardaloedd gwledig. A yw'r gwaith yr ydych wedi'i wneud yn cynnig tystiolaeth fod teuluoedd, ac efallai rhai ifanc gyda phlant, yn mudo i'r trefi ac felly bod llai o deuluoedd yng nghefn gwlad nag a fu?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** I will direct my second question at the two witnesses at the far end, given that they mentioned barriers to working in rural areas. Is there any evidence from the work that you have undertaken to show that families, maybe with young children, migrate to towns and, therefore, there are fewer families in rural areas than there were?

[82] **Dr Piette:** Credaf fod y ffigurau, er enghraifft o ran Ynys Môn, yn dangos bod y boblogaeth rhwng 18 a 25 oed yn mudo, ond nid wyf yn credu eu bod yn deuluoedd gyda phlant, ond yn bobl sy'n gadael ar gyfer addysg uwch neu waith ac yn dewis peidio â dychwelyd. Credaf fod ffigurau'r boblogaeth yn dangos hynny. Ni allaf ddweud fy mod yn gwybod am bobl sydd â phlant yn y categori penodol hwnnw sy'n penderfynu mudo, felly credaf ei fod yn digwydd gam cyn hynny ac wedyn, wrth gwrs, nid oes teuluoedd ifanc gyda phlant yn yr ardaloedd hynny oherwydd maent wedi gadael erbyn hynny.

**Dr Piette:** I think that the figures, for example for Anglesey, show that there is migration among the 18 to 25-year-old population, but I do not think that they are families with children, rather people who are leaving for higher education or work and who choose not to return. I think that the population figures bear that out. I cannot say that I know of families with children in that specific category, who choose to migrate, so I think that it happens a stage before that and then, of course, there are no young families with children in those areas, because they have left before reaching that point.

[83] **Alun Davies:** Ms Dunne, a allwch ychwanegu unrhyw beth at yr ateb hwnnw?

**Alun Davies:** Ms Dunne, can you add anything to that answer?

[84] **Ms Dunne:** Na, nid oes gennyf ddim i'w ychwanegu.

**Ms Dunne:** No, I have nothing to add to that.

[85] **Brynle Williams:** Pan oeddem yn Awstria yr wythnos diwethaf yn clywed tystiolaeth, yr oedd yn ddiddorol gweld eu bod yn mynd â'r gwaith at y pentrefi yno yn lle ceisio mynd â'r bobl at y gwaith. Mae enghraifft dda o hynny yng ngogledd Cymru ym mhentref bach Betws yn Rhos, lle mae ystâd ddiwydiannol fach, ac nid yw'n edrych allan o le. Mae mwy o bobl yn mynd i'r pentref i weithio nag sy'n mynd allan. A ddylem edrych ar hynny? A ddylai'r cynlluniau gynnwys hyn? Mae llawer o agweddau ar hyn. Yr ydym eisiau creu'r swyddi hyn a chodi'u gwerth.

**Brynle Williams:** When we were in Austria last week hearing evidence, it was interesting to see that, instead of trying to take people to the workplace there, they were taking the work out to the villages. There is a good example of that in north Wales in the small village of Betws yn Rhos, where there is a small industrial estate, which does not look out of place. More people go to the village to work than leave it for work. Should we look at that? Should the plans incorporate that? There are many aspects to this. We want to create these jobs and increase their value.

[86] Hwyrach mai dyma'r amser inni dorri llawr ar ystadau diwydiannol mawr ar gyrion trefi a rhoi yn eu lle ffatrioedd sy'n cyflogi 40 o ddynion mewn ardaloedd o harddwch naturiol eithriadol, gyda dwy neu dair mewn pentrefi bach o 600 i 1,000 o bobl. Hwyrach dylem fod yn edrych ar hynny. A

Perhaps this is the time for us to cut down on large industrial estates on the outskirts of towns and put in their place factories that employ 40 men in areas of outstanding natural beauty, with two or three in small villages of about 600 to 1,000 people. Perhaps we ought to be looking at that. Does



oes unrhyw un am ymateb i hynny?

anyone wish to respond to that?

[87] **Alun Davies:** A oes rhywun am ateb hynny?

**Alun Davies:** Does anybody want to answer that?

[88] **Ms Dunne:** I do not think that we should rule it out. We should do it in conjunction with everything else that we look at in Wales. Flexible working, and the whole agenda around it, would sit quite nicely with that. We would not necessarily have to create new opportunities within those areas, as we could avail ourselves of the opportunities that are already available all across Wales. With the use of broadband and enhanced technology, we could bring the jobs to the people in that way.

[89] **Mick Bates:** Thank you for the evidence and answers so far. I just want to look at the barriers to work, especially those that affect women, and ask about Hayley's work with Chwarae Teg. We have heard many times that insufficient childcare is a big barrier to work, as are inadequate facilities for older people. We have known this for a long time. In your experience, why is it still such a massive problem? The Wales Rural Observatory said, in 2004, that around 70 per cent of town and community councils did not have childcare facilities in their areas. We have known about this for a long time, so why is this still the case?

[90] **Ms Dunne:** We have known about it a long time, which is why Chwarae Teg was set up many years ago. We have seen an improvement, just not enough of an improvement. The childcare sector is still quite poorly paid and very stereotypical in that it is difficult to progress in that environment because of low pay. It is a double-edged sword, in that we cannot provide quality, affordable childcare and good jobs within the sector as well. There are two things going on there that we need to look at—we need to make it a more attractive career path for individuals and, while we are doing that, we also need to ensure that it is still affordable, because childcare is still rather expensive across the nation, never mind just in Wales. As Brec'hed said, people are relying increasingly on informal childcare, and perhaps not availing themselves of the opportunities that nurseries and formal childcare offer because they cannot afford to do so.

[91] **Mick Bates:** Our aim, in scrutinising your evidence, is to make recommendations. So, if you were to write one now, given your answer, what would it be? Where do we target whatever funding is available? Is it European structural funding, convergence funding? Where do we go to make sure that the problems you highlighted about low pay and facilities are dealt with?

[92] **Ms Dunne:** I am not sure that ESF is the right place. I do not know. We have a very good project in Genesis, and, hopefully, that will continue. We need to target money at training and better quality jobs in that sector.

[93] **Mick Bates:** But where does the money come from? Is this Government's responsibility?

[94] **Ms Dunne:** If we are looking to get more people into work, be that in employment or self-employment, and we want more people to progress through employment and have families to keep the population going, then, yes, I do think it is a Government issue.

[95] **Mick Bates:** So, clearly, it is a Government issue. Are you telling me that the situation has improved since the figures that I quoted from the Wales Rural Observatory, which said that some 70 per cent of town and community council areas did not have childcare facilities?

[96] **Ms Dunne:** I am not sure whether it has improved in that respect. In the work that Chwarae Teg has done, in the 15 years that we have been in operation, it has improved: more women are in work now than when we started 15 years ago. I do not have the figures in my head.

[97] **Mick Bates:** Is it possible to have the figures to show us how we are progressing and why that progress has taken place? That is what we want to address in this scrutiny, and to provide answers and recommendations to Government.

2.10 p.m.

[98] **Ms Dunne:** Yes, I can provide that.

[99] **Mick Bates:** It seems to me that, if I have understood you correctly, this is a Government responsibility and it needs to address it, to provide nurseries, training and well paid jobs in that sector.

[100] **Ms Dunne:** Yes, that is our view.

[101] **Mick Bates:** And the same would apply to the care of an ageing population?

[102] **Ms Dunne:** Yes, absolutely.

[103] **Mick Bates:** Thank you.

[104] **Alun Davies:** Byddem yn gwerthfawrogi nodyn yn cynnwys y wybodaeth honno. A hoffech ychwanegu unrhyw beth ar hynny, Dr Piette?

**Alun Davies:** We would appreciate a note including that information. Would you like to add anything on that issue, Dr Piette?

[105] **Dr Piette:** Yr unig beth i'w ychwanegu yw bod prinder weithiau o lefydd meithrin lle mae'r gofalwr yn siarad Cymraeg: mae hynny'n bwysig i lawer o deuluoedd lle mae plant yn cael eu magu'n Gymry Cymraeg. Efallai fod yr unig ofalwr plant yn y pentref yn rhywun di-Gymraeg. Weithiau mae hynny oherwydd bod llai o gyfleoedd gwaith i bobl ddi-Gymraeg yn rhai o'r pentrefi gwledig hyn, felly maent yn gwneud y math hwnnw o waith. Mae hynny'n iawn. Fodd bynnag, mae hynny'n golygu nad oes darpariaeth ar gael i deulu o Gymry Cymraeg.

**Dr Piette:** The only thing to add is that that there is occasionally a shortage of nursery places where the carer speaks Welsh, which is important to many families who raise their children to be Welsh speakers. The only childminder in the village may be non-Welsh speaking. Sometimes that is because there are fewer job opportunities for non-Welsh speakers in some of these rural villages, so they do that sort of work. That is fine. However, that means that there is no provision available to Welsh-speaking families.

[106] Felly, mae'n bwysig cofio am yr elfen ieithyddol honno hefyd, yn enwedig yn yr ardaloedd Cymraeg.

Therefore, it is important that we bear that linguistic element in mind too, especially in Welsh-speaking areas.

[107] **Mick Bates:** To follow up on that, and returning to the same issue about opportunities, I notice that you have some work with smaller businesses. I often hear the mantra that smaller businesses cannot provide all the benefits for women to get into work that bigger businesses can. Is this true? If so, how can we address the issue?

[108] **Ms Dunne:** The work that we have done with small businesses has been more around

flexible working and work-life balance. We hear the same mantra in that respect, but we also hear it from larger organisations, which will say, ‘We are so set in our ways, we cannot do anything differently’. Therefore, the ESF project, to which I referred earlier, is about working with small businesses to look at what they have available in terms of women’s progression in the workforce, and working with them to help them address those barriers that are preventing women from moving through their organisation. We cannot do much more around that until we have more money.

[109] **Mick Bates:** This is where we get to the real problem. [*Laughter.*] What kind of investment are you talking about—what amount of money do you need?

[110] **Ms Dunne:** The ESF project that we will be submitting under the gender equality in employment framework is a £10.5 million project.

[111] **Mick Bates:** Would that run for the whole period, seven years?

[112] **Ms Dunne:** Yes.

[113] **Mick Bates:** And that is match funded by the Government, is it?

[114] **Ms Dunne:** Yes.

[115] **Mick Bates:** So the total cost is £21 million?

[116] **Ms Dunne:** No, sorry, the total is £10.5 million.

[117] **Mick Bates:** Okay, so, your bid to ESF is for half of that?

[118] **Ms Dunne:** Yes.

[119] **Mick Bates:** I see. How many women would you hope to give better job opportunities to through that project?

[120] **Ms Dunne:** Some 2,600 women, and 450 employers.

[121] **Mick Bates:** So, for £10 million, you are going to help 2,500 women in Wales?

[122] **Ms Dunne:** Yes. It is not only 2,500 women, there are 450 employers in that as well, and there will also be a pilot programme for men within that project with regard to men and non-stereotypical areas of work for men.

[123] **Mick Bates:** I am just trying to work out the investment per person.

[124] **Ms Dunne:** I believe that the beneficiary cost is around £3,500, which I understand is acceptable.

[125] **Alun Davies:** Diolch am hynny. **Alun Davies:** Thank you for that. Brynle has Brynle sydd â’r cwestiynau nesaf. the next questions.

[126] **Brynle Williams:** Hoffwn fynd yn ôl at ofal plant. Yr wyf yn siŵr bod prinder mawr o gyfleusterau gofal plant. Yr ydym mewn penbleth ofnadwy, oherwydd mae gofynion iechyd a diogelwch yn rhoi mwy a mwy o bwysau a rheolau ar bobl sy’n rhedeg **Brynle Williams:** I wish to return to childcare. I am sure that there is a shortage of childcare facilities. We are in a terrible conundrum, because health and safety requirements are placing more and more rules and pressures on those who run crèches,

meithrinfeydd, sy'n cynyddu'r gost ac yn gwneud y sefyllfa yn waeth ac yn waeth. Felly, yn hytrach na helpu, mae'n creu problem. Sut allwn ni ddatrys hyn? Dyna'r gost i anfon plentyn i feithrinfa am y diwrnod neu'r wythnos, ond mae'r costau yn cynyddu drwy'r amser.

which increases the cost and makes the situation worse. Therefore, rather than assisting, it creates a problem. How can we resolve this? That is the cost of sending a child to a crèche for a day or a week, but the costs are increasing all the time.

[127] Mae fy merch-yng-nghyfraith yn sôn am £70 yr wythnos i anfon plentyn i'r feithrinfa. Gan ei bod hi'n byw yng nghefn gwlad, nid yw bron yn werth iddi fynd i'r gwaith. Felly, sut allwn ni ymateb i hyn? Fel y dywedais, mae'r rheolau'n cynyddu'r costau, ac mae'n ddigon hawdd mynd at y Llywodraeth a gofyn am ragor o arian, ond mae'n rhaid i ni ganfod tir canol. A yw'n bosibl i ni wneud hynny?

My daughter-in-law is now talking about £70 a week to send her child to the crèche. Given that she lives in a rural area, it is almost not worth her going to work. Therefore, how can we address this? As I said, the rules are pushing the costs up, and it is easy enough to go to Government and ask for more money, but we must find a middle ground. Is that possible?

[128] **Ms Badman:** In terms of actual costs, one of the key planks of our Welfare to Work programme is about making work pay via the tax credit system. If our customers access work and use formal childcare, a considerable amount of help is available through the tax credit system, which provides the most support for those with the lowest income. My colleague mentioned informal childcare, and that is an issue because there is no formal support through the tax credit system for informal childcare arrangements, and my guess would be that that is unlikely to change. I accept the point that you make, but there is considerable support available via the tax credit system.

[129] **Alun Davies:** A fyddech yn hoffi **Alun Davies:** Do you wish to add anything? ychwanegu unrhyw beth?

[130] **Ms Dunne:** Just to say that by thinking about work differently and by employers thinking about how they deliver their businesses differently, we can start to look at some of these things, and it will not be the same for any two businesses or any two individuals. We have done work with employers in the past to see how we can work with them to improve their business and to look outside the box of working from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or whatever their business is, to help their employees in that way.

[131] **Lorraine Barrett:** Brynle mentioned the cost of childcare, but in this area full-time childcare for a baby is £700 a month. You can get tax credit, so my concern, from family experience, is that the person does not know whether he or she should go out to look for full-time or part-time work, because that person is not told until after starting work, having paid the nursery in advance, how much tax credit he or she is entitled to. I can see that it could be open to abuse if people, having been told how much they would get, then decide how many hours they would work on that basis, but it is difficult, when it is the other way around, to decide how best to manage your life and the children's lives. So, it would be good if there were more flexibility in the system so that people would have an idea of what they might get, because it is a big commitment. If you sign up your child to a nursery, you sign up for a long time. You have to give a month's notice and pay in advance—£700 is a lot of money to pay out in advance—it can even be double that if you are paying for both the month in advance and the first month. So, tax credit can be great, but it can also be cumbersome and complicated.

[132] **Alun Davies:** Before you answer that, the Commission for Rural Communities in England gave evidence to this committee in January, and one issue that it raised was that

benefit take-up in rural areas was considerably lower than in urban areas. The issue that it identified was a lack of information and a lack of ability to access this information, which is a similar issue to that raised by Lorraine. I want to bring the session to an end after this question, but can you explain how you are addressing this lack of information, specifically in rural Wales?

[133] **Ms Badman:** There is an answer that meets the two questions and, again, it is around the needs of the individual and a relationship with a personal adviser. The point about tax credits is entirely pertinent, because none of our tax or benefit systems are simple. To support lone parents, in particular—it is available for all of our customers—they are offered a better-off calculation, which works out for people in advance, and as part of their preparation for looking for work, how a selection of hours and a selection of job rates work out in terms of housing benefit, tax credit and child benefit. It is not acceptable for people to launch into the unknown without having that information, so a better-off calculation is one of the planks that our lone parent advisers, in particular, offer.

2.20 p.m.

[134] There is a childcare partnership manager in every one of my districts, who work closely with the local authorities' childcare information service. They provide information on available childcare. It is their role to ensure that someone is successfully launched into work, because, in many cases, particularly for lone parents, the issue is not finding a job, it is overcoming some of the barriers about getting into work and staying in work. That is where the efforts are focused.

[135] It is difficult for me to comment on the take-up of benefit. If it is associated with work—and there is in-work support—that is handled on an individual basis when someone moves into work. I am sure that colleagues in Citizens Advice would have more on the take-up of other benefits that perhaps are not the mandatory large benefits that we deal with primarily.

[136] **Mr Walsh:** I would like to add a little, if I may. First, to go to the issue of the better-off calculation and how people might be better off in work, perhaps I should also mention that, later this year, there is an intention to pilot a better-off-in-work credit, whereby people who have been on a benefit for six months who go into work will be guaranteed that, for the first six months of employment, they will be at least £25 per week better off. That will be piloted later in the year. If it is successful, the idea is to roll it out. That underlines two points: it is felt that people ought to be better off in work, and people should have that confidence.

[137] On the take-up of benefit, I do not know how much one can read into this, but if you look at the take-up rates of what might be termed the 'non-out-of-work benefits', such as bereavement benefit, carers' benefit, or disability living allowance, and the way in which those rates differ within rural, mixed or Valleys areas in Wales, the take-up rate is the same. It is only when you look at benefits such as disability benefit, income support, and jobseekers' allowance that the rate seems to be somewhat lower. That might suggest one or two things. One of the reasons why there is a lower take-up of jobseekers' allowance, for example, is that there tend to be fewer people unemployed in rural areas, and therefore fewer people claiming. I am not saying that that is the whole answer, but it is interesting to compare the relative statistics. The department is keen that those who are entitled to benefits receive them. So, we are keen to have any information that will help us to improve that. Just as we do not want those who are not entitled claiming, it is important to us that those who are entitled should be aware of it and should claim.

[138] **Alun Davies:** Diolch. Mae cael **Alun Davies:** Thank you. Having access to mynediad at y wybodaeth hon yn dibynnu ar this information depends on having access to

gael mynediad atoch chi. Os ydych yn cau swyddfeydd yng nghefn gwlad, mae'n rhwystro pobl rhag cael mynediad at y wybodaeth hon, er ei bod ar gael. Nid wyf am fynd yn ôl dros y pwynt hwnnw unwaith eto'r prynhawn yma.

you. If you close offices in rural areas, people will be prevented from getting access to this information, even though it is available. I do not want to go back over that point this afternoon.

[139] Diolchaf i bob un ohonoch am eich tystiolaeth y prynhawn yma ac am eich parodrwydd i ateb cwestiynau'r pwyllgor. Yr ydym yn gwerthfawrogi hynny yn fawr iawn. Byddwch yn derbyn trawsgrifiad o'r sesiwn hon. Bwriadaf hefyd ofyn i'r clerc ysgrifennu at Chwarae Teg a Phrifysgol Bangor i ofyn am fwy o wybodaeth am eich prosiectau. Bu ichi sôn y prynhawn yma am eich gwaith. Yr wyf yn awyddus i ddysgu gwersi, oherwydd, yn aml yn y sesiynau hyn, yr ydym yn trafod y problemau, ond yr ydym hefyd am drafod yr atebion. Yn anffodus, nid oes gennym fwy o amser y prynhawn yma, ond hoffwn ddysgu ychydig yn fwy am eich ymchwil a chanlyniadau eich ymchwil. Bydd y clerc yn gwneud hynny ar ôl y cyfarfod. Gwerthfawrogaf yr amser mae pob un ohonoch wedi'i roi i ni'r prynhawn yma a diolch am hynny.

I thank each one of you for your evidence this afternoon and for your readiness to answer the committee's questions. We appreciate that very much indeed. You will receive a transcript of this session. I also intend to ask the clerk to write to Chwarae Teg and to Bangor University to ask for more information on your projects. You mentioned your work this afternoon. I am keen to learn lessons, because, very often in these sessions, we discuss problems, but we also want to discuss answers. Unfortunately, we do not have any more time this afternoon, but I would like to learn more about your research and the results of your research. The clerk will follow that up after the meeting. I appreciate the time that each of you has given this afternoon and I thank you for that.

2.44 p.m.

### **Ymchwiliad i Dlodi ac Amddifadedd yn y Gymru Wledig: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth ar yr Economaidd Weithgar**

#### **Inquiry into Poverty and Deprivation in Rural Wales: Evidence Session on the Economically Active**

[140] **Alun Davies:** Gofynnaf i'r ail banel ddod at y bwrdd, os gwelwch yn dda, fel ein bod yn gallu symud yn syth at yr ail sesiwn. Ymddiheuraf ein bod yn rhedeg ychydig yn hwyr.

**Alun Davies:** I ask the second panel to come to the table, please, so that we can move to the second session. I apologise that we are running a little late.

[141] Diolch am eich amser. Fel y gwyddoch, mae'r pwyllgor yn cynnal ymchwiliad i dlodi ac amddifadedd yn y Gymru wledig. Mae Aelodau wedi derbyn copïau o'ch tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig. Yr ydym yn gwerthfawrogi'r dystiolaeth ac wedi cael cyfle i'w darllen, felly symudwn yn syth at gwestiynau gan Aelodau yn seiliedig ar eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig. Cyn gwneud hynny, gofynnaf i bob un ohonoch gyflwyno'ch hun ar gyfer y Cofnod, a hefyd i gyflwyno ychydig o eiriau i danlinellu'r pwyntiau yr ydych wedi'u codi yn eich

Thank you for your time. As you know, the committee is conducting an inquiry into poverty and deprivation in rural Wales. Members have received your written evidence. We appreciate that evidence and we have all had an opportunity to read it, so we will move immediately to Members' questions based on your written evidence. Before we do so, I would like to ask each of you to introduce yourselves for the Record, and to say a few words to underline the points that you have raised in your written evidence.

tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig.

[142] **Mr Edwards:** Fe ddechreuaf ar ran Cyngor ar Bopeth Cymru. Yr ydym yn ddiolchgar am y gwahoddiad ac yn hapus i fod yma i gyflwyno tystiolaeth. Yr ydym, fel mudiad, mewn cyfnod trawsnewidiol o ran ein gwaith yn y maes hwn, gan fod y swyddog arferol, Alun Gruffudd, wedi cychwyn ar gyfnod sabathol ers dechrau'r mis, ond fe wnawn ein gorau i gyflwyno tystiolaeth gynhwysfawr i chi y prynhawn yma. Yr wyf yn falch o gyflwyno Ian Thomas, y swyddog datblygu cenedlaethol, sydd wedi arwain ar gynhyrchu'r dystiolaeth; Ian fydd yn arwain ar ran Cyngor ar Bopeth Cymru heddiw. Mae'n bleser cyflwyno Suzanne Gainard, rheolwr biwro Caerfyrddin, ac yr wyf yn siŵr y bydd ei phrofiad o ddelio ag achosion ar lawr gwlad o fudd mawr i chi.

**Mr Edwards:** I will start on behalf of Citizens Advice Wales. We are grateful for the invitation and we are happy to be here to provide evidence. We, as an organisation, are in a period of transition in terms of our work in this area, as the officer who usually does this work, Alun Gruffudd, started a sabbatical at the beginning of the month, but we will do our best to provide comprehensive evidence to you this afternoon. I am pleased to introduce Ian Thomas, the national development officer, who has led on producing the evidence, Ian will lead on behalf of Citizens Advice Wales this afternoon. It is a pleasure to present Suzanne Gainard, manager of the Carmarthen bureau; I am sure that her experience of dealing with issues at grass-roots level will be of great assistance to you.

[143] Cyn i mi basio'r awenau, efallai y byddai o werth i mi wneud pwynt ynglŷn â strwythur y gwasanaeth. Mae gennym 32 biwro yng Nghymru, ac maent i gyd yn sefydliadau elusennol annibynnol. Mae Cyngor ar Bopeth Cymru yn is-adran o Gyngor ar Bopeth, tra bod Cyngor ar Bopeth yn yr Alban ac yng Ngogledd Iwerddon yn elusennau annibynnol eu hunain.

Before I hand over to Ian, it might be useful for me to make a point about the structure of the service. There are 32 bureaux in Wales, and they are all independent charitable organisations. Citizens Advice Wales is a subsidiary of Citizens Advice, while Citizens Advice in Scotland and Northern Ireland are independent charities.

[144] **Mr Thomas:** I just want to make two main points in respect of our submission. The first point is that the submission, as far as possible, is based on evidence from our clients. Within that evidence we can say that the two largest groups of problems that we deal with are welfare benefits and debt, both of which account for about a third of all the issues brought to us. We have found it slightly difficult at times to draw a simple line between economically active and economically inactive people, because many of those who come to us are people who have recently been in work but, for various reasons, have stopped being in work, and may be looking for work again.

[145] Not very many of our clients present transport as their primary problem, but we find that transport is often a factor in rural areas in exacerbating or complicating people's problems, whether it is because of the distance from work or from public agencies or the inability to commute to work because of lack of public transport or the cost of running a car. We have said that there is not much difference between rural and urban inquiry patterns; there is some evidence from our colleagues in England that there is a tendency for people in rural areas to bring more employment and relationship-related problems to Citizens Advice.

2.30 p.m.

[146] It is not entirely clear why this is happening. The aggregate statistics for Wales, where you take the nine rural counties together, do not show that that is happening, but if you look at the statistics for individual counties and areas, they suggest that, in most of them, it is true that we deal with more employment-related problems in rural areas. What we would like

to do, but cannot at the moment, is an analysis by postcode, which we suspect would be much more accurate and would probably confirm or deny that supposition. However, we suspect that it is true, certainly for most Welsh rural areas, that there are more employment and relationship queries.

[147] That is what people bring to us, but in terms of how we respond to that, a good advice service will stabilise people's circumstances by maximising their income when they are not in work, by minimising debt and the impact of debt and uncontrolled debt, which can mean that people will avoid losing their homes, and so are better placed to enter the labour market and succeed in getting work. We can also advise around return to work, in terms of tax benefits, employment rights and so on. In recent years, we have been developing a lot of work around financial capability; so, instead of advising individual clients who come to us, we are working with people to enable them to learn to budget, to handle bank accounts, and to do things like taking on a mortgage or buying a car. This is different to traditional advice work, so it depends on having specific projects. We have a number of projects in Wales, including in Powys and Ynys Môn, where we are working with both young people in education and older people to develop their personal financial capability.

[148] The final point that I would like to make is that, in common with a lot of other voluntary sector organisations, by providing opportunities to volunteer, we provide many people with opportunities to move towards the labour market by developing their skills. Overall statistics for England and Wales suggest that about 40 per cent of the volunteers who leave us go on into either paid work or further education and training. If you consider that a number of the people who leave us are already retired, that is probably quite important. In Wales, we participate in the advice training network that is funded through the European social fund; we have seen something like 200 people a year across Wales becoming beneficiaries of that, working in bureaux with training and supervision, and gaining the experience of working in a work-type environment. Our hope is to expand that to more areas of Wales in the next year, as part of the convergence programme.

[149] **Alun Davies:** Suzanne, would you like to add anything to that?

[150] **Mr Edwards:** Yr wyf yn credu y byddai'n well gan Suzanne ddod i mewn yn ystod y cwestiynau. **Mr Edwards:** I think that Suzanne would prefer to contribute by answering questions.

[151] **Alun Davies:** Mr Harris, a fyddech chi'n hoffi eich cyflwyno eich hun a rhoi eich tystiolaeth? **Alun Davies:** Mr Harris, would you like to introduce yourself and give your evidence?

[152] **Mr Harris:** I am Simon Harris, the chief executive of the Wales Co-operative Centre. I will not repeat what is in the written evidence. Our organisation has been established for 25 years to cover all of Wales, and it provides general co-operative development and training support services. Our interest and focus is on trying to encourage a mixed economy and a mixed approach to enterprise and community development across the whole of Wales, urban and rural. That is the key for us. No single solution will fit all. We are trying to promote co-operative working, community regeneration from the community up. There are some existing programmes, which I identified in the paper—Communities First being an obvious example, and Communities Next into the future—that will, if used properly, with a focus on output and delivery, help to identify the problems and the solutions for rural areas and local communities. We have a number of other policies, such as child poverty strategies, which are of great importance in addressing some of the issues that I have outlined and which have been discussed previously.

[153] The financial inclusion strategy that is being developed is also important. Another



key area that links in with some of the Citizens Advice stuff is lack of access to banking services and good financial advice services. I think that those three strategies will be the key. However, our angle is very much to take a generalist approach to developing co-operation across Wales, within rural and urban communities, suggesting a mixed approach to the development of the economy in Wales. That is our focus. You have probably seen some of the statistics that I included in the paper before, as they were drawn from the Wales Rural Observatory paper. You will be aware of some of the areas that we have identified, such as transport, childcare, and housing issues. However, I have also thrown information and communications technology into that. We think that there is a widening gap with people in rural areas becoming excluded from the use of ICT. We are looking to target that issue for community regeneration, hopefully using a co-operative and social enterprise model. So, it is really a generalist approach that I am providing there. I will now take questions on the paper and anything that I have said.

[154] **Alun Davies:** Diolch yn fawr. Yr ydym yn gwerthfawrogi hynny. Fe ddechreuaf i, cyn dod ag Aelodau eraill i mewn. Wrth ddarllen y papurau i baratoi ar gyfer y cyfarfod hwn, yr oeddwn yn meddwl ei fod yn syfrdanol mor wahanol oedd eich papur chi a phapur yr Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau. Yr wyf yn derbyn eich bod yn edrych ar hyn o safbwynt gwahanol, ond mae'r bennod sydd gennych ar gyflogaeth yn cyflwyno darlun hollol wahanol o'r Gymru wledig o'i gymharu â'r darlun a gawsom gan y DWP. Yr ydych chi'n dweud,

**Alun Davies:** Thank you very much. We appreciate that. I will start, before bringing other Members in. While reading the papers to prepare for this meeting, I found it astonishing to see how different your paper was compared with that of the Department for Work and Pensions. I accept that you are looking at this from a different perspective, but the section that you have on employment paints a completely different picture of rural Wales from that painted by the DWP. You say,

[155] 'Low wages and lack of employment opportunities are a major factor in financial disadvantage'.

[156] Fodd bynnag, mae'r DWP wedi dweud bod lefelau cyflogaeth a chyflogau yn uwch yn y Gymru wledig nag ydynt mewn mannau eraill. A allwch chi esbonio'r gwahaniaeth?

However, the DWP stated that employment levels and wages are higher in rural Wales than in other areas. Is there any way that you can explain that disparity?

[157] **Mr Thomas:** Yes, chairman. We must base our evidence on what we are told by the people who come to seek advice from us. By and large, people who are in well paid jobs and who are not having difficulty holding them down are not going to come to a citizens' advice bureau for employment advice, and so we do not pretend that we see a typical cross-section of the population. Our evidence indicates that there are problems with people on low incomes and with poor employment practices, and there are a number of problems associated with people having a lack of access to work. So, in a sense, we see a different public from the public that the DWP sees, which looks at the population as a whole. It is very easy, I suppose, for any of us to produce statistics, but what we tend to see are individual stories.

[158] **Mick Bates:** Thank you very much for your evidence. I have just a comment for Citizens Advice and I do not know whether you will want to respond to it. I am sure that all of us, as Members, are heavily involved in your work. One issue that I continually raise is the continuity of funding for your operation, because you do such valuable work. For many years, we have tried to get the Government to provide you with core funding. How sustainable is your current service level, because the work is critical?

[159] **Mr Thomas:** It depends, in the sense that different areas of work are dependent on

different funding streams. The core of the service is still supported by local authorities, as it has been for a long time. On the whole, local authority funding has been bearing up surprisingly well, but, from time to time, there are severe cuts and we have had substantial reductions in Powys and the Vale of Glamorgan in the last couple of years. You can struggle with small cuts, but when you are talking about cuts of 25 per cent to your budget, you can deal with that only by closing the main office or by making a huge reduction in opening hours.

[160] Our second major source of income comes from the Legal Services Commission through legal services contracts. There is considerable uncertainty about what will happen to that in the future because of the legal services strategy, which intends to introduce community legal advice networks in Wales. We do not yet know how that will work, but there are some worrying indications from what has happened in parts of England. The idea, broadly, is to pool the funding from the local authorities and the Legal Services Commission and try to bring all advice agencies together to provide a joined-up service—which is splendid in theory. There is some uncertainty about that.

2.40 p.m.

[161] We have other sources of income. A point about innovative services is that they have often been funded from such sources as the National Lottery, but some of those funds are now being diverted to the Olympics. I make no comment on whether that is a good or a bad thing, but it does have an impact on us. In any case, there is always a problem as that kind of funding is only for a fixed term. We have been very pleased to receive funding from the Welsh Assembly Government for a number of years for our Better Advice, Better Health service, which is probably responsible for the great majority of our outreach services to small, local communities. That service is still receiving support, but there has been a difficulty in providing cost-of-living increases for it. So, there is uncertainty in a number of areas. However, although our funding is more diverse and is not quite so difficult as it has been in the past, in my experience of the service, that uncertainty means that bureau managers like Suzanne tend to spend more of their energy on identifying new funding streams and finding out how to access them, and rather less on how they can improve the day-to-day operations.

[162] **Mick Bates:** Thank you very much for that interesting point. I will dwell no longer on your continuity. In your experience, what is the main cause of the deprivation that you meet in your service? Suzanne may be the person to answer that.

[163] **Ms Gainard:** Sorry, did you say the main cause?

[164] **Mick Bates:** Yes, the main cause of the deprivation that you see in your customers.

[165] **Ms Gainard:** Unemployment and high debt are the main causes. We have had funding from the financial inclusion fund for the past 12 months, and that been used to help us to identify time and opportunities to expand on our work. Our overall debt figures for 2006-07 amounted to £3.5 million. In one quarter, with the FIF funding, we were able to deal with debts worth £1.5 million. During the last quarter, we have seen 161 people face to face, and that was to deal with new debt. So, this money has supported us in being able to get out there.

[166] During the last six months, September 2007 to March 2008, additional funding allowed us to open an evening surgery two evenings a week. That made a huge difference to us. That evening surgery funding has now come to an end. The additional funding through the FIF gave us the opportunity to meet a lot more of the need than we would have been able to otherwise.

[167] **Mick Bates:** Two points arise from that. First, is there any difference between the rural and urban parts of Wales? Secondly, with the financial inclusion strategy, can you say a little about how you are addressing the problem, perhaps by linking with credit unions, to make sure that the expertise that you develop in dealing with debt is fed down to education? You are dealing with the end product, but really it is better to educate people on how to avoid debt in the first place.

[168] **Ms Gainard:** We are hoping to develop that side of our service. We have not done the financial capability as yet, but our bureau is looking to go into that next year. Some two to three years ago, we used to go to schools to address the new sixth formers. There would be a selection of organisations there, including Barclays Bank and other banks, the bureau and several of the different trading standards officers from Carmarthenshire. We would address the sixth formers at that level at various schools in the county. We have not done that for a while because of work pressures and a shortage of funds, but we are hoping to address that in the coming year.

[169] **Mick Bates:** What about the rural/urban split? Are there any obvious differences?

[170] **Ms Gainard:** The most obvious difference with debt clients is the cost of running a car for people who live in rural areas but travel to towns to work. Generally, the car is bought either on hire purchase or through a loan. So, they have that to repay, and then they have their travel costs, the MOT, the road tax and the insurance; all that has to be paid for before even leaving the house to go to work to earn money. That is probably the biggest split.

[171] **Mick Bates:** I now want to address a couple of questions to Simon Harris. I picked up on something that you said about current Government intervention programmes, Communities First, for example. You used the words, 'if used properly'. Could you tell me a little more about that?

[172] **Mr Harris:** Yes. As an organisation, we keep a close eye on the policies and strategies that are developed and promoted by the Welsh Assembly Government, and I sometimes find the sheer number that comes out frustrating. We need to focus on the actions at the other end of them, and on the output of a strategy that has been developed. I always remember a former Assembly economic development committee report on economic inactivity, published a couple of years ago by now, which contained, I think, 23 actions. Many of them were sensible actions, but I would have liked to see those actions being driven forward and focused on. I am not quite sure what happened to them, but I thought that they were good.

[173] In essence, Communities First is a great programme, and the thinking behind it, namely allowing communities to assess their own issues and priorities and to set their own programmes of action, is sensible. In the early days, the focus was very much on setting up partnerships and the legal structures, and we were very closely involved in that. At the next stage, it will be so important to focus on the outcomes and outputs and on what is to come out at the end of the day. If a community identifies a building that has been derelict for ages, it can say, 'Let us do something about it' and if there is a lack of childcare in the area or there are unemployed individuals—and I always use this example—you could marry the three: employ the unemployed in renovating the building and then use it to run a childcare facility. It is about trying to make those connections, so that the strategy focuses on actions and outputs. That is what we need to do.

[174] **Mick Bates:** From what you have just said, the critical question for me is where does the investment come from to achieve that, and to overcome the deprivation that you have just identified? What, in your experience, is the best source of funding to achieve that?

[175] **Mr Harris:** It would be a mixed bag. I wish that you had asked me the question about where our funding comes from. However, you did not ask me that, so never mind.

[176] **Mick Bates:** You can always answer that, if you want.

[177] **Mr Harris:** No, it is okay. Money is always an issue, is it not? We know that, at the moment, it is particularly tight and is getting tighter, certainly in the Welsh Assembly Government. That is a challenge, but it is being addressed in part through the European structural funds. We have to get the interested parties together for each individual problem that we need to tackle, and develop a programme jointly and then attempt jointly—and there is no easy answer to this—to access the wide range of funding that could be available. Sources for that would include the Big Lottery Fund, local authority funds, and Welsh Assembly Government funds. Our focus on a small scale, in communities, is to address the longer term sustainability issue. For example, we have to see that building that is being renovated by local people to provide childcare facilities as a longer term, sustainable business. Childcare is a great example of something that is very difficult to set up as a sustainable business. Community transport is another area identified as a problem. So, it is not easy, but we need to see whether we can get our heads together and use the funds available, including loan funding through Finance Wales, for example, for what could be seed funding for a business at the end of the day.

[178] Having said that, there is no easy answer and, to set these things up, you use programmes like Communities First, you feed in seed money to the partnerships, which have identified the problems in their communities, and you see whether you can generate a local environment and economy that leads to more sustainable projects. It is not an easy question to answer, as you probably know.

[179] **Mick Bates:** That is why we are here. There is one more part to that question. You referred to ICT in your document, and we have heard about that from other sources too. Give us an indication of the deprivation that exists in rural areas because they do not have decent broadband connections.

[180] **Mr Harris:** I guess that ‘I do not know’ is the honest answer on the specifics—and I am making my excuses, being a generalist. We are running the Communities@One project, which you will probably be familiar with, and the background to that is all about the potential digital divide that is being created in situations such as that which you suggest. We all probably use the internet and e-mail, but many people do not. As a result, people are losing out on opportunities. For example, banking is cheaper on the internet, and paying your electricity bill is cheaper using the internet or through direct debit. Those are the sorts of problems that we have to try to tackle. Ensuring that information and communications technology is promoted and taken up by people in deprived areas is crucial, and there is a danger that people get left behind. Sorry, there are no specific answers there.

2.50 p.m.

[181] **Alun Davies:** Thank you. I will now bring in Alun Ffred, then Lorraine and Brynle.

[182] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae gen i sylw i ddechrau i Simon Harris. Yr ydych yn sôn y dylai gwaith Cymunedau yn Gyntaf, efallai, gael mwy o ffocws neu gefnogaeth, ond y gwir amdani yw nad yw Cymunedau yn Gyntaf, ar y cyfan, yn gweithredu mewn ardaloedd gwledig. Felly, beth ddylid ei wneud i geisio ymateb i'r amddifadedd sydd

**Alun Ffred Jones:** I have a comment first of all for Simon Harris. You mention that the work of Communities First should perhaps be given more focus or support, but the truth is that Communities First, generally speaking, does not operate in rural areas. Therefore, what should be done to try to respond to deprivation in rural areas?

mewn ardaloedd gwledig?

[183] **Mr Harris:** That is a good point, which we are dealing with. You find that—and I do not know whether you would call it jealousy, because that is not the right word—those areas that are just outside Communities First areas see that there are programmes operating across the road or around the corner that are not operating in their particular area. Problems exist across the whole of Wales, and it is a challenge for us. We have to use the small amount of money that is available for programmes such as Communities First, and target the most deprived areas—there are questions about how you define that—but that leaves a whole swathe of Wales that is not targeted by these specific programmes, which are, I think, good programmes.

[184] We are always trying to provide an all-Wales service, but we can only deliver services where we can get the funding. At the moment, another example would be the convergence fund. We can access the convergence fund for our Communities@One project, but it is not available in the non-convergence areas such as Powys and vast rural areas of Wales. So, if the Assembly, for example, has all-Wales strategies, and the Wales Co-operative Centre has all-Wales strategies, we need to try to ensure that areas do not get left behind. It is again a question of funding. If we cannot encourage, in the shorter term, the individual sustainability of those areas, through sustainable social enterprises and co-operatives, for example, we need to identify programmes that provide the seed development for that future sustainability. If it is an all-Wales strategy, you could use the funding available in the rural development plan, for example, to promote elsewhere the opportunities that are available within Communities First areas. It is a difficult question. It would be great if Communities First was available across the whole of Wales, but we do not have enough money for that.

[185] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae gen i gwestiwn yn awr i Gyngor ar Bopeth—efallai eich bod wedi ateb hwn eisoes. A ydych chi'n gweld bod amddifadedd—beth bynnag yw eich diffiniad ohono—yn wahanol ei natur yng nghefn gwlad ac yn y trefi? Hynny yw, a yw'r math o broblemau yr ydych yn delio â hwy yn wahanol yng nghefn gwlad nag yn y trefi, neu a oes dim gwahaniaeth?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** I now have a question for Citizens Advice—perhaps you have answered it already. Do you believe that deprivation—whatever your definition of it is—is different in nature in rural areas and urban areas? That is, are the kinds of problems that you deal with in rural areas different from those in urban areas, or is there no difference at all?

[186] **Mr Thomas:** We certainly would not say that there is no difference at all. At the first level at which people approach us for advice, very often the problem does look superficially the same: people are in debt, at risk of losing houses, have employment problems or are not on the right benefits and so on. Looking at many examples of cases dealt with by bureaux in rural areas, what is striking is the combination of the usual difficulties of low income and lack of employment with factors that are often to do with distance. It may be a long way to travel to available work, or you cannot find a house where the work is available. There are associated travel costs, but also, quite often, a lack of choice. Although it is not particularly about economically active people, we have, for example, had cases where people have not been able to access NHS dentists. In rural areas, you cannot have the same number of dentists as in urban areas, because it is not economically viable. So, one of the difficulties is not simply the difficulty of transport and travel, which affects a very large number of people, but also the relative lack of choice, and that, again, applies, as other witnesses have said, to the range and quality of employment opportunities. If you live in an urban area and there is a job available at a superstore at or around the minimum wage, there is a fair chance that you can get there in a short bus ride or can even walk. In a rural area, you might be talking about 15 miles or 20 miles in each direction, which completely changes the financial equation. Suzanne has some information on how much it costs to run cars and the difference that it makes.

[187] **Alun Davies:** Could we see that information on the cost of transport and of running cars so that we can refer to it in our later discussions?

[188] **Mr Thomas:** Yes, we could send you something on that.

[189] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I ddilyn hynny, yr wyf yn edrych ar ffigurau—nid eich ffigurau chi—ynglŷn ag enillion canolrif gros yng Nghymru, gan gymharu Cymru wledig gyda Chymoedd de Cymru. Mae'r ffigurau yn debyg iawn—£403 yng Nghymru wledig a £400 yng Nghymoedd y de. Ffaith arall a ymddangosodd o'r drafodaeth a gawsom yr wythnos diwethaf wrth holi'r cwmnïau ynni oedd bod y ffigurau ar gyfer teuluoedd a oedd yn byw mewn tloidi tanwydd yn y gogledd—yr oedd y ffigurau am ogledd Cymru gyfan, felly mae'n cynnwys ardaloedd poblog—yr un peth ag ydynt ar gyfer y de, sy'n awgrymu bod canran llawer uwch yn dioddef o dlodi tanwydd mewn ardaloedd gwledig nag mewn ardaloedd fwy poblog. Fodd bynnag, mae polisïau'r Llywodraeth, sy'n cael eu gweithredu'n bennaf ar sail y mynegai amddifadedd lluosog, yn methu'r pwynt hwnnw yn llwyr. Yr wyf wedi gofyn y cwestiwn, braidd yn annheg, i Simon Harris ynglŷn â'r hyn y dylid ei wneud gyda phobl sy'n dioddef amddifadedd yng Nghymru wledig, ond a ydych yn derbyn fod mynegai amddifadedd lluosog Cymru yn erfyn anhylaw iawn i'w ddefnyddio wrth geisio mesur amddifadedd mewn ardaloedd gwledig?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** To follow that up, I am looking at figures—not your figures—on gross median earnings in Wales, and comparing rural Wales with the south Wales Valleys. The figures are very similar—£403 in rural Wales and £400 in the south Wales Valleys. Another fact which emerged from the discussion that we had last week when we questioned the energy companies was that the figures for families who live in fuel poverty in north Wales—the figures were for north Wales as a whole, therefore they include the more populated areas—were the same as for south Wales, which suggests that a much higher percentage suffers from fuel poverty in rural areas than in more populated areas. However, the Government's policies, which are mainly implemented on the basis of the index of multiple deprivation, miss that point entirely. I have asked the question, quite unfairly, to Simon Harris as to what should be done about people suffering from deprivation in rural Wales, but do you accept that the Welsh index of multiple deprivation is a highly inflexible tool in trying to measure deprivation in rural areas?

[190] **Mr Edwards:** Ymatebaf i hynny ar ran Cyngor ar Bopeth. Yr ydym yn ymgynghori yn fewnol ar Cymunedau Nesaf ar hyn o bryd, felly byddai'n anodd i ni roi ein safbwynt swyddogol i chi heddiw. Fodd bynnag, o ran y modd y mae'n gweithredu, mae mynegai amddifadedd lluosog Cymru yn nodi amddifadedd mewn clystyrau. Mewn ardaloedd gwledig, nid yw'r clystyrau hynny yn bodoli—gall rhywun cyfoethog fyw drws nesaf i rywun tlawd, felly nid yw defnyddio ystadegau ar sail ardal o'r fath yn helpu'r broblem mewn ardaloedd gwledig.

**Mr Edwards:** I will respond to that on behalf of Citizens Advice. We are currently conducting an internal consultation on Communities Next, so it would be difficult for us to give an official position today. However, in terms of how it operates, the Welsh index of multiple deprivation identifies deprivation in clusters. In rural areas, those clusters do not exist—a wealthy person could live next door to a poor person, so using such area-based statistics does not help the problem in rural areas.

[191] **Alun Davies:** A oes unrhyw un arall am wneud sylw arbennig ar hynny?

**Alun Davies:** Does anyone else wish to make a specific comment on that?

[192] **Mr Thomas:** Specifically on the fuel poverty point, I am not in a position to give any general statistics at the moment, but there is evidence from a number of rural areas that people

have struggled with fuel costs because, for example, they are not on gas mains. Where people are housed in accommodation with oil-fired central heating and water heating there are cases where the oil can only be bought in substantial quantities of over so many 100 litres, and if people do not have the money upfront, they cannot buy it. In urban areas, you are likely to have more choice of fuel supply, so the problem will not be so acute.

3.00 p.m.

[193] **Alun Davies:** I will bring Lorraine in first and then come back to you, Brynle, because I am aware of the time limits.

[194] **Lorraine Barrett:** Simon mentioned earlier the former Economic Development Committee's report on economic inactivity in Wales. One recommendation in that report, and I do not know what has happened to it, was that the voluntary sector should be given more support for its work in offering an early stepping stone into the labour market. Perhaps Simon could tell me first what role the voluntary sector could play in rural Wales to support people to get the labour market. I put the question to the co-operative centre specifically. I am not sure that it applies to Citizens Advice, but if there are things that you feel that you do in that area of helping people into the labour market, I would be interested to hear them.

[195] **Mr Harris:** We have been helping the Assembly with the development of a new strategy, which, again, is an important strategy as it is trying to bring together the voluntary and social enterprise sectors under the third dimension, which is a new and interesting strategic action plan; it is a strategy and an action plan. The interesting part is the action plan. Within that, there are opportunities for the voluntary sector and the social enterprise sector to work together to try to develop that early stage success. One of the issues that I have picked out in rural areas would be community transport. Again, that is a difficult thing to make sustainable. However, the voluntary sector has a role to play in providing community transport: it is a big barrier, as seen in previous evidence.

[196] The voluntary sector, in terms of financial inclusion—Mick mentioned credit unions and linking in with credit unions—is not just providing financial services, but also financial advice. With Citizens Advice, we are currently running a programme called DRAMA, the debt redemption and money advice scheme, and so there is a focus there on providing financial advice. So that is a voluntary sector activity.

[197] Another issue is where rural facilities such as pubs, post offices and village stores are closing. You have probably heard it all before, but there are a small number of examples where the community has come together to provide those facilities. People have put their hands in their pockets in many instances and invested in shares in small community organisations to buy the pub or village store. The key is that it needs to be a sustainable business—it needs to provide services that that community wants. Post offices close because no-one uses them, and that is a business case. Everyone argues that they are needed, but we need to refresh what they are used for. However, there are opportunities for the voluntary and co-operative sectors to help develop those.

[198] Then there are several things that the Wales Co-operative Centre is keen on in the farming and agri-food sector, which is a big area where there is poverty and deprivation. There is support for farmers in encouraging them to form co-operative businesses. That can be linked with supplying the public sector—local authorities, schools, colleges and the Assembly—in ensuring that the public sector purchases, where it can, from local farmers. Those farmers could also come together to supply the private sector. I see agri-food farming co-operatives as part of the social enterprise third sector. There is also diversification, using the co-operative model. There are a number of examples of farmers diversifying. I go back to my original point about there needing to be a mixed and vibrant economy in rural Wales. We

have heard a great deal about jobs and having the skills to do jobs. However, the jobs need to be available and we need to ensure that our existing businesses survive across the whole of Wales. So again, a co-operative solution would be business accession, ensuring that existing businesses do not close, but are given the opportunity to remain and grow through transfer to the employees or through the establishment of consortia, bringing smaller businesses together so that they can be stronger and win bigger contracts. So, that is a range of areas. I mentioned housing, but there are other areas as well.

[199] **Lorraine Barrett:** I have always had a thing about crèches being set up as co-operatives, but, again, the business case must stack up: it is not as simple as—this is what I tend to think happens—a group of parents getting together to try to keep down costs and provide some childcare. Do you know of many examples that work in rural areas?

[200] **Mr Harris:** There is not a massive amount, but we have dealt with a number of them; you are now going to ask me what that number is, but, off the top of my head, I do not know. However, we have helped establish a number of childcare co-operatives, and it is difficult to make the figures add up. Therefore, subsidised provision may be the solution in the most deprived areas—I do not know. However, we have helped support a number of examples.

[201] **Lorraine Barrett:** If there are any examples that you could send to us, so that we could include them in the report, that would be helpful.

[202] **Alun Davies:** Working examples would be useful to the committee in its consideration of this matter.

[203] **Mr Harris:** I will arrange that, and not just on childcare examples.

[204] **Alun Davies:** We would welcome information on a range of different issues.

[205] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Gyda llaw, mae enghraifft ym Mhenygroes o fudiad cydweithredol yn rhedeg uned gofal plant, a sefydlwyd gyda help Antur Nantlle. Mae'n dal i fynd ac yn llewyrchus. Mae Penygroes yn bentref gweddol fawr, ond yn gwasanaethu ardal gymysg wledig a phentrefol. Felly, os ydych eisiau gweld un yn gweithio, ewch yno; dof i gyda chi.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** By the way, there is an example in Penygroes of a co-operative organisation running a childcare facility, which was established with the assistance of Antur Nantlle. It is still operating and prospering. Penygroes is quite a large village, but it serves a mixed rural and village area. Therefore, if you want to see one in action, go there, and I will join you.

[206] Yr ydym wedi clywed cryn dipyn y prynhawn yma ynglŷn â thrafnidiaeth, a'i bod yn un o'r ffactorau sydd yn creu anawsterau mewn ardaloedd gwledig. Fodd bynnag, mae cynlluniau trafndiaeth gymunedol ar hyd a lled Cymru yn cael eu rhedeg yn bennaf gan y sector gwirfoddol. A ydych yn ei gweld yn rhyfedd, felly, nad oes yr un cynllun trafndiaeth gymunedol yng ngogledd-orllewin Cymru, sydd yn cynnwys Gwynedd, Conwy a Môn?

We have heard a great deal this afternoon about transport, which is one of the factors that create difficulties in rural areas. However, community transport schemes are in place the length and breadth of Wales, mainly run by the voluntary sector. Do you find it strange, therefore, that there is no community transport scheme in north-west Wales, which includes Gwynedd, Conwy and Anglesey?

[207] **Mr Harris:** I apologise that this will, again, be a general answer, but we are not very good at transferring best practice, learning lessons from elsewhere and taking ideas that work in one area—be it in other parts of Wales, or in England, Scotland, Ireland or throughout Europe and the world—and trying to replicate them in another area. That is difficult, because



it would mean suggesting a top-down approach, and normally these voluntary sector and social enterprise activities develop themselves, and we get a telephone call asking, 'Can you help to set this thing up?'. How do you take an example of best practice, something that really works, and transfer it somewhere else? However, working with the agencies and the people who operate in a particular area, you can generate interest and try to replicate something that works.

[208] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Just for your information, a community transport scheme was operating in Nefyn. You would have thought that Pen Llŷn was one of the areas that demanded one, but it was not funded in the last round. When the money was allocated, Pen Llŷn was left out.

[209] **Brynle Williams:** To expand on that, I know of two successful schemes in north Wales where communities have come together to form their own shop, even taking the post office on board. One is in Clawdd Newydd, and the other is in Groes. The problem, as you have just said, is how do we get this out? It cannot come from the top down. There seem to be two individual drivers in the villages, but how can we get other villages to realise that it can be done and that they can move forward? It has got to the point where one village now has its own filling station. This is another thing that I think you touched on earlier, Mr Thomas, namely fuel poverty. It is very serious. The price of oil has gone up by more than £200 since Christmas in rural areas, where people do not have alternatives. You will be inundated with a lot of further problems.

[210] However, these village schemes may need financial pump-priming, which is there, but how do we stimulate individuals in those communities?

3.10 p.m.

[211] **Mr Harris:** Again, that is a good question. Our focus is on providing support and advice. What we are trying to do is not rocket science; it is about raising awareness, marketing, getting out to try to explain to people what can be achieved and try to generate the interest from within the communities. It is up to them to do it. I have often spoken at events and conferences and pointed out what can be achieved and what can be done, but it is up to the community to get together to do it.

[212] **Alun Davies:** You mentioned in one of your earlier answers that post offices close because people do not use them. This is partly true, but it is also true that post offices close because someone in an office decides that a very successful post office will close. Mick Bates and I have both attended meetings and are campaigning on this issue in different parts of Wales. Has the Wales Co-operative Centre discussed with Post Office Ltd the option of not closing particular post offices? I accept that some will need to close, because they are no longer viable, but I believe that there are a number of post offices in the central Wales region that are being threatened with closure but which are viable, which are currently profitable, and which would have a future if there was an economic model that would take them forward. Has the Wales Co-operative Centre spoken to Post Office Ltd about looking at different models to take forward postal services in parts of rural Wales?

[213] **Mr Harris:** I do not think so; I have not, but I do not know whether my deputy has run with this recently. We are invited to speak to some post offices on an individual basis, and there may well be a number in development. However, it is something that I could take forward. Years ago, we did a research paper for the Welsh Assembly Government looking at post offices. I am not saying that I support the closure of post offices—I do not want that message to be taken away—but the conclusion of that report was that there have to be services that people want in that particular area. So, there is a viability issue there. We have been called in to some post offices on an individual basis, but I will take back that idea and

see if we can work with Post Office Ltd and have that strategic approach to getting involved where post offices are up for closure.

[214] **Alun Davies:** Thank you. I will seek to take that forward with you outside this meeting. At the same time, one of the issues that came out of the evidence provided by Citizens Advice and others is that of the delivery of services in rural Wales. Different models are available to deliver services. Mick Bates raised the issue of broadband earlier in this evidence session; the availability of broadband is at crisis point in some places. That has an impact on people in terms of isolation, and prevents children from being able to do their homework in the same way as other children in the same classroom. Has the Wales Co-operative Centre considered working with, for example, community councils, to develop different models of the delivery of broadband? Certainly, I am advised that the delivery of wireless solutions in parts of Pembrokeshire would be relatively straightforward on a technical basis, but needs the work of local authorities at county level and, possibly, at community level to deliver the services that that community requires.

[215] **Mr Harris:** In England, there are co-operative broadband providers, where communities have come together to try to develop their own co-operative broadband provision. We have not been proactive in doing that here. Again, that is useful, and in developing our next phase of Communities@One we will feed that in. Having said that, it may have been considered in the development of our Communities@One project. However, once again, there is an opportunity to feed that in. BT has a role to play in this, but I do not know what its response would be.

[216] **Mick Bates:** We will not say anything about that.

[217] **Alun Davies:** I think that we need to bring this session to a close before we start discussing those issues.

[218] I thank you all for your evidence.

[219] Diolch yn fawr am eich tystiolaeth y prynhawn yma. Yr ydym yn gwerthfawrogi hynny. Byddwch yn derbyn copi o drawsgrifiad y sesiwn hon. Yr ydym wedi cytuno ar rywfaint o waith ysgrifenedig ychwanegol a bydd y clerwr yn trafod hynny gyda chi y tu allan i'r cyfarfod. Thank you for your evidence this afternoon. We appreciate it very much. You will receive a copy of the transcript of this session. We have agreed to additional written submissions, and the clerk will discuss that with you outside the meeting.

[220] Cynhelir cyfarfod nesaf yr is-bwyllgor ddydd Iau nesaf, 24 Ebrill. Byddwn yn parhau gyda'r ymchwiliad hwn. Diolch yn fawr. The next meeting of the sub-committee will be held next Thursday, 24 April. We will continue with this inquiry. Thank you.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 3.15 p.m.  
The meeting ended at 3.15 p.m.*