



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol ac Adfywio**

**The National Assembly for Wales
The Social Justice and Regeneration Committee**

**Dydd Mercher, 4 Hydref 2006
Wednesday, 4 October 2006**

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

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

Aelodau o'r Cynulliad yn bresennol: Lorraine Barrett, Mick Bates, Christine Gwyther, Mark Isherwood, Laura Anne Jones, Huw Lewis, Leanne Wood.

Eraill yn bresennol: Barry Cradle, Heddlu De Cymru; Debbie Davies, Heddlu De Cymru; Grahame Howard, Tîm Alcohol a Chyffuriau Caerdydd; Joy Lott, Heddlu Gwent; Sarah Metcalf, Canolfan Alcohol a Chyffuriau Powys; Linda Roberts, Cydlynnydd y Rhaglen Ysgolion Genedlaethol, Rhaglen Gyswllt Ysgolion a'r Heddlu Cymru Gyfan.

Gwasanaeth Pwyllgor: Dr Virginia Hawkins, Clerc; Claire Griffiths, Dirprwy Glerc.

Assembly Members in attendance: Lorraine Barrett, Mick Bates, Christine Gwyther, Mark Isherwood, Laura Anne Jones, Huw Lewis, Leanne Wood.

Others in attendance: Barry Cradle, South Wales Police; Debbie Davies, South Wales Police; Grahame Howard, Cardiff Alcohol and Drugs Team; Joy Lott, Gwent Police; Sarah Metcalf, Powys Drug and Alcohol Centre; Linda Roberts, National Schools Programme Co-ordinator, All-Wales Police School Liaison Programme.

Committee Service: Dr Virginia Hawkins, Clerk; Claire Griffiths, Deputy Clerk.

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.31 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.31 a.m.*

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

[1] **Dr Hawkins:** Good morning. Welcome to this meeting of the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee. Unfortunately, Janice Gregory, our Chair, is unable to be with us today. So, under Standing Order No. 8.20, I ask for nominations for a temporary Chair.

[2] **Lorraine Barrett:** I nominate Mick Bates.

[3] **Laura Anne Jones:** I second that.

*Penodwyd Mick Bates yn Gadeirydd dros dro.
Mick Bates was appointed temporary Chair.*

[4] **Mick Bates:** Welcome to this morning's meeting of the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee. There is currently no-one in the public gallery—

[5] **Mark Isherwood:** There are two people there.

[6] **Mick Bates:** I am sorry; I can see them now. At some stage this morning, we will be joined by 12 sustainable-development practitioners from India who are undertaking a 12-week programme in environmental and sustainable development at the University of Wales, Bangor, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It will be interesting to see if they arrive. It is a great interest of mine, so I was looking forward to seeing them this morning. The Valleys to Coast Housing Association group also has 10 seats reserved; I hope that that group will join us at some stage.

[7] If the fire alarm sounds, please leave the room via the fire exists and follow the instructions of the ushers. No test has been scheduled for today. If you have any mobile phones, pagers or BlackBerrys, please ensure that you have switched them off, as they

interfere with the broadcasting equipment. The National Assembly operates through the medium of Welsh and English, so headphones are provided should you need simultaneous translation; for anyone with hearing difficulties, the headphones also amplify sound. Members of the public will be able to access refreshments during the break in the cafe located on the first floor. I ask Members not to touch any buttons on the microphone, as you know that this can disable the system. Please ensure that the red light is showing before you start to speak. Interpretation is available on channel 1 and the verbatim feed is on channel 0.

[8] Apologies have been received from Janice, who is otherwise engaged this morning, and Sandy Mewies; Lorraine Barrett will substitute for Janice and Christine Gwyther will substitute for Sandy Mewies later on.

9.34 a.m.

Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Blaenorol Minutes of the Previous Meeting

[9] **Mick Bates:** Do you have any comments on the minutes? I see that you do not.

*Cadarnhawyd cofnodion y cyfarfod blaenorol.
The minutes of the previous meeting were ratified.*

9.34 a.m.

Adolygiad Polisi: Digartrefedd ymhlith Pobl Ifanc Policy Review: Youth Homelessness

[10] **Mick Bates:** As a committee, we received a scoping paper from the Welsh Assembly Government for consideration at the last meeting on 21 September. Unfortunately, at that meeting, as Members will recall, time did not allow us to undertake a full discussion about the priorities that we would wish to consider in our review. Therefore, the clerk discussed the priorities with committee members. As a result, the paper reflects the priorities suggested by Members, and includes draft terms of reference and a timetable for the review. Are people content with those terms of reference? If you wish to reflect on them during the day, I am sure that you could contact the committee clerk with any views. What would be the absolute deadline for that?

[11] **Dr Hawkins:** It would be by the end of the week.

[12] **Lorraine Barrett:** I am not a member of this committee, and I was not here during the discussion on this, but three of the Assembly's regional committees will take evidence. Rural youth homelessness, seasonal youth homelessness, and youth homelessness in Objective 1 areas is mentioned, but there is also an issue in built-up urban areas, and in cities, particularly, where housing is more expensive. Multiple-occupancy residences are sometimes sub-standard, or people do not have a bond, or landlords will not accept people who may be on benefits—not that all young people are on benefits, but homeless young people, by definition, would be. Therefore, I hope that you would cover that as well.

[13] **Mick Bates:** I believe that that will be covered. We had legislation recently, which is useful for houses in multiple occupation. However, that is a valid point. Thank you. Are there any other issues?

[14] **Mark Isherwood:** Building on that endorsement, last time, I raised the problems caused by youth homelessness, in terms of benefits and finance, particularly when accessing

education. Some of that is not devolved, but that does not mean that the committee cannot have an opinion on it. However, much of the funding, and certainly alternative funding, is devolved, and the committee should have a view on that.

[15] **Mick Bates:** That is why we are undertaking this policy review on youth homelessness. Thank you, Mark. Are there any other points? I see that there are not.

9.37 a.m.

**Adolygiad Polisi: Camddefnyddio Sylweddau—Atal (Rhaglen Gyswllt Ysgolion
a'r Heddlu Cymru Gyfan)
Policy Review: Substance Misuse—Prevention (All Wales Police School Liaison
Programme)**

[16] **Mick Bates:** This is the final evidence session on this policy review. This item will continue after the break, and we have three sessions with difference stakeholders. Members will have received a briefing paper—I hope that you have all read your papers. Each organisation will have five minutes to make an oral presentation, and then Members will have further time to question them.

[17] I believe that most of you have seen the original terms of reference for our review; I will recap. They are: to consider the effectiveness of current policies and arrangements of prevention and treatment of substance misuse, giving particular regard to the identification of best practice and substance misuse education in Wales, the assessment of guidance and support necessary to ensure the implementation of best practice in schools and other settings, and the assessment of action taken to reduce the risk of substance misuse in Wales by means other than education, for example, within the areas of family support, housing and employment.

[18] It is my great pleasure, in this first session, to welcome Linda Roberts, the national schools programme co-ordinator, and Chief Superintendent Joy Lott of Gwent Police. I invite them to make their presentation.

[19] **Ms Lott:** Thank you. Good morning, Chair and Members. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to give evidence this morning. I will just take a few seconds to try to put things into context for you.

[20] In the past, I have received questions about why the police are involved in schools. Therefore, I will reiterate that prevention is a key objective for the police service, and anything that we can do along those lines has to help us and our communities generally. This programme was developed in Gwent Police initially, and has been rolled out across Wales, with the good support of your Minister, Edwina Hart. As you are aware, the programme is jointly funded at present—50 per cent by the Assembly, and 50 per cent by police forces. The Assembly money comes from the substance misuse action fund.

9.40 a.m.

[21] This is very much a partnership programme—it is not the police delivering a programme in schools, but a partnership. Even though there was initial scepticism from education when this work commenced, the feedback, as Linda will tell you and as you will see from the report, is now glowing. So, it is a good partnership. Community safety partnerships are also able to support various activities that help with this programme. Miss Roberts will basically outline the forthcoming developments and the benefits that come from that, so, I will hand you over to her.

[22] **Ms Roberts:** Good morning. The programme itself, as Joy said, was rolled out nationally in September 2004, with an aim to promote crime and disorder prevention among the young people of our communities and to promote positive citizenship. Research and evaluation undertaken externally in 2005 showed—and this is highlighted in the paper that I submitted—that the programme has positive feedback from both schools and pupils.

[23] The lesson content is based on three areas: substance education, social behaviour and community, and personal safety, which are all within the objectives of the personal and social education framework in schools. It is our aim to provide a balance of accurate, non-judgmental and current information that leads to a discussion of attitudes and values and the development of skills. Each topic that we choose is within an officer's area of expertise and conforms to best practice, as laid down in the Substance Misuse Children and Young People Circular No. 17/02. All these lessons have now been reviewed, with a greater emphasis on thinking skills and a balance of learning styles, and they are interactive, so that small-group work can occur, allowing children to practice real-life situations in a safe environment. The pupils have shown that they value the realism and the variety that officers bring to lessons, and an overwhelming sense that the lessons have provided a greater understanding of issues, particularly in the drugs field.

[24] The training that we encouraged the officers to undertake originally was a graduate diploma in education, because it is not only about the content of the lessons, but the way in which they are delivered and the ability to deliver them. As a result, 34 officers achieved a graduate diploma in education in July and another 17 will go through the same process next July. I highlight that 14 of these officers have shown commitment and will go on to undertake a master's degree, which will give us valuable insight into aspects of the programme for future development. I believe that that is in line with the 'Making the Connections' document, where it talks about the skills and capacity of staff as a foundation for achieving excellence.

[25] We have a new monitoring and evaluation system in place, which, from this September, is an electronic version. The evaluation system will show us not only the access to schools, but the penetration within them, so that we can see that the whole programme is being delivered. Qualitative evaluation is undertaken by the co-ordinators, personal and social education advisers in each authority and so on, and the teachers. Evaluation is also undertaken by the pupils themselves.

[26] Future key points include further evaluation. The first evaluation was undertaken in our infancy, and the next evaluation is due to be presented to you by December 2007. It will look at attitudes and behaviour, relevance, community engagement and relationships and so on. It will act as a baseline for future evaluation. The focus of this evaluation will be on the voice of the pupil to ensure that we are being responsive to the needs of pupils and their communities. So, we are encouraging a more active approach to researching the needs of users. We have introduced a supplementary menu that has, again, come from evaluation, asking schools which topics they feel we have not included in the programme, in relation to crime prevention and reduction, and assessing the police perspective on it. I have attached an appendix that shows you the introduction of the supplementary menu.

[27] I am conscious that we need a corporate approach, and that will remain. The officers will deliver no more lessons than they are currently delivering, but schools will have the flexibility of choice to switch in and out, if they feel that their problem is more related to one of the issues in the supplementary menu. I hope that that will provide immediacy and flexibility to deal with local issues.

[28] The other development is a disengaged element of the programme, which we are piloting for these two terms. We are looking at putting together a working party to look at the

programme. We held an evaluation at the end of the summer term, and what we found from pupil referral units and other establishments for the disengaged was that it is not the relevance of the topics concerned that matters, but the methods by which they are delivered to these difficult children. So, we are putting together a working party to achieve that, and to look at the methodology to be more effective within pupil referral units. That work will be completed and piloted by March.

[29] This obviously means that there is a need for specific training for the officers; we can cater for this under training for pupil engagement in January, which will be in relation to advanced emotional intelligence, nurture groups, philosophy for children and so on. This will link into the educational side. To develop this, we will need additional officers, but it has shown that we are exploring new ways of supporting vulnerable people in their relationship with public services.

[30] With regard to the school beat protocol, initially, we developed this policy because I was conscious that we needed a corporate approach to deal with incidents in schools as much as we needed the programme itself. It went before the Association of the Directors of Education Wales's scrutiny committee on 8 September, which agreed it, and it will go before the whole of ADEW in November, for its members to endorse it—the Welsh Association of Chief Police Officers has also endorsed it—and, from then on, it will be a case of it being disseminated through headteachers' meetings by regional co-ordinators and on the ground, with the officers talking to each of the individual heads whom they represent.

[31] Finally, last year, we accessed 1,609 primary schools and 282 secondary schools, delivering to 484,543 children—that is 97 per cent of schools in Wales, not just in the public sector, but in the private sector. We believe, as do I as a former personal and social education teacher, that we are providing children and young people with the information to make informed decisions. The evaluation in the report that summed it up for me is this:

[32] 'It is already perceived as a ground breaking and pioneering initiative that is carving out unprecedented path in the process, breaking down traditional professional barriers, opening up new channels of communication and defusing feelings of suspicion, resentment and exclusion'.

[33] We have opened the door, and I can see that we still have a long way to go, but I am sure that we can take up the challenge.

[34] **Mick Bates:** Thank you for that excellent presentation. While Members are preparing themselves to ask questions, I welcome the members of the public in the public gallery, and the Valleys to Coast group and the 12 students who are undertaking a programme on environmental and sustainable development at the University of Wales, Bangor. Welcome to you this morning. If you have difficulty hearing the proceedings, you can pick them up through the earphones provided, as well as the translation service. Thank you.

[35] **Laura Anne Jones:** Congratulations on all the work that you are doing on this essential and worthwhile programme. It will have positive effects on young people coming through the generations. All parts of the programmes that you laid out in your report are essential, clearly, but today we want to discuss with you the drug and alcohol section, although, obviously, all sections from the evidence that we have received are interlinked.

[36] Children are often scared and need a point of contact to talk about certain matters, and they are often a bit scared to approach a policeman because they may think that it will result in their going to jail or something like that. That is the impression that they might have. Do the police have small working groups within which they talk to the children and say, 'Look, you can talk to me about it and we can discuss your experiences', and that sort of

thing?

[37] Also, in your sessions, do you talk about the things that might lead children to take drugs or abuse alcohol in the first place? That might include problems at home, bullying or peer pressure.

[38] Finally, under the figures reflecting the quality of the programme, figure 9 states:

‘The value of the officer’s supportive school policing and reassurance role during this academic year.’

[39] Can you expand on how they are working with schools throughout the academic year, and not just in maybe one or two sessions?

[40] **Ms Roberts:** Can I have the page number?

[41] **Laura Anne Jones:** It is on page 12, but it is on quite a few other pages, as well.

[42] **Mick Bates:** It is on part 2 of the table, is it not?

[43] **Laura Anne Jones:** It is figure 9 at the bottom.

[44] **Ms Roberts:** Can I have it in parts, please? [*Laughter.*]

[45] In terms of part 1, you asked whether children are concerned about talking to police officers. I think that that may have been an initial impact, but as the relationship has developed with schools, that is not the case: children are coming forward and talking to the police officers, and they do see them as their friends, basically. The response from these police officers, who obviously want to work with children, is very considerate and that links in to the school process, so that, if issues do come up, they talk to the heads of year and the headteachers. So, there is that link in the process.

9.50 a.m.

[46] **Ms Lott:** To add to that, the aim is that our school liaison officers actually start at primary level with children who are quite young—before the stereotypes have set in. They work closely with schools. They are in uniform when they deliver the programme, so the children understand their role. That role is not just to deliver the schools programme; the children also come to understand the role of a police officer. So, even though a police officer is a school liaison officer and is delivering this programme, he or she is also looking at policing issues within the school environment. One positive development in neighbourhood policing teams that are being rolled out across Wales is that the school liaison officer can link in with those teams, and get assistance, where required, to deal with issues in the school environment. So, it is actually a dual role, and children are growing up with an understanding of that. Therefore, police officers deliver lessons in class but, if children have an issue or a problem, they will and do approach police officers outside the classroom.

[47] **Laura Anne Jones:** Do you want me to repeat what I said?

[48] **Ms Roberts:** You will have to, sorry.

[49] **Laura Anne Jones:** Do you talk to them in your sessions about what might lead to their taking drugs and alcohol, and do you explain to them that other routes and help are available? If they have problems at home, they do not need to resort to doing that.

[50] **Ms Roberts:** The officers give specific lessons in their area of expertise, which is the law. As a former personal and social education teacher, I know that there would be a drugs programme in any school system, and so the lessons from the expert in the law would slot in at the appropriate place. However, at the end of our lesson on the law, we give out leaflets relating to helplines and so on in relation to drugs across Wales. As a result, children are well informed of external, alternative avenues.

[51] **Ms Lott:** There are also supplements to the programme, which involve children learning messages through drama and that type of thing, where exactly what you asked is acted out. So, young people can see what the consequences could be, as well as what they could do to avoid them.

[52] **Ms Roberts:** We have met recently to put information on your new helpline, DAN 24/7, into the PowerPoint slides for the drugs lessons, so that all children are aware of that as another helpline available to them.

[53] **Mick Bates:** Thank you. Lorraine is next. Sorry, I nearly forgot the figures in the table on page 12.

[54] **Ms Roberts:** Sorry, yes, on the value of the police officer's supportive role. Approximately 80 per cent of their time is spent in the delivery of lessons, and 20 per cent in supportive school policing. That can involve any issues that the school wants assistance with. It may involve dealing with an incident, or maybe providing advice. It may be along the lines of wanting them to come in to talk at parents' evenings, or getting involved in governor training. We take a whole-school approach, and that is the idea behind the supportive school policing. As Joy just said, linking in with the neighbourhood policing teams means that, if there is an issue in the school and the wider community, we can tackle it both ways, so we are having a bigger impact.

[55] **Lorraine Barrett:** It is an excellent programme. I have sat in on three classes in different schools with the police officers concerned taking completely different approaches, yet it was interesting to see the similarities that came out at the end, as regards the pupils' responses—and I am talking about pupils in years 5 and 6 here. It would be great if everyone sat in on one of those lessons. The police officer said to me, 'Do not react when the children say something that may shock you'. They go into role play and are asked to put themselves in a situation in which they have built a park, have spent 20 years as the park keeper looking after this park, and then some of them are asked to be the baddies, and asked, 'What would you do to the park?'. The things that they came up with were really quite scary, although you know that those children have never really experienced them and would never dream of doing them. At the end of the day, they were asked to reflect on how they would feel if they saw the park destroyed in those ways. It was amazing.

[56] I also have a question about engaging with parents, but you have just answered it, really. Parents should see how this programme works and see how they could carry some of it through into the home. I put this same question to the police officers in the classrooms, too. How can we ensure—and the answer is probably funding—that, for those youngsters at 10 or 11 years of age, who have learnt so much, it is carried through to secondary school? As Laura mentioned, when they get to a certain age, peer pressure is much greater, whether that pressure is to do with drugs or anti-social behaviour, and we must ensure that we continue with this programme and that we follow through in terms of those same youngsters. We would probably need to do that to monitor and evaluate the whole programme over a number of years.

[57] **Ms Roberts:** I hope that that evaluation in 2007 will be a baseline and that if we go back to it in a couple of years' time, on the same line, I would be able to look at the

improvements that have happened from one stage to another. However, you are quite right, and what we did with the police officers was split them so that they have a comprehensive school and the feeder schools as well. Therefore, they are a consistent factor all the way through a child's life, because I appreciate that the transition from primary school to secondary school is a vulnerable stage for pupils. A familiar face is important and I encourage the officers to go to parents' evenings at years 6 and 7, at that transition stage, so that the parents are aware of them and they will have contact through into the secondary school. That seems to be proving fruitful.

[58] **Mick Bates:** Are you happy with that answer, Lorraine?

[59] **Lorraine Barrett:** Yes, that is fine. I am really heartened by this; I think that we will do all that we can to ensure that this programme is continued and supported.

[60] **Ms Lott:** If I could just make an offer, you said that you have attended and sat in on three lessons, but that invitation is open to any member of this group. If you should want to take up that offer, you simply have to contact either Linda or me and we will arrange it.

[61] **Mick Bates:** Thank you. I am sure that a lot of us have actually been to the lessons; they are good. I often wonder about the stress that the officers are under to maintain the standard of the lessons.

[62] **Ms Lott:** Our officers have gone up a vertical learning curve; there is a big difference between walking the street in uniform and presenting to children, even more so when they get a good relationship with the young people because then they are not frightened to say what they think. It has also helped our police officers enormously.

[63] **Mick Bates:** It is a very different situation. Mark has a question to ask.

[64] **Mark Isherwood:** We know from evidence that we have received that growing numbers of young people entering the youth justice system have learning needs, mental health problems and, often, associated substance misuse problems. We know that growing numbers are entering prison with literacy and numeracy problems and that drugs and alcohol are readily available; in the prisons that I have been to, that is freely admitted by both the uniformed staff and the residents. However, we also know, for instance through the DAWN project in north Wales, which is a partnership of all the voluntary and statutory providers and groups, that there is a reluctance to approach the police and other agencies because of a fear of the repercussions for them, their family or their communities. How do you respond when you identify a young person with particular problems that require some form of intervention? What can you do, short of coming down with the heavy hand of the law? I was pleased to hear your comment that young people increasingly go to the officer assigned to their school to raise issues. I note that in New South Wales in Australia, they have a police buddy programme where an officer becomes part of the community on that basis. What reassurance can you give us that when young people in those circumstances are identified, appropriate intervention and support can be given?

[65] Secondly, with regard to the programme monitoring and evaluation, which is obviously essential to the effectiveness of any programme, you quite rightly said that it is focused on ensuring a high standard of delivery. Is there any measure of the outcomes? Is there any way of quantifying the effects on the target population, the young people whom you are speaking to? Is there a reduction in the proportion of the population who have changed their use or abuse of alcohol or drugs?

[66] Thirdly, I want to ask about the role of charities and addicts, ex-addicts and ex-offenders in the drug awareness education process at all ages, whether that is at a primary or

secondary level. There are a number of schemes that also seem to be working effectively in schools in different parts of the country. I was involved with a scheme a few years ago that was called the Prison Me No-Way project, which came out of Hull prison, and Flintshire was the first place in north Wales to pioneer that.

10.00 a.m.

[67] It has been shut down for now, I believe, because the officer who ran it was not able to do it. The concern with that was that it became self-selecting. The people who participated were predominantly volunteers from particular schools, and were often those least likely to have problems, whereas those who were the hardest to reach were the least likely to volunteer. The danger in going to schools, particularly in an official role, perhaps in uniform, is that it is the youngsters with the least problems who will put their hands up to participate, asking questions and feeding back, whereas the ones most in need of support could sit in silence, or could even be truanting on that day. How do we reach them? From the evidence that I have seen from certain projects, such as the *Choose Life* play in HMP Walton, there needs to be an involvement from someone who has been where they are, or where they might go in the future, in order to help them to choose which path to follow. Will they carry on the way they are, as the person at the front of the classroom did, or will they choose a different path on the advice of the person who has been there? How, if at all, do you work with that key sector of the community?

[68] **Ms Roberts:** May I ask for the first part of the question again?

[69] **Mick Bates:** It was about supportive intervention.

[70] **Ms Lott:** I will start off, and then Linda can take over from me.

[71] When pupils show signs of need, if they identify need, or even if they do not identify that need personally, those signs can be picked up. Our school liaison officers have a lot of training that is not just about delivering lessons; it is actually about understanding human behaviour. If the disengaged element of this programme gets the go-ahead, those officers will have training in how to deal with particularly challenging young people, as Linda said. For me, the schools programme is about taking a whole-school approach. It is not just about how the police officer deals with that, identifies it, or even gets asked about it. We have a policy document that talks about dealing with substance misuse in schools and colleges. It sets out clearly where the police must take the lead, where there is a clear need for police investigation and that type of thing. In an awful lot of cases, the aim is to keep young people out of the criminal justice system, because once they are in it, they are almost a lost cause. So, the aim is to keep them out. We also look at other positive interventions. We work very closely with the youth offending teams. There are all sorts of interventions that can be put in place, but the key is that you work in partnership, so the police officer will work with the school, and subsequently maybe the youth offending team and other support agencies, to try to put appropriate intervention support and assistance in place.

[72] Sorry, but Linda is whispering in my ear, so she clearly wants to say something.

[73] **Ms Roberts:** I am back with the programme. One of the problems with intervention is that there is a set-up within the school. The officer would refer to, and discuss it with, the headteacher, and that opens up the mechanism of not just the criminal justice system, but also of social services and whatever is necessary. So, they would work together because, as our school policy points out, problems within the school setting do not have to be classed as crime—we can work in a different way. Consequently, we are there to support these children and to keep them included in the system. We do not want exclusion.

[74] **Ms Lott:** The aim must be to find an appropriate intervention that supports them to change their behaviour, if that is what is required, and to keep them out of the criminal justice system. There are far too many young people in the criminal justice system already, so the better we can become at keeping them out of it, the better it will be.

[75] **Mick Bates:** Absolutely. The second point was on outcomes. Do you have any evidence on that?

[76] **Ms Roberts:** We have the outcomes from the external evaluation, and we have regular internal evaluations. We have looked at access and penetration, and we have looked at the content and delivery of the programme. With the 2007 evaluation, I hope to set the baseline for future outcomes and evaluations, because I can return to it every x number of years to see whether there is an improvement or a difference in the attitude and behaviour of young people over time. You not will identify it instantly; it has to be a long-term project in that respect.

[77] **Ms Lott:** Given that what we are doing is preventative, it can be very difficult to count what you have stopped happening in terms of that prevention activity. I also understand entirely, and one of the reasons why this piece of evaluation has been given certain terms of reference is to try to arrange that. I get asked the same questions all the time. How many children have you stopped from committing crime? Well, put your finger in the air. We do not know, very often.

[78] I think that it will be almost impossible to prove cause and effect simply because there are so many other factors that also work towards or against our activity. However, there are certain indicators that we can look at around crime, problems within that school's area, within that community, and so forth. It will need some very clear terms of reference and will not necessary be that easy to gather. However, the work that Linda is doing tries to achieve that. Hopefully, we will have something for you in around 18 months' time.

[79] **Mick Bates:** Finally, there was an issue with the voluntary sector about working in partnership, was there not, Mark?

[80] **Mark Isherwood:** Working with some of the service providers, particularly charities and voluntary sector providers, many of which will involve, if not be run by, ex-offenders and ex-addicts.

[81] **Ms Roberts:** We currently work in partnership with a number of agencies in delivering the programme, which gives us access to them while working with the local groups. These are small; as you say, the charity is quite often local. We have embedded ourselves in areas according to what is there locally.

[82] When you talk about local offenders and involving them in the programme, I would say 'yes' to that. I think that they have a strong credibility with pupils if they hear from those people. That is also where the police officers come from—their credibility is in the fact that they are experts in their area, as these offenders would be. As a teacher, I would like to vet each one, because I think that it is important that the same message is given by these people in the programme. I would hate to let someone into a classroom without having vetted them first to make sure that they are appropriate.

[83] **Ms Lott:** I understand Linda's concern. I am the drug interventions programme champion for Gwent, and am very supportive of user involvement. However, you have to be very careful with schools. Even clean users—those who are no longer misusing—cannot be controlled by us. We do not have a remote control for them. The last thing that we would want would be for the wrong messages to be given in schools. There are ex-users who are

involved in local substance misuse treatment programmes, and have become volunteers for voluntary and charitable groups that provide treatment services. They prove very effective in the adult setting. I am sure that there will be opportunities to use those individuals, on occasion, within the school setting. However, I remind you that the schools programme is voluntary and not mandatory. We cannot insist that schools take this programme. Generally, I think that they are more than happy to take it, but it has to be done in partnership, and the school has to feel confident and comfortable about what is provided. So, I certainly think that there is a place for that, but it has to be very carefully managed.

[84] **Mick Bates:** Mark is next. Could you please be brief?

[85] **Mark Isherwood:** I am talking about a number of structured, professionally delivered, accredited programmes with a wealth of endorsement from schools—documentary endorsement, such as letters of reference and so forth—often run in the background by prison offenders perhaps, or people working in social services and so forth.

[86] **Ms Lott:** There is definitely a place for it; it just has to be carefully managed, that is all.

[87] **Ms Roberts:** It is already partly there with Crime of your Life, for example, which is a multi-agency approach between the prison service, the magistrates the youth offending team, and us. Sometimes, the prison service brings in a young offender, but we are insistent that the corporate message is delivered because, if messages are inconsistent, we will leave the children confused. However, we are working towards that.

[88] **Christine Gwyther:** I have not been to any secondary school sessions, so I would like to take you up on your offer of that. However, I have to been to junior school sessions in my constituency. I really want to test you on the non-judgmental ethos of this work, which I think is vital. One of the sessions that I attended was in a school that was not in what you would think of as a bad area, although I realise that that is a judgmental thing to say in the first place. I was struck by how sophisticated these 10 to 11-year-olds' knowledge of drugs was; they knew the current street names, their value—everything. They did not get that knowledge from their 10-year-old mates; they will have got it from much older siblings, or even from their parents. That is what I wanted to test you on. How do you deal with the fears of children who regularly encounter drugs at home, because their parents are using them?

10.10 a.m.

[89] **Ms Roberts:** The officers, with their extra training, will pitch their lessons according to the level of knowledge in that classroom—we do not take them beyond what they know. On being concerned about parents, it is the same process that we have talked about before. If they are willing to talk to the police officer, we can set certain mechanisms in place as support for them. We also give them the helpline numbers that they can ring, and so on, and we also flag up Crimestoppers, and such things. Consequently, support is there through that mechanism. If they wanted to talk to a police officer independently—and that has happened—they can sit down with a police officer, and then he can be the liaison with the school, and work through the system.

[90] **Ms Lott:** Or her.

[91] **Ms Roberts:** Or her, sorry.

[92] **Ms Lott:** We have male and female school liaison officers. Again, I would go back to the fact that this is about taking a whole-school approach. The school would be involved in supporting that child. What the police officer can do is limited in terms of support, but our

police officers are well aware of where the support sits, and how to access it.

[93] **Ms Roberts:** That is an important issue. As a teacher, I know that when we had issues in school that we wanted to take forward to outside agencies, we sometimes struggled to find that agency. We had to ring around, and so on, depending on what the issue happened to be. So, for these officers to know the correct pathways and connections, and have that link with external agencies will be valuable to schools, looking at it from the perspective of a teacher, which I was.

[94] **Christine Gwyther:** How often do those messages and sessions need to be repeated? The ones that I sat in on took a whole morning or afternoon, because you had to build up confidence using role play, drama, and so on. That is a tidy chunk out of the curriculum. How often should they be done—a few times a year, or once a year? Do you have any feel for that yet?

[95] **Ms Roberts:** We are there to support the teachers, and the work is now being achieved; now that it is in the programmes with schools, schools are looking at it. It must be part of their curriculum, and schools have to work with us to develop the correct amounts on different topics to deliver to the children. It is a school's responsibility to return and repeat that—reinforcement is an important part of education. We can slot into schools' programmes, and the programme could depend on the particular problems of a school. For example, you may need to return to a drugs issue more frequently in one area than you do in another. There are great variations in the problems that rural and urban areas have. So, we have to work with schools on this issue, and let them take a lead, in that sense, but we also have to work with them and provide as much support as they need.

[96] **Ms Lott:** The key is that this is a supportive, preventative programme. These school liaison officers are not trying to be teachers or do the school's job; they are trying to assist the school in making sure that those young people have the information that they need to make informed decisions. Our school liaison officers are not judgmental when they go in, as those of you who have viewed lessons will know. They are there to enable young people to explore the risks, to receive the correct supportive information, and thereby to make informed decisions in the future. It does not mean that we will stop every young person from trying drugs, or smoking, or binge drinking, or whatever, but at least they will be making informed decisions.

[97] **Mick Bates:** That is an interesting point on communications, which we may return to later.

[98] **Leanne Wood:** I am sorry for missing your presentation, because of traffic problems, so I apologise if my questions have already been covered.

[99] What is the programme's aim? There could be two different, conflicting aims. Is it to stop all young people from using substances, or is it to prevent problematic or criminally supported drug use? There are two different ways of going, depending on your aim.

[100] Is there an acceptance that although many young people will experiment with drug use, most of them will not go on to develop problematic or criminally supported drug use? Is that accepted and catered for in the delivery of the programme?

[101] My concern is about those children who are difficult to engage; I notice that, in the report that you provided to us, there is a section about how you will develop a programme to target that group. It is a concern, because that group is more likely to develop problematic drug use and is at a higher risk of criminal activity as adults. So, do you really think that the police are the best people to deliver the programme to that group? I ask this question as a

former probation officer, and someone who has dealt a lot with people who have ended up in criminal activity and problematic drug use. I know that attitudes towards the police among certain sections of society are not very positive, because of their experiences. We must take into account things such as attitudes towards the police after the miners' strike in the Valleys and so on.

[102] Following on from Mark's question, my understanding is that young people need to have the messages delivered by people who are credible and who understand the issues. Is there a danger that there will be young people in those classes who will know more, from their own experience or from older siblings—Christine Gwyther just asked about this—than the person delivering the programme? If that is the case, what does that do for credibility?

[103] I am also concerned about the evaluation, and the point that Mark raised about outcomes, because we cannot confidently say that this programme is achieving its aims—even though I am not quite sure what those aims are—unless we can test attitudes 10 years down the line. From the evaluation that I have seen in this report, it seems that you have only asked teachers what their view of the programme is, not the children. Is that right?

[104] **Ms Roberts:** We have asked children.

[105] **Leanne Wood:** Okay, so I apologise for that, then. However, in terms of teacher feedback, which, from this report, is obviously glowing, I am aware that teacher feedback for the drug abuse resistance education programme that was run in the Valleys was also glowing, but teachers were coming from a position of lacking the confidence to deal with these issues themselves, and so they were almost desperate for anyone to come in and deliver a programme that could meet the needs of the curriculum in this area. So, I am a bit dubious about taking teacher feedback as read. I really want to see a movement in children's attitudes. I am aware that there was a recent report from the advisory council on alcohol and drug misuse that criticised a lot of the programmes that are being run in schools and said that some can result in more children becoming problematic drug users later on. So, that is also a problem. The final point is that my understanding is that heroin addiction is 27 per cent higher in former coalfield areas. Do you have any idea as to why that might be?

[106] **Mick Bates:** Thank you, Leanne, there were some very valuable points there.

[107] **Ms Roberts:** Starting with the aims of the programme, when I came in as national co-ordinator, these were already set. They are to work towards reducing crime and disorder in our communities. In a perfect world, it would be nice to think that we could stop every child from using or picking up and experimenting with drugs, but we aim to work towards it and to promote the principles of positive citizenship.

[108] You asked whether police officers are the best people to deliver this, and I will put my teacher's hat on for a minute—I was the head of the personal and social education faculty in a large comprehensive school. The PSE programme is about life skills, and I cannot put hand on heart and say that I am an expert in all life skills. A PSE programme needs the support and expertise of external agencies; that enriches the programme for pupils and gives them different perspectives. At the end of the day, I can give one perspective in that classroom, from the teaching side. Yes, I can deliver the message, but it is much more effective if it is reinforced by other agencies with a consistent message. Visitors to a school have a big impact on children, and their supporting and reinforcing a consistent message is very effective. I honestly believe that, in my PSE department, our work with agencies—and we did a lot of multi-agency work in our school—had far more impact and value than had I just worked on my own.

[109] You asked about whether it comes to a point where children may know more than the

deliverer. You are looking at a police programme here, but, at the end of the day, there were children at my school who knew more than I did. Yet I was still in the position of the teacher.

[110] **Leanne Wood:** I am not necessarily saying that teachers are the best people to deliver this either.

10.20 a.m.

[111] **Ms Roberts:** The point is that these officers have been in the field and have dealt with issues and incidents such as this, they know their background in relation to the law and crime, and pupils see them as credible. It would be exactly the same if we were talking about health issues in the drugs programme. I submit, as a teacher, that a health expert would know more than I would. Children ask questions and want answers, and the more expertise that you can bring to a classroom, the more valuable the work is.

[112] **Ms Lott:** Linda said earlier that we do not take children beyond their knowledge. In other words, we do not give them information that might be dangerous to them. If they raise such issues, then we will deal with that. Police officers' experience of issues associated with substance misuse will vary according to how many cases they have been involved in, their general level of knowledge and so on, but our school liaison officers have monthly training days to address issues of which they need to be aware. In Gwent Police and, as far as I am aware, in the other forces, there are substance misuse education and prevention officers. The substance misuse education and prevention officer in Gwent, for example, works quite closely with me on the drug intervention programme and so is well aware of the current substance misuse issues, the street prices of drugs, and the current prevalence of drug taking and so on. The school liaison officers will get an update from him on a regular basis. So, if they are not aware of the latest prices, they will be updated. Then again, our school liaison officers are trained to deal with situations in which children clearly know more than they do because there may be substance misuse in the family, for example. As a police-trained teacher, I have had to deal with that with police officers who know more than I do, and it is a case of 'Well, well done you', or, if I do not know, 'Why don't you go away and research it?', so there are ways of dealing with that. It would not floor a police officer if a child apparently knew more than he or she did about this subject.

[113] **Ms Roberts:** To return to the issue that you raised about the relationship with children, and whether they might find it threatening if a police officer delivered this and so on, we start to work with children at five years of age, and they genuinely see the officers as their friends and confidants in the school. The officers appreciate that there is a fine balance, and they work with the children in that way. That is reflected in officers' general comments about how they have been approached in supermarkets and elsewhere, to be introduced to mum and dad. The relationship is built up, and the fact that that is happening is a superb advancement.

[114] **Mick Bates:** Leanne, do you want to come back on the other issue about the recent drug and alcohol abuse report that questioned the effectiveness of these programmes?

[115] **Leanne Wood:** There was that, and the 27 per cent higher use in former coalfield areas.

[116] **Ms Lott:** I have looked at that report. I sit on the advisory panel on substance misuse on behalf of Gwent, and that document was shared with us at the last meeting, so I have made a particular point, because I have the force responsibility for the schools programme, to look at the section on substance misuse education in schools. You will find, if you read that document, that the vast majority of the programmes that were looked at were in the United States, not in this country. I would suggest that, if the programmes are not working there,

people need to come and look at what we are doing in Wales, because the programme here has been developed in partnership with education to try to address children's needs. The feedback, not just from teachers, but from pupils, too, is excellent.

[117] **Leanne Wood:** To come back to that, you will not know that any of this works until you measure attitudes in 10 years' time. We know that substance misuse is increasing. Prices on the street are coming down, which basically means that there is more around, so there is more demand and more use. I do not know what the official figures are—they probably show that it is coming down—but that would be people presenting to services and so on. However, if the price of drugs on the street is going down, that strongly suggests that levels of use are increasing. So, you cannot really say that you know that this programme is working, can you?

[118] **Ms Lott:** One aim of this programme is to ensure that young people have the information that they need to make an informed decision. If they do not have that information, they can take an ecstasy tablet without understanding the possible consequences; they can take heroin without understanding its longer-term effects. This programme can never claim to stop every young person from taking substances that are going to harm them, potentially. What it can do is to give them the information to enable them to make an informed choice and that shows them how they can deal with peer-pressure situations that might lead them down that path.

[119] In terms of what you say about our not knowing whether we are successful, we only know what people are telling us in feedback. One reason why Linda is commissioning this research is to see whether we can identify changes in behaviour. Even if, in five years' time, we could turn to you and say, 'We have had this evaluation and we know that, five years on, that group of young people's attitudes and behaviour were significantly better and changed from what they were', that does not mean that it would all be down to the programme because there are so many other factors in life. However, if we said, 'Well, if we cannot prove it, we will not do it', we would never do anything. This is about giving people the ability to make informed choices and, through that, to make the right decisions and stay away from substance misuse. It is part of our preventative role, so we cannot not do it. All we know is that the feedback is good. The suggestions are that it is having the desired effect. Whether that research will subsequently show something different remains to be seen. However, if it shows us that it is not doing anything, we will change. The programme has already changed significantly since it started.

[120] **Mick Bates:** Several people want to speak. Laura, do you have a point?

[121] **Laura Anne Jones:** It is on this point. My experience is that it is working. I am not that old—although I feel about 96 years old sometimes, doing this job—and it was only 10 years ago that I was in the sixth form in school, and there was no information available about what drug was what and now there is, and I have seen a huge difference. I have good relationships with various schools, particularly my old schools, and my experience is that because of this information, young people seem to be making informed decisions in terms of whether they are going to take a drug, which drug they want to take, and the risks involved in taking that drug. They know now what they are getting into, more than they did when I was in school—we did not have a clue what was what, to be honest with you. From my relationships with primary schools, particularly my old one in Usk, I have seen that they have an amazing relationship with the school liaison officer and this is making a difference to the crime figures in the Usk region. I know that that sounds daft but, already we are seeing a huge impact, because, as you say, they know the police, they would say 'hello' in the street and all that sort of thing. I think that it is working, from what I am seeing on the ground.

[122] I want to ask you a quick question on attitudes.

[123] **Mick Bates:** Can you make it quick, Laura?

[124] **Laura Anne Jones:** Yes, sorry. In your lessons, is there any feedback from the officers on what influence the media has on these children and whether that is the main source of their information? Obviously there are role models out there, if you can call them that—top models and band members and so on—and the media also plays a role in glorifying the taking of drugs and the misuse of alcohol and so on. What effect is that having? Are you getting any feedback from your officers on that? If it is coming back in the feedback that it is a big factor, we, as well as you, have a responsibility to give that feedback on the role of the media to the Government.

[125] **Ms Roberts:** I definitely think that there is an influence from the media. Children watch a lot of television and so on these days and I find—and I am going back to my teaching perspective here for a minute—from being in class and working on particular issues that children think that, if had happened on *Eastenders* or on some other programme, it was true. As a teacher, you turn that around as a teaching tool, to open it up and discuss and debate it, so that they can see the reality. Yes, I do believe that there is an influence.

[126] **Mick Bates:** Leanne, are you happy with the answers now?

[127] **Leanne Wood:** I just wondered about the 27 per cent higher heroin addiction in former coalfield areas. I do not know whether there is an answer to this, but I would be interested to hear your take on it.

[128] **Ms Lott:** I could give you a view, although I do not have any research to back it up. My view would be that former coalfield areas have suffered for a considerable length of time from a lack of regeneration capability and, therefore, in many such areas, you had, and still have in some, significant unemployment, leading to a lack of opportunity and perhaps a lack of academic achievement, and all those things going together—that lack of opportunity and self esteem, because they may be third-generation unemployed, for example—can lead to situations where morale and self esteem plummet.

10.30 a.m.

[129] Therefore, an easy and quick way out to make them feel better is to have a quick blast of crack or heroin or whatever. That is certainly why a lot of the voluntary sector targets areas that have that sort of profile. However, I cannot point you to any research that will support that.

[130] **Mick Bates:** That was an interesting question. Finally, Huw Lewis wants to come in.

[131] **Huw Lewis:** I have a point to make and then a question. The point that I wanted to make was that I really think that we should, at this stage, promote and celebrate the work that Joy, Linda and their colleagues are engaged in. To my mind, it is certainly a step forward that the police are heavily engaged in the kind of social conversation that we need to be having about these issues, and have stepped away from what might be a pure enforcement role. Whatever cynicism there might be about results—of course, in time, the research will show us what kind of numerical effect this might have had—it has to be socially more valuable for the police to be involved in this kind of work than to be simply standing outside the problem and attempting to pick up the pieces by means of enforcement and arrest. This has to be better, not just for the community, but for the professionalism of the police themselves, and their engagement in the life of their communities. On that basis alone, it is worth the money.

[132] As an aside, to invoke the miners' strike in terms of the thinking of young people about substance misuse was a rather curious point. From my experience as a teacher, if you

talk to 10 or 11-year-old children about the miners' strike, you might as well be talking about Julius Caesar for all the influence that it has on their lives. They regard it as something that happened in the deep and dark past, that is not part of their world at all.

[133] I come now to my question. I stressed the point about the value of the social conversation, because we are all aware of the difficulty of engaging the wider community in facing up to the realities of what young people, in particular, face every day, for instance, when trying to locate drug rehabilitation facilities in communities and the enormous hoo-hah that that throws up from time to time. There are perhaps too many people who would like to pretend that this is not part of their world and who do not like to have a visible manifestation of dealing with the problem in their community. You mentioned that you cannot make schools take up the offer, so I wonder if there are schools that are a bit like that in relation to your programme. Forgive me if it is in the paperwork—I have not spotted it—but I wondered if some headteachers and boards of governors would rather pretend that this is not an issue for their school, and who think, 'This is a nice school in a nice area and we do not have that problem'. How many of those types of schools are out there and what do you think that we should do about that?

[134] **Ms Roberts:** We have come across that issue and, in fact, I think that we have broken down most of those barriers. For example, when we were introducing the programme, we had to go to the governors of church schools in turn, and we met some opposition there that said, 'This is a nice leafy, residential area and this does not happen'. What was interesting was that the police officer said, 'Yes, it is a nice leafy residential area, but at that house around the corner is the drug baron'. In fairness, we have got over that barrier and we are now in those schools. Of the 3 per cent of schools that we are missing at the moment, I would say that a percentage of that is due to the possible amalgamations that are going on at the moment and they do not want to be caught up in it. We have had one or two difficult headteachers and we are working on that. However, when you consider that we are covering 97 per cent of the private and public sector schools, and we also go into ethnic minority schools, we are achieving more than most other programmes have managed to do.

[135] You were talking about 35 schools across the whole of Wales, and the majority of those will be primary schools and not comprehensive schools. We are in every comprehensive school in Wales. What we have not been able to pick up on is some of the primary schools, and there have been some issues with amalgamations or closures, or whatever.

[136] **Ms Lott:** I think that it is ongoing work. There are very few schools that are not accessed in relation to this programme. To give due recognition to Linda and other coordinators, there has been resistance in primary schools, particularly when initially they said that it was not appropriate to give drugs education to infant school pupils, and that type of thing. However, we work with the schools, and, as I said, it is not a compulsory programme. So, you work with schools and allow them to see the benefit of it, and allow teachers from those schools to look at a lesson being delivered in another school, and build confidence in that way. It must be a proper partnership approach, and not an enforced partnership approach. As Linda said, the numbers are so low now that it is very heartening.

[137] **Huw Lewis:** I am very happy; I did not realise that the numbers were that good.

[138] **Mick Bates:** Thank you for an interesting session. I am sure that we all understand the challenges that face you. One of the concerns that I have is the pressure within the school curriculum in order to find time to fit in what is an important issue; PSE is the vehicle that is used. I thank Members for their questions. You will be sent a record of the evidence. I wish you all the best in your liaison programme in the future.

[139] **Ms Lott:** Thank you. I reiterate that—[*Inaudible.*]—get in touch me and we will

arrange it.

[140] **Mick Bates:** Thank you. You are quite welcome to stay, by the way.

[141] **Ms Lott:** I have police business. [*Laughter.*]

10.33 a.m.

**Adolygiad Polisi: Camddefnyddio Sylweddau—Atal (Cymunedau Diogelach)
Policy Review: Substance Misuse—Prevention (Safer Communities)**

[142] **Mick Bates:** We were due to take evidence now from the Powys Drug and Alcohol Centre, but, unfortunately, Sarah Metcalf is lost. As someone who lives in Powys, I know that it is a long way down to Cardiff, so I hope that she is okay. I understand that traffic is bad. Fortunately, we have Grahame Howard here from the Cardiff alcohol and drug team, who was due to appear later. If Members are willing, we will take evidence from Grahame now; welcome, Grahame.

[143] **Mr Howard:** It suits me better to do it now.

[144] **Mick Bates:** We could not have planned it better, then. I welcome you and ask you to give your presentation for about five minutes, and then we will take questions from Members.

[145] **Mr Howard:** Members have seen the paper, and will have had a chance to go through it. I welcome the opportunity to speak to you today, and I will be happy to take any questions afterwards. I have prepared some information packs, that the clerk will distribute, which bring together a range of evidence about the effectiveness of the programme that has begun to develop in Cardiff.

[146] I joined the Cardiff alcohol and drugs team about 18 months ago with the brief to undertake some development work around family support, on the basis that, historically, there has been little emphasis placed on the needs of families where drugs and alcohol are an issue. There are two sides to the role that I have taken on. One side is to look at the acute needs of families, in the here and now, and the other side is to develop a preventative programme. A particular model had already been identified, that has its roots in America, when I came into post. That model is the strengthening families programme, and that is what I have come to give evidence on today.

[147] It is important that you get the title of this programme right, because there are a couple of other things with similar-sounding titles. This programme specifically targets families with children in the age range of 10 to 14, so it is called the 'SFP 10 to 14', and that is a very particular programme.

[148] What interested us very much when we first looked at what type of model we might adopt in Cardiff was a strong evidence base of effectiveness. As it happens, the people who developed the programme happened to be in the UK giving evidence in the Midlands on some of the research that had gone on behind the programme. In America, they quote a figure somewhere in the region of \$16 million that has been spent on evaluating this programme. So, quite a big research project lies behind it, over a six-year period, with a large number of families and a full-scale, randomised, controlled trial of outcomes of families across a range of measures. Therefore, we were reasonably confident, when we looked at it, that this programme could offer really good outcomes in the UK. In fact, it offers good outcomes in Barnsley, Rotherham and other places in the north and east of England. We are one of around half a dozen sites in the UK currently running with this programme.

10.40 a.m.

[149] We very much come from the standpoint that if you believe that individuals, families and communities can embrace opportunities to make positive changes, this is the programme for us; this is the vehicle that will get us there. On the back of the American research, which is longitudinal, there is also some British research from Oxford Brookes University, which undertook a Cochrane Collaboration systematic review of programmes from around the globe that had similar aspirations. The review looked at the evaluation outcomes from all of those programmes and this one popped out right at the top as having the most promise for the UK. So, again, that inspired us and gave us more confidence.

[150] Therefore, the Alcohol Education and Research Council in London gave us a very small grant of £5,000, because it is also very keen to promote the programme in the UK. We hosted the American developers of the programme for a week last September and they trained 23 workers in Cardiff—drawn from a range of different agencies. So, for the first time in Cardiff, we have workers in the fields of substance misuse, community development, education, education welfare, youth work, family support, and parenting, working together towards a shared goal, which is the prevention of substance misuse for children in that age group. Crucially, for us, what sets this programme apart from other initiatives around prevention is the whole family approach, and on that basis, I believe that the family remains the single greatest influence on young people's lives regardless of how that family is constituted, which can be positive or negative. That is what we hang our coat on. This is about the family.

[151] There are three strands to this programme—this is the quickest and easiest way for me to describe it without going into masses of detail. The first strand is that of parenting skills, and looking at the skills that parents already have; it is very much a strength-based programme. We take those parenting skills and enhance them during the course of the programme. We also look at life skills for young people. We look at the skills that young people will need for life and we help them to develop those skills.

[152] The part that glues it all together is strengthening family bonds. There is a lot of work in this programme that encourages young people to think about life through the eyes of a parent, and parents to understand the needs that young people have and why, sometimes, those needs are met in fairly negative ways, and to help those children, perhaps, to look at meeting those needs in more positive ways.

[153] Therefore, it is a very highly-structured seven-week programme. I cannot emphasise that strongly enough. People turn up; they start at 5 p.m. and finish at 7 p.m.. For those two hours, each week of those seven weeks, it is timed to the minute. There is some learning in that, certainly for the young people, in terms of boundaries.

[154] The programme is always intended to be, and it was developed as, a universal programme. This is not necessarily a programme for families exhibiting certain characteristics or problems, in particular.

[155] **Mick Bates:** Thank you. Have you completed your presentation?

[156] **Mr Howard:** Was that enough?

[157] **Mick Bates:** Yes, that was fine.

[158] **Mr Howard:** I could go on all day; there is a lot to cover.

[159] **Mick Bates:** Yes. That was fine. Laura?

[160] **Laura Anne Jones:** It was very encouraging to hear what you said. It goes without saying that families have the main influence in a child's life. The school programme is fantastic, but there is a lot of responsibility with the parents at home. As you say, whether or not a family is a good, strong unit makes a lot of difference, and influences how the child grows up. What is the first point of contact? Do the families recognise their need and come to you, or is it an outreach programme? I am not sure as to how it works.

[161] **Mr Howard:** The honest answer to that is 'yes'. It can go either way. It is an entirely voluntary programme. What works best is if families step forward and come to the programme by picking up on some information, perhaps, through their school—which we do—through health visitors, social workers, or any type of professional informing a family. If a family picks up our literature and is interested, it can self-refer.

[162] That is great because, to us, it means that the family is motivated and so it will probably stick with it. I do not know whether you are familiar with other parenting programmes, but they tend to have huge problems recruiting and retaining parents. We are retaining 70 to 80 per cent of those who start in the programme, and I believe that that is because it is a whole-family approach. We are not working with the parents in isolation of the children, and we are not working with the children in isolation of the parents.

[163] We have removed some of the barriers, such as the physical ones, but removing the attitudinal barriers takes longer. We have also removed some of the practical barriers to families attending, such as providing childcare for younger children on-site. So, if a family comes with a couple of 10 to 14-year-olds, and some six or seven-year-olds, that is fine. We will also provide help with transport costs, even if we are running a programme in a local school, and we always put on some food, because we are asking these families to attend. They are often under huge pressure to come to us from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m., so we need to put on some food. Those three things are absolutely fundamental.

[164] **Leanne Wood:** Is it taking place every night?

[165] **Mr Howard:** It is once a week, for seven weeks.

[166] **Mick Bates:** Thanks. Laura, are you happy with that?

[167] **Laura Anne Jones:** Yes, but I also have a brief question.

[168] **Mick Bates:** Please make it brief, because time is short.

[169] **Laura Anne Jones:** Okay, sorry. I have completely forgotten what I wanted to ask now. I am sorry, it has gone.

[170] **Lorraine Barrett:** I have a straightforward question. What happens after the seven weeks? Some of the areas in my constituency are covered here, and I can imagine that a lot of families will need continued support, particularly when this programme has brought out other things in their lives that the family was not aware of. Do you feel that the mechanisms are there?

[171] **Mr Howard:** That really is the strength of doing things in partnership and in a multi-agency way. If, at the end of a programme, a family has identified a need, which came up through the programme, then one of the agencies that we are working in partnership with more often than not can pick that up and do some ongoing work with them. Sometimes that involves looking at helping the family to implement some of the strategies and what they

learnt from the programme, because it is one thing to have knowledge, but it is another thing to use it. Some families, particularly if they are under a lot of pressure, need that extra bit of support in the short term. We can provide that through one of the agencies that we are working with, which are listed in the paper that I have submitted.

[172] Another thing that I should mention is that we will be offering another four structured booster sessions during the six to 12 months following the course, which is part of the programme and the research. So, there should not be a sense that we have dropped them after seven weeks, because we have set out to avoid that from the outset.

[173] **Lorraine Barrett:** Thank you.

[174] **Mick Bates:** Mark, I think that you are next.

[175] **Mark Isherwood:** I love to see programmes such as this that focus on the generational aspects, the family aspects and the societal changes that have led to this situation over a number of decades. I also commend the fact that you are identifying good practice and building on it, rather than trying to reinvent the wheel, which is always a positive start.

[176] In terms of outcomes—and we had this discussion with a previous group—you are straight in there; you have a system in place to monitor what many other agencies would state as being too general or non-quantifiable issues. Will you tell us a little bit more about how you are doing that, particularly the very interesting use of the control group? Will you also say a little more on the numbers that you are able to accommodate and the number of people that you are reaching in this project? What resources would be required to roll this out elsewhere, or are there other similar schemes operating elsewhere already?

[177] **Mr Howard:** That was about five questions, Mark, I think.

[178] **Mick Bates:** You can perhaps focus on three, namely outcomes, numbers and the cost of roll-out.

[179] **Mr Howard:** In terms of outcomes, there are a number of measures that are used. To go back to your comment on the soft outcomes, which is how you can describe them, we are often in a position these days where we are required to provide hard statistical information around crime prevention. We can do that, but it presents us with a challenge in terms of the way in which we measure the outcomes for these families, because they do not initially look like that when we take the evaluation away from the programmes and look at it. In the packs that I gave to Claire, you will find a collation of statistics from three seven-week programmes run in Cardiff, which measure things such as parental attitudes and childhood behaviour across a range of issues. Have a look at them for yourself. They speak volumes; they are self-reporting at the end of a programme, but they are a before-and-after snapshot.

10.50 a.m.

[180] On the control group, we were talking about a full-scale piece of research—a full-scale randomised controlled trial. We are currently contributing to some work at Oxford Brookes University; we have submitted questionnaires filled in by families. The control group is elsewhere in the UK and we should have the report providing further evidence of the effectiveness of the programme in December.

[181] The American trial was huge: it included around 500 families in a similar-sized control group over a six-year period. The graphs, which I have submitted and which you can keep, caught our eye as they show quite clearly the longitudinal impact of that programme—the gap widens as time goes on for the families who have been through the programme.

[182] I was pleased to hear our colleagues in the police presenting today. There are some comparisons with the standard schools-based life skills training that all children get in the US, as well as the strengthening families programme. There is a stark difference between the two groups in terms of alcohol use.

[183] **Mick Bates:** What about the costs?

[184] **Mr Howard:** That is not an easy question to answer. All I can tell you is how much it has cost us to begin to look at this programme. I can tell you what it costs to put a family through this programme, which is when people might become interested. There are good ways to keep the cost down, namely through partnership working.

[185] We have to invest in programme materials from the outset. So, you need manuals, videos, posters and a few other things. To ship those from the US initially costs around £500. We then brought the trainers across and hosted them for a week. We had a venue and provided a great deal of administrative support to get it all sorted. We spent £5,000 of the Alcohol Education Research Council's money on that. So, for £5,000, we have the programme. We have 23 workers trained and delivering this programme for £5,000.

[186] We work with 10 to 12 families at a time, so they are large groups. Sometimes they are sibling groups, but, more often than not, they are single children—many single parents tend to join the programme, but not always. Every programme is different. I would say that it costs around £100 per family for a seven-week programme. That is an estimate—an average of what it has cost us up until now. That average is only £100 per family because the workers' time is all given by their agencies.

[187] So, when I put a team together to deliver a programme, we are talking about six workers, who all come from different agencies. Their managers give them the equivalent of a day a week, for seven weeks, to come and run the programme with us because they also bring families to the programme. They also support the ethos; they look at the outcomes of the programme and it is helpful to them in their work. So, we are talking about organisations such as Barnardo's and NCH, the children's charity, and our own children services. They all want to see good outcomes for families and substance misuse prevented in that age group, so they are more than willing to put in a day's work a week from time to time.

[188] We use venues that are reasonably priced or free. We currently use school premises and are drawing in funding from community-focused school co-ordinators. So, it is not necessarily about leveraging in lots of money, but about looking at what is already there. I am fortunate to live and work in Cardiff in that things are close, and that is an advantage to us in terms of networking. So, that is where we have reached.

[189] On rolling it out, if you are looking to roll it out in Wales, the Americans are coming back in March. We will train another 30 workers and will put through six workers to become trainers, so we will have the capacity to re-train ourselves. We have committed to our partners in Cardiff that that will always be free—we will never charge for this training in Cardiff because we will do it ourselves rather than buy it in. On a Wales-wide level, there is no reason why that cannot be replicated. We would be more than prepared to discuss how we might be able to resource and spread that.

[190] **Leanne Wood:** I am impressed with your evaluation. When you can show that, over time, attitudes have changed and, specifically, that there are statistically significant delays in the initiation of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use, that is a concrete achievement. So, I think that that is very good. However, who comes to the programme? Is it parents who think that their kids have a problem with drugs, or is it parents who have a problem with drugs? The

latter group would obviously require a different approach. From your papers, it looks like it is parents who think that their children have problems with drugs and that it is the parents who would do the referring. Would you say that you offer a post-prevention service, because there is a problem there that they are coming along to solve?

[191] **Mr Howard:** No, you have to draw a line. This is a preventative programme. Having said that, if a young person is experimenting—as many young people do—then it is absolutely appropriate for them to be on this programme. If a young person has developed a problematic drug or alcohol habit, then it is not the right place for them as they need something individual to look at making that change—potentially with a view to coming to the programme later in terms of maintenance. We have had people from all sorts of backgrounds coming to this programme and we do not discriminate on that basis. We do not set up a programme for all the families who have concerns about their children using drugs, or parents with a history of that, or a separate programme for all the parents who self-refer through schools because they think that it is a good idea; we do not do it in that way. What we say to people—and I will quote from our leaflet—is:

‘Help your youngster prepare for their teen years, avoid problems with drugs and alcohol and strengthen family communication’.

[192] We do not call this ‘drug-proof your kids’; we are not setting ourselves up in that way. There is a programme called Drug-proof Your Kids, which I think is horrendous, as no-one can promise to do that. Our message is about strengthening families. That is a huge protective factor in terms of outcomes for children.

[193] **Leanne Wood:** Coming back to the aim of the programme, would you say that you are more focused on harm reduction than abstinence? Where are you on that?

[194] **Mr Howard:** No, it is focused entirely on prevention.

[195] **Leanne Wood:** Is that with a view to total abstinence? You tell young people that they should take no alcohol, drugs, tobacco and that they are bad; is that how you do it?

[196] **Mr Howard:** Our starting point is to ask them what are their hopes, dreams and goals in life. We then talk to them in rounded terms about how they might get there and what might get in the way. We introduce the notions that drugs, alcohol, smoking, truancy and so on will get in the way of achieving those goals. The message is that drugs, alcohol and smoking are bad for you, because they are. Another side of my work involves working in a harm-reduction model. Our message is not about total abstinence; we realise that, for many people, it is not a possibility. We are attempting to prevent young people from misusing drugs and alcohol.

[197] **Christine Gwyther:** I wanted to test your reaction, Grahame. Earlier on, Mark seemed to imply that dysfunctional families are a totally modern phenomenon. I think that that is complete rubbish. When we were growing up, if families were dysfunctional, then they were just left to be dysfunctional; it was swept under the carpet. What is a modern phenomenon is that families and society are prepared to tackle issues such as that and help people to get through them. The media is helping on that score with all of these reality programmes in which Supernanny, or whoever, comes into the home. That is healthy and positive. What do you feel about that? Is it a new phenomenon or is it the fact that we are prepared to do something about it? What really counts?

[198] **Mr Howard:** So, the question is: is familial dysfunction a new phenomenon? No, I do not think so, but there is a growing openness to do something about it. In America, this programme is run by, through and with communities; this is a piece of community development work. That is my background. I do not come from a substance-misuse

background. I bring community development approaches to my work. That is where we would like to see it go. We would like to see parents trained in delivering the programme and running it in their own communities; that would be great. That is what this is about. We do not yet have that openness in the UK, which is why the families who currently come to us tend to come through services. In the UK, you have to have a reasonably significant problem to get any sort of help. On that basis, sometimes families find their way to us. We are beginning to reach out through schools, which has been successful

11.00 a.m.

[199] However, it is small—only a small amount of families come forward in that way, because there is still a stigma about being perceived to be weak, is there not? To ask for help is seen as a weakness in this country, whereas it is the opposite, in many respects, in America.

[200] **Christine Gwyther:** Are the media helping to overcome that barrier, so that it is not seen as a weakness?

[201] **Mr Howard:** Yes, that is probably helpful; the media are unhelpful in many other ways, but on that note, they probably are helpful. It is becoming normalised, which is helpful.

[202] **Mark Isherwood:** On societal changes over recent decades, I am not saying that there were not societal changes and problems prior to that, but the key issue is that you are focusing on today's problems as opposed to the problems that existed in previous generations.

[203] **Laura Anne Jones:** What you have told us today seems to be one of the best forms of prevention possible. You are stimulating debate and conversation within families, which is necessary, and does not always happen—it did not happen in mine; there were things that were not talked about. It is so important to stimulate that debate, so thank you for that.

[204] Could you just clarify for me when this programme started? Is it the only pilot project in Britain, or are there projects in other areas, and do you have feedback from that?

[205] **Mr Howard:** On your first question, do you mean when did it start in Cardiff?

[206] **Laura Anne Jones:** Yes.

[207] **Mr Howard:** We had our training last September, so it was about a year ago. We are about to start our fourth programme in Cardiff.

[208] **Laura Anne Jones:** Are there other areas in Britain, or is this the only one?

[209] **Mr Howard:** Not in Wales; we are the only project running this programme in Wales. I would point you towards Barnsley. It has been running the longest there, for about three and a half years, and we liaise a lot with colleagues in Barnsley around that.

[210] **Laura Anne Jones:** Are you learning from their feedback and bringing best practice?

[211] **Mr Howard:** Yes, absolutely.

[212] **Laura Anne Jones:** That is reassuring.

[213] **Mr Howard:** That was my first business trip in my new role—Barnsley in the winter; it was great. They had been to Iowa for their training, but I had to go to Barnsley and have a chat.

[214] **Laura Anne Jones:** So, it is working in Barnsley, then?

[215] **Mr Howard:** Yes.

[216] **Mick Bates:** I believe that Rotherham was also mentioned.

[217] **Mr Howard:** Yes, Rotherham is equally as exotic.

[218] **Mick Bates:** It certainly is.

[219] **Mr Howard:** Did I answer both your questions?

[220] **Laura Anne Jones:** Yes.

[221] **Mick Bates:** Yes, that is fairly complete. Thank you, Grahame, for your evidence. I am pleased to see that Sarah Metcalf has arrived safely. We will take a break now for 15 minutes, so please be back at 11.15 a.m.. Coffee is served in committee room 1, because there is an event in the Cwrt today.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 11.02 a.m. a 11.22 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 11.02 a.m. and 11.22 a.m.*

**Adolygiad Polisi: Camddefnyddio Sylweddau—Atal (Cymunedau Diogelach:
Parhad)**

Policy Review: Substance Misuse—Prevention (Safer Communities: Continued)

[222] **Mick Bates:** Welcome back. We return to section 3 now, 'Safer Communities'. The Flintshire Youth and Community Service, as you can see, has a video link. Oh, it has now disappeared, which is interesting.

[223] I understand that we have hung up and cancelled the video link altogether. I suggest that you look through the evidence that was submitted and, should you have any questions, please forward them to the clerk, and they will then be e-mailed to the Flintshire Youth and Community Service. I am sorry about that; we will need to address that problem. However, I understand that it was not to do with our technical ability, but something at the other end. Are there any points that Members wish to raise?

[224] **Lorraine Barrett:** I accept that the problem may not be at our end, but it is disappointing that we have all this technology and yet it has failed. I am not blaming anyone, but it is a shame.

[225] **Mick Bates:** Testing does take place. It is just unfortunate that there was a problem with the sound at their end. As someone who likes the technical stuff, I have arranged many links with Brussels, for example, and, generally, I have to say that they are okay. It is unfortunate that this has happened.

[226] **Leanne Wood:** Will we be taking evidence from any other organisations that look specifically at peer education? Flintshire does that and I was hoping to get some more information about that method.

[227] **Mick Bates:** I take your point, but we will go back to session 2 and take the Powys drug and alcohol team now.

[228] **Leanne Wood:** That is fine. I was just wondering whether we will talk to any other

organisations in the future, or whether we can speak to the Flintshire service again, to look specifically at peer-led schemes.

[229] **Mick Bates:** This is the final evidence-collecting session. That is why I am offering you an opportunity to submit questions to the clerk.

[230] **Leanne Wood:** Okay.

[231] **Mick Bates:** The Plenary debate is set for January, in our first week back. So, the report has to be compiled after this session.

11.24 a.m.

**Adolygiad Polisi: Camddefnyddio Sylweddau—Atal (Ymarferwyr)
Policy Review: Substance Misuse—Prevention (Practitioners)**

[232] **Mick Bates:** To go back to the agenda and session 2, in which we will talk to a practitioner. I welcome Sarah Metcalf from the Powys Drug Alcohol Centre; I think that you had traffic problems getting here. We are pleased that you have arrived safely, and I invite you to make your five-minute presentation, after which Members will ask questions.

[233] **Ms Metcalf:** Powys Drug Alcohol Centre has really changed over the last 18 months, so much of this is quite new. We have not actually got any statistics up and running at the moment, because the last 18 months have been quite busy, and we have been trying to get everything started.

[234] We work in prevention in line with the substance misuse action team, which sets the agenda and monitors activities against its action plan on a quarterly basis. The prevention sub-group on which I sit comprises partners from our agency, health, education and youth services. Within that group, our aim is to help children, young people and adults to resist substance misuse in order to achieve their full potential through a series of different actions.

[235] The first big thing of the past six months is that we have purchased a new mobile unit, which is a big van, and that is available to all the partners and was launched at the Royal Welsh Show this summer. I used it for a week. It was also used at the young people's village at the Royal Welsh Show ground, and it is used to provide information, advice, and some harm reduction interventions. So, at the young people's village, we were giving out condoms, bottles of water, cups of tea, sympathy and all that kind of stuff. However, it is also being used by the youth offending team and me in and around towns to promote what we do, and get parents involved in what is going on in the local area.

[236] We have also just started a huge training programme on substance misuse, which is offered free of charge to other agencies—social services seem to be taking it up quite a lot. It is designed to help people to identify any substance misuse and to learn how to act accordingly in relation to any substance misuse that is taking place. It is also useful in that, when we first go into post, we do the full training through the induction programme, and we go to help out on some of these courses as well, to give our perspective as workers of what we deal with every day. We have our own brochures, posters, leaflets and so on, which we give out at youth clubs and schools, and I do that quite often. The school work is done mainly through partnership with the police and the health board. We are actually starting that now, and we hope to have it up and running by the end of the month. That is to deliver a one-day session on substance misuse for year 9 pupils in every school in Powys. We will take the mobile unit out and reach as many young people as possible with some sort of drug education. A lot of schools do not want the professionals to come in to give a talk on substance misuse;

they think that they can do it themselves. We find partnership working really good, because we are now all singing from the same hymn sheet, working with the LEA and the police. Before, we were going in individually, and it was quite difficult because they know that I am a substance misuse worker who works with young people who have drug and alcohol problems, so they know what I do when I explain my job and the role of the agency. You see teachers cringing and thinking, 'Oh my goodness; maybe we should not have them in school', but we know more about drug and alcohol abuse than teachers do. So, hopefully, that partnership working will be really good.

11.30 a.m.

[237] We have also worked with Dyfed-Powys Police on the school substance misuse survey and the report will, hopefully, be available in December. The figures for 2004 highlighted that the substances most used by young people in Powys were alcohol and cannabis.

[238] On diversionary activities, we do quite a lot with clients. We are quite involved, at present, with promoting diversionary activities, allowing the clients the opportunity to spend more time productively and to gain employment. Many of the young people whom I work with do not have many prospects—they do not know what they want to do—so we give them tasters of different things and we link in with other agencies to try to get them to think about what they want to do with their future. It has worked really well because quite a lot of them are thinking about what they want to do and now have a goal to work towards.

[239] On the drug interventions programme, we are currently contract holders for delivering the drug intervention programme in Powys as well as the arrest referral scheme, providing prevention work. The programme is designed to reduce re-offending, and I work quite closely with that.

[240] On barriers to our delivery in a rural area, we have quite a lot of trouble with poor transport links, social isolation and access to health and leisure services. It is reported by young people that a lack of confidentiality, feelings of disempowerment, and problems with access to transport, amenities and information prevent people from making use of the limited facilities available. These problems are particularly severe in rural areas and are compounded by low income. As Powys is one of the lowest income areas in the UK, issues are compounded even further. So, in many of the areas that I work in, there is only a youth club available for a lot of the young people in the evenings. It is quite easy to see why they are out of an evening, hanging around the streets, causing trouble and so on. Having been a young person in Powys, quite a few years ago, I know that there was nothing to do. There was not even a youth club in our area then. There is nothing for them to do and, therefore, it is quite understandable that they go and cause trouble sometimes.

[241] **Mick Bates:** Thank you, Sarah. Is that it?

[242] **Ms Metcalf:** Yes.

[243] **Mick Bates:** Thank you. I know that you have only been in post for a couple of months. There are lots of issues there.

[244] **Christine Gwyther:** Quite a few issues came up there, Sarah, so thank you. What you were saying about there being nothing to do in a rural community hit home. I spent a lot of my childhood in Dyfed-Powys, sitting on a wall and talking. That is what we used to do. Nowadays, some people would see a group of young people sitting around on a wall as threatening behaviour.

[245] **Leanne Wood:** Or anti-social behaviour.

[246] **Christine Gwyther:** Yes, I would have been ASBOed before I could turn around.

[247] How are young people coping with trying to get into the modern world, in a rural setting where, sometimes, quite traditional values are imposed and weigh on them? Are you are discussing those sorts of issues when you go into schools?

[248] I was interested in what you reported to us about there being a lack of a welcome from some teachers. One of the presenters earlier today was saying that teachers understand that they cannot be experts in everything. We have a few former teachers—not me, I hasten to add—on this committee. It was said that teachers cannot be experts on everything, and that when they have outside influences coming into the classroom, it brings the whole classroom situation to life. Can you expand a bit on how you overcome the issue that some rural areas are stuck in a time warp and how you cope with schools that you feel do not want you there?

[249] **Ms Metcalf:** There are quite often no resources. I have been working quite closely with Llandrindod youth club over the last few months, trying to survey what the young people want and what would be useful to them. I have learned that there are no public toilets in Llandrindod that can be used after a certain time in the evening, the youth club is only open two nights a week and the sports hall does not want them because it does not want hundreds of people hanging around and it is not big enough to hold everyone. It is difficult for young people to go anywhere. They hang around in a grassy area in the middle of town and the police move them on, but they have nowhere else to go. So, it is difficult to find somewhere for them to be. They have to travel to get to the nearest cinema—I am not sure how—by persuading parents to take them or whatever. The youth club now runs a bus to take them to the cinema, which is seven or eight miles away. There are no shopping facilities or anything in the area that I cover in Radnorshire and it is really quite difficult to find anywhere for young people to go.

[250] We send a letter to schools, asking if they would like us to come in and deliver the programme, and quite often we do not hear anything back. At the moment, we are trying to go through the PSE co-ordinator in the school, to see if that works better than going through the headteacher. Certain schools are a lot happier than others about having us in. I run a drop-in session, once a week, at Llandrindod High School. The school has an oasis room where Powys Young Carers meets one day and Walkways Powys goes in another day—all the Powys organisations go in on one day a week. I go in and the pupils quite enjoy it. Quite often, I am not asked about any drug or alcohol issues—in fact, one day I was asked what salmonella was—I am just a friendly face that they can come and chat to. Llandrindod school is very good, but there are other schools that do not want to know. We have referrals from schools sometimes and certain schools that do not want us to go in do not refer any pupils that they are concerned about either. It is really quite difficult.

[251] **Christine Gwyther:** May I ask, finally, whether you think that working in partnership with the police helps to get over that barrier and to get the schools to accept you?

[252] **Ms Metcalf:** Yes, because the school liaison officers are going in and delivering a programme anyway, so we kind of tag along. That gets us in and gets us recognised and they are then quite happy to let us in. A lot of my work with schools involves a drugs box that we have. The pupils can open it, look at the things and actually touch what is in it, whereas when I was in school, the police came in, the stuff was put there and you could have a quick look, but that was it. It is a lot more hands on with us and a lot more about the risks and what you need to do to be safe if you are going to take that risk, because sometimes young people experiment. That is the nature of young people to a certain extent, especially in relation to alcohol. I go through same safety information with them about making sure that they know

how they are getting home and telling them to think about who they are out with, and that if they are going to have a drink, they need to think about whether their friends are responsible and what they would do if one of their friends was drunk. We try to promote safety as well because young people drink, and, at the end of the day, if they are safe, that is one less problem for them to worry about.

11.40 a.m.

[253] **Mick Bates:** Before I move on to Mark, you said that there was resistance from schools about letting you go in. What type of schools are they? Are they primary, infant or secondary schools?

[254] **Ms Metcalf:** They are secondary schools—that is what we are concentrating on at the moment, because the area is so big, and there is only me and two other youth workers to cover Powys at the moment. Hopefully, there will be more. I have five or six secondary schools in my patch, and about 15 primary schools. We are not focusing on primary schools because it is hard enough trying to focus on the secondary schools, as well as to do my client work and everything else that I have to do.

[255] **Mark Isherwood:** To pick up on a few themes from earlier, the prevention sub-group comprises partners from drug and alcohol centres, health education and youth services. What is the role of the voluntary sector, if any?

[256] **Ms Metcalf:** We are voluntary sector.

[257] **Mark Isherwood:** Good, thanks. Do you work with other agencies that work in this field in the county? What role, if any, in terms of peer education, would there be for ex-addicts—although addicts say that they never stop being addicts; they never say that they are ex-addicts, but addicts who just live with it day by day—or ex-offenders, people who, alongside the other agencies, the most vulnerable members of your target groups can relate to? Also, to ask a question that I asked to previous contributors, how are you monitoring outcomes?

[258] **Ms Metcalf:** In terms of ex-users, our training manager was a user quite a few years ago. After rehab, he trained to be a counsellor and he has worked his way up to become our training manager. So, quite often, I take him along to a school. He can say at first hand, 'This is the trouble I was in, this is the struggle that I have had to overcome everything'. We have other workers who are also ex-users. They are quite open about what happened, and we take them around with us sometimes to help us to get the message across. The great thing about our programme is that he delivers the training, and he has social services, youth workers and all different types of organisations coming in and he can sit there and say, 'This is me', and he does that. You will hear his life story for the first hour; he is so knowledgeable because he has been there, which make a huge difference. He gives out his phone number and says, 'If you have a concern, give me a ring', which I think that they all like.

[259] I do not know about the outcomes. At the moment, we are still sifting through the outcomes from the Royal Welsh Show. We are looking at how many people we see on a daily basis, and the quantity of resources that we were giving out was another way that we were going to find out some outcomes. Apart from that, I really do not know.

[260] **Leanne Wood:** If you do not know what your outcomes are, how can you know that what you are doing is working or is effective? You can measure the numbers of people coming through doors but that does not mean that what you are saying to them is having any impact, unless you have some way of measuring changes in attitudes or behaviour over a period of time. Are you collating any of that information?

[261] **Ms Metcalf:** I know that we are doing that; I just do not know how we are doing it. We have a man who does that. I do not know how it is done, because I have only been in post for a few months and it is all really quite new to me.

[262] **Leanne Wood:** Okay. I will not ask—

[263] **Mick Bates:** I think that that point was a little unfair, given that you have not been there very long. Perhaps you could send that information to the committee when you have talked to your colleagues.

[264] **Ms Metcalf:** Yes, I will.

[265] **Leanne Wood:** I have another question. How could we get young people to drink less? What kinds of key messages need to be given to them?

[266] **Mick Bates:** It is such a big problem.

[267] **Ms Metcalf:** Yes, it is, because 80 per cent of my client work is on alcohol-related cases. At present, a lot of youth club representatives in my area are phoning up and saying, 'Forget about the drug education for now; will you come to do some alcohol work about binge drinking and so on?'. I do not think that there is an easy answer. It seems to be society. You go out on a Friday and a Saturday night and it is deemed as normal to drink as much alcohol as you can. Young people are just picking up on this. There are programmes on the television about—

[268] **Leanne Wood:** Do you think that price is an issue?

[269] **Ms Metcalf:** Yes. There are cheap offers in pubs, bars and supermarkets. A lot of the young people will get it from the supermarket or the off-licence store.

[270] **Leanne Wood:** You do not see any barriers being put in the way of them being able to purchase alcohol themselves?

[271] **Ms Metcalf:** They will go to get older friends. It really is quite difficult.

[272] **Lorraine Barrett:** During the break, we spoke to Sarah, and discovered that the project has only been going out for 18 months. I think that outcomes need to be measured over a longer period of time.

[273] I was going to ask about the percentage of alcohol to drugs and you have just answered it; it is quite interesting.

[274] **Ms Metcalf:** It is also pretty similar in the adult work that the adult workers undertake.

[275] **Lorraine Barrett:** Yes, and is it mainly young people that you deal with?

[276] **Ms Metcalf:** I am a youth worker, so I work with people up to 25 years old.

[277] **Lorraine Barrett:** Linked to the point that Leanne just raised about the amount that young people drink and how we stop them, I do not think that any of us have the answer. I live in quite a big town nearby and, at 11 p.m. on a Friday night, it is obvious that the 30 or 40 youngsters who are going past my house, absolutely legless, have been drinking in someone's home somewhere; they have bags with cans in them and they are off somewhere else. It is

clear that they have not been to a club or a pub, because of the direction that they are coming from. It is another issue but similar, maybe, to the issues that you have in places like Llandrindod Wells.

[278] I want to ask about the farming community, particularly. Mick and I talked about this earlier. I know that you are the youth worker, but, within the project, is there an alcohol or drugs issue within the older farming community, although you may only be able to talk about the younger farming community? Is there any difference between those who are from the farming community and the town community?

[279] **Ms Metcalf:** We do not seem to get any farmers coming through the project's doors. I think that that is the case throughout Powys—there are very few farmers. If you read, in the local newspaper, about court cases for drink-driving or whatever, you will see that a high percentage of those being stopped for such offences are from the farming community. That is something that we do not seem able to get into—the doors seem to close. Young farmers are not interested. The only reason why we were at the young people's village this year was that it was part of the licence that we had to be there.

11.50 a.m.

[280] **Laura Anne Jones:** The problem with rural areas compared with city areas, which you have touched on already, is the lack of facilities and lack of public transport. There really is nothing to do in those areas. As a farmer's daughter, I grew up in a rural area, so I understand where you are coming from on that, because I have seen it at first hand. That is what the difference is. All the other problems are the same in both areas.

[281] **Mick Bates:** Sorry, Lorraine. Did you—

[282] **Lorraine Barrett:** Yes. I was asking that question to be helpful; I was not being critical of farmers. I was trying to recognise, maybe, the different needs, possibly, of the farming community, and whether farmers are opening up and seeking help, if help is needed. But, it is obvious, from what you have said, that there is a bit more work that needs to be done in those communities.

[283] **Mick Bates:** I think that we have covered that point pretty well, and there are many challenges within that whole area. Mark, do you wish to come back?

[284] **Mark Isherwood:** Do you do any cross-generational work, on which certain voluntary organisations put a lot of emphasis? That not only targets the groups that we are talking about, but also the older people in their own communities, who often feel most uncomfortable about the young people's behaviour, given the problems that we have been discussing. This work brings the two groups together, in order to overcome the barriers and misunderstandings and to get them to work together for the common good.

[285] **Ms Metcalf:** Hopefully, with the diversionary activities, we will start doing projects with Powys County Council. It is all a bit new at the moment, and we have not had the okay, but hopefully we can start to get some of my clients and young people from the local high school and the local youth club to start looking after the local area around the lake and the park, in order to make it look a little nicer. It is a nice place to live in certain aspects, so we need to get them to appreciate where they live, because I do not think that they realise what they have a lot of the time, even if they do not have many facilities. It will also be a way in which they can interact with other organisations and older people, which is something that they probably do not do at the moment.

[286] **Mick Bates:** Thank you, Sarah. You have given us an interesting perspective from a

younger person's view, and very often we miss that type of evidence. A copy of the transcript will be sent to you to look at. You are quite welcome to stay here while we move on to our next group to give evidence, which is the HYPE project from Merthyr Tydfil.

11.53 a.m.

**Adolygiad Polisi: Camddefnyddio Sylweddau—Atal (Prosiect HYPE)
Policy Review: Substance Misuse—Prevention (HYPE Project)**

[287] **Mick Bates:** I welcome PC Barry Cradle and PC Debbie Davies. Thank you for the notes that you provided us with. The floor is now yours for your five-minute presentation.

[288] **Mr Cradle:** Before I start, I would just like to say that, when we agreed to come down here, we were not entirely sure what was happening. So, next time, I will certainly step back a lot quicker when they are looking for volunteers to come down.

[289] **Mick Bates:** What were you told, as a matter of interest?

[290] **Mr Cradle:** We were told that it would be a five-minute chat with a couple of people who were interested in HYPE.

[291] **Mick Bates:** Take your time.

[292] **Mr Cradle:** HYPE in Merthyr Tydfil stands for helping young people through peer-led education. It has been running since 1999 and the idea came from Thames Valley Police, where a guy set up an initiative to look at ways of engaging young people in relation to substance misuse. It is quite clear from all the research surrounding peer-led education that young people are more likely to speak to people of the same age, or who are slightly older than them, in school, than to approach someone such as me, as a schools' liaison officer, or a teacher. So, that is why the project was put in place. Each year, in Merthyr, we take six year 12 pupils from each of the four secondary schools and six first-year students from the local college to two residential training weekends and give them information in relation to drugs and other topics, which I will come on to later. They then go back into their schools and do two sessions with the year 8 pupils. The first session is a role play to stimulate discussion and the second session provides information on drugs and useful contacts and so on for anyone who has issues in relation to anything that has been discussed.

[293] The college is slightly different, because the age-group with which they would come into contact is older. So, they run those sessions slightly differently. They have an office in the student union to which people can go at certain times and ask for any advice or help that they need, but they were keen to come on board with us and this is the third year that they have been with us. It seems to be working; they seem to get something from it. As long as that is the case, we will not bar them from coming along just because it does not fit in with the peer education side of things.

[294] The overall aim of the project is to reduce the number of substance misuse incidents involving juveniles in the Merthyr Tydfil borough. We think that we are getting somewhere with that, because over the last two years, there has been an 8.5 per cent drop in substance misuse. To be totally honest, that is very difficult to measure, because the number of offences involving drugs and alcohol, in relation to being arrested for those offences, has dropped by 8.5 per cent, but we have no current way of recording whether a juvenile breaking into a car is under the influence of alcohol or any other substances. So, we need to consider how we can record that figure.

[295] The weekend is quite full. As I said, we give them a team-building exercise; it can be quite daunting for them at times to go into year 8 and act as peer educators, so we give them team-building exercises to give them the confidence to do that. We also give them drugs information. There is input on sexual health from the local health board through the community gynaecologist, Sharon Vine, because of the problems associated with young people getting drunk and becoming sexually active. Often, the peer educators may be approached by someone who does not have an issue with drugs or alcohol, but will say, 'My friend went with so and so in a party on Saturday night, what should they do?'. So, we feel that we have to give them sexual health input to equip them for this, because we do not want them going in and not being able to answer the majority of questions that we think they will get.

[296] We also give them input on presentation skills and lesson planning. Spectacle Theatre has been on board for the first time this year in relation to the role play, because we feel that, if they are going to be doing role play, they should be prepared for it and not go in and do some wishy-washy presentation that does not engage the pupils. Up until two years ago, the input in the session was cannabis-related, where a juvenile had got involved in cannabis use and it then showed that person's downward spiral. However, we reflected on that and, given that the problem with alcohol, as was discussed earlier, is massive, particularly in Merthyr Tydfil, we have now changed the content and alcohol is now the main focus. We look at the spiral that someone could get involved in, even if it is quite a minor role play in terms of missing school lessons, which has an impact on their lives, or committing crime and the impact that that can have on their lives. We are trying to get a message across that alcohol is a problem and that illegal drugs are not the only issue.

[297] We have changed the session quite a lot over the past few years. Drugaid is now on board and its representatives come along and provide input on drugs, whereas, previously, last year's peer tutors would return to provide input on drugs for this year's cohort. We have now changed that, because, as I said earlier, we want to give them the best possible information and ensure that they are totally prepared for anything that could come up in the classroom.

12.00 p.m.

[298] They have the teachers as a point of contact, because the PSE co-ordinators from the high schools come along with us on the residential weekends. So, they are there as their first point of contact within the school. If they cannot help, they have our numbers if they want to give us a ring. The Drugaid workers have also given their numbers. So, if we cannot answer, there will always be someone among us who will be able to give them an answer of some sort.

[299] We do contact monitoring, whereby if any of the peer tutors are contacted in school with a query, they make a note of it. It is all anonymous, but they make a note of the type of query that they have received. It helps us to see whether there is a trend or a pattern and we can gear our training for the next year to cover that. It will also make us aware of anything that may be ongoing. The contact monitoring forms are then sent to us. The schools make a note of how many pupils have engaged with the programme. It is usually somewhere between 600 and 750 pupils per year. At the moment, every year group in year 8 and above in the secondary schools in Merthyr Tydfil has been engaged. So, HYPE is now established and seems to be working well.

[300] As I said, the aim is to reduce drug use, but the young people involved get a massive amount out of it with regard to building their self-confidence and so on. This year, for the first year, we have applied for National Open College Network accreditation so that they get something to take away from it rather than just being able to put on their curriculum vitae for university or whatever that they did a police course. As I said, this is the first year that we

have done that, so it is at level 1. However, we are looking to develop that to level 2 and possibly further over the next few years. That is about it for HYPE.

[301] **Mick Bates:** Thank you very much for that presentation. We now go over to Members for questions.

[302] **Leanne Wood:** You mentioned that there has been an 8.5 per cent drop in substance-misuse incidents involving juveniles in the area that you cover. Do you have a clear definition of a substance-misuse incident?

[303] **Mr Cradle:** As I said earlier, that involves people who have been arrested for drugs offences, such as possession or supplying, or any public order offences, which include being drunk and disorderly, and drunk and incapable. It is offences of that kind.

[304] **Leanne Wood:** So, there has been an 8.5 per cent drop in offences of that kind in the last two years?

[305] **Mr Cradle:** Yes.

[306] **Leanne Wood:** What about since 1999, since you started the programme?

[307] **Mr Cradle:** I do not know how big a reduction there has been since the start of the programme.

[308] **Leanne Wood:** You said that there was no way of collating the information if a young person is arrested, for example, for a car theft; you have no way of knowing whether substance misuse is an issue in that instance. Are young people not tested on arrest?

[309] **Mr Cradle:** When they come into custody, we would be aware of whether they were under the influence of any substance, because, for their welfare and safety, we have to be. However, it is not recorded. That is not one of the boxes that they consider when our statistics are looked at; the box noting their state of arrival is not looked at.

[310] **Leanne Wood:** Do F11 panels still meet and would that information be available to F11 panels?

[311] **Mr Cradle:** I do not know. That might be a way of collating the information, but I am not entirely sure.

[312] **Leanne Wood:** I am pressing you on this, because I think that you need to prove your effectiveness.

[313] **Mr Cradle:** I totally agree with you. This is only the second year that we have been involved in this. We feel that the changes that we have made were necessary. Evaluation is the next step that we will look at. We are working with Drugaid and the local schools to see how we can evaluate the programme more holistically.

[314] **Leanne Wood:** Okay. On a different point, you said that alcohol is now your main focus, which is good. You talked about the spiral that people can get into. Is your message to the young people through the peer educators a message of abstinence or is it a safe-use message?

[315] **Mr Cradle:** Our research has told us that, with regard to anything in which the police are involved that preaches abstinence, those aged 16 or 17 with whom we are involved will do the complete opposite. So, we are going with the message of safe use. It is a little bit different

with year 8. Through our peer tutors, we try to look at something in between the two. We cannot say, 'Do not do it', because as soon as we say that, they will do it. We are just putting things in place if they decide to do it, and we are there.

[316] **Leanne Wood:** You do not have any evidence to back this up, but what do you believe are the most effective messages on alcohol to give to young people, to enable them to use alcohol safely as adults? What are the key messages that you need to give them at a younger age?

[317] **Mr Cradle:** That is a difficult question to answer, because of the culture in which we live. The images, and everything that they are hearing, is all about alcohol being okay, and that it is cool to be a binge drinker, and so on. It is difficult for us at present to give any sort of message that will have as much of an impact as what they see on a Friday and Saturday night. This sort of scheme works, and the all-Wales core programme is working, to an extent, lower down the schools. However, once they get to year 9 and above, any sorts of messages that we are trying to give on alcohol and its safe use are, again, lost. I am a PC from Merthyr Tydfil, and I cannot answer that, I am sorry.

[318] **Leanne Wood:** Finally, is there any gender differentiation in the message that you give? I am interested to hear you talk about giving safe messages on sexual health. There are different issues for girls and boys in that debate. Do you target your programme at girls and boys differently, to take that into account?

[319] **Mr Cradle:** The input is generic. We ensure that we cover this before lunch, because of the impact that some of the photographs, and some of the body parts, that we show can have on the young people; otherwise, we would have a lot of mess to clean up. Therefore, we ensure that both sexes are covered equally, so that the right messages are given out.

[320] **Mick Bates:** Did you wish to comment on that, Debbie?

[321] **Ms Davies:** On sexual health, a lot of it is to do with when they do role play—they can bring that out themselves. The message that we give is the same for males and females, but when they split into their groups to do role play, they have the freedom to decide in which direction they would like to take that role play—whether it is aimed more towards females or males.

[322] **Leanne Wood:** Okay. I could go on, but I will not.

[323] **Mick Bates:** There will be time later, I am sure, but I will call on Huw now.

[324] **Huw Lewis:** I have a few questions. One is relatively straightforward—how are the 12 young people who go off to do the course selected? Are they self-selected, or do you use some sort of criteria? The second question is rather more abstruse. I am the Assembly Member for Merthyr Tydfil—

[325] **Mr Cradle:** I work in the same office as your brother.

[326] **Huw Lewis:** Let us not mention that. [*Laughter.*]

[327] **Mick Bates:** Is there anything that you wish to mention as a declaration of interest?

[328] **Huw Lewis:** My brother is a PC in the Merthyr Tydfil division, Chair. They have not sacked him, yet. [*Laughter.*]

[329] One issue that I have been worrying about regarding Merthyr Tydfil is the effect on

the town centre, and its night-time economy; I have been trying to talk to the local authority about this without too much of a two-way process. It is one of those town centres that, after a certain time of day, is almost entirely turned over to a youth-orientated, binge-drinking culture. There is no provision for families in the early evening, and it can be an intimidating place for older people. Therefore, people of my age and up are barricaded in the Imperial Hotel—with the doors barred, and we get our dominoes out.

[330] There have to be outlets; young people will be young people, and we have all been young. However, is there a contrast in terms of how some town centres have developed? When I was a teenager, you did not have much choice—if you were going out of an evening, you were almost forced into an inter-generational setting, often in the social clubs. That had a moderating effect on the amount consumed, behaviour, and what happened at chucking-out time; because there were older people around, there were role models around as well. That seemed to keep a downward pressure on disorder, excess, and so on.

[331] As well as the dialogue with young people, which is absolutely crucial, as is our willingness to listen, should we introduce into this debate issues about the way in which we plan our night-time economy, in terms of making it more diverse? It should not be the case that, at 9 p.m., there is a town centre to which children, for instance, would not be taken, because their parents would be too nervous about it. Should we plan provisions through local authorities and other partners to ensure that the whole of society gets to enjoy the night-time economy, and not just a small sector in which the breweries and so on seem to be particularly interested?

12.10 p.m.

[332] **Mr Cradle:** On the first point, we go into the schools and give input in relation to what the programme is all about to year 12 pupils. Anyone who is interested can express that interest to the PSE co-ordinators, who then select who they feel are the best people to come on the programme. Given what is required, namely going in and doing role play and acting out in front of an audience, it is pointless to get someone who is academically bright but does not want to go out and do these types of things and would rather sit back. There is a selection process, but it is for the teachers to decide who they see as the best candidates. Does that answer your first point?

[333] **Huw Lewis:** Yes.

[334] **Mr Cradle:** In relation to the second point, I totally agree, especially about Merthyr Tydfil; I would not take my children out in Merthyr Tydfil after about 8 p.m.—there is no shadow of a doubt about that—purely because, as you said, it is very intimidating. Hopefully, the development of the Rhydycar village and so on will address that in terms of creating more family-friendly activities. However, I would have no problem with bringing my children down to Cardiff bay at night, which has as many licensed premises as Merthyr Tydfil. I do not know whether there is a historical issue in relation to the town, but I cannot see why that is the case.

[335] **Mick Bates:** Huw, do you want to come back on that?

[336] **Huw Lewis:** I do not want to go on at length—a lot of this is supposition, Chair—but I think that there is an issue, perhaps for future work by us, in terms of how town centres are organised. The point about Cardiff bay is interesting; I would theorise that the bay is different, in some ways, because it has an intergenerational aspect to it and it is not solely focused on alcohol. The food outlets, and the types available, are absolutely crucial. We need more of a grip, when licenses are handed out and planning permissions are given, on the mix of premises that we are delivering to a community.

[337] **Mr Cradle:** A lot of the problem is also the availability of alcohol to young people. I have taken part in test purchases with our licensing officer and trading standards, and when I have seen the test purchaser, I have thought ‘There is absolutely no way in the world that this person is going to be able to buy alcohol tonight, because they look about 12 years old’, but they have four or five successful purchases. It is just the way in which licences are dealt out; perhaps that is something that could be looked at, because, at the moment, a licence can be taken off a man and his wife can become the new licensee. Do you know what I mean?

[338] **Mick Bates:** Quite, and there are other issues. I have just been reminded by the clerk that the Local Government and Public Services Committee undertook a study on the night-time economy.

[339] **Ms Griffiths:** It was the theme of its July meeting in north Wales.

[340] **Mick Bates:** That can be circulated to Members. It is an interesting point; thank you for sharing that, Claire. The issue of planning is crucial. We are all aware of the issue regarding town centres, but it is a long-term issue that involves detailed planning. It appears to me that the integration of people’s views by the local authority is an important part of that, so that, when regeneration takes place, it is then possible to address some of the issues that you raised, Huw.

[341] **Mark Isherwood:** I wish to raise two issues. First, the people who are perhaps in the greatest need of help and support are the least likely to volunteer as peer tutors. So, how representative are the peer tutors and how, if at all, are you working to try to overcome that barrier and genuinely bring in to the scheme—which is the whole principle—those people who will truly have the ear of the people who will most need to work with them?

[342] Secondly, to build on the town centre issue, to share a little of what is happening in north Wales, I endorse the fact that local authorities have a key role, especially in licensing. We had a situation in which applications for late-night licences were held back or declined if there was a record of incidents in, around or related to the premises making the application. There are also some positive points given in that they stopped selling high alcohol-content alcopops, they installed closed-circuit television and decent security systems, and took a zero-tolerance approach to drug use. There is even an idea from Wrexham of giving people a lollipop as they leave. For some strange reason, if you give someone a lollipop, when they get back out on the street, statistics show that that person is far less likely to behave in an anti-social manner.

[343] I have discussed individual cases with our divisional superintendent in north-east Wales, and the police are very open to reconsidering recommendations on refused licences subject to an agreed plan of action being implemented effectively by a licensee. What are your views on how that could be rolled out as a broader principle?

[344] **Mick Bates:** I can see us issuing lollipops as we go into the Chamber. [*Laughter.*]

[345] **Mr Cradle:** I understand what you are saying about the people who might be in most need of this not volunteering. I do not think that we are looking for those people to come forward as volunteers in the first instance, to be honest, because we are looking for people who could engage with those people at a later date, if that makes sense. We do not want the people who have the issues to come to us; we want people who can deal with those issues for others and help them along. So, if someone came forward who had such issues, we would not say, ‘No, you are excluded and you cannot come along’, but we do not actively seek them out either. We want people to come forward and be volunteers. If none of this year’s 30 includes those people whom you are talking about, that is how it will work. When they go back into

school, because we think that these people are the best suited to become peer educators, the chances of their being approached by people who have the issues is increased. That is how we look at it. Does that answer your question?

[346] **Mark Isherwood:** Yes, thank you.

[347] **Mr Cradle:** In relation to the lollipops, that has also been done in Port Talbot. They have taken it on board there. Our licensing officer in Merthyr Tydfil is always looking at new ways of doing things, and I know that the partnership work that he does with trading standards and the local authority is very good. They work together very closely, as well as with the licensing department, so I am sure that they would work together on any projects that came forward to roll them out quite easily.

[348] **Mick Bates:** Do Members have any other points?

[349] That was very interesting. There is, however, just one issue. What happens afterwards to the students who have gone through your programme? Do you look at what they do? Does it have a big influence on the type of activity that they eventually might take up as a profession?

[350] **Mr Cradle:** We have not. We certainly might look to include that in the evaluation process, but we have not done so up to this point.

[351] **Mick Bates:** That is very interesting. I am sure that they enjoy it and, possibly, they could get together with similar projects, as there are quite a lot of peer projects.

[352] **Mr Cradle:** I believe so, yes.

[353] **Mick Bates:** Thank you both for your evidence this morning. I must point out to Members that a third person was supposed to attend, Kay Griffiths, who is the point of contact with the clerk of the committee. So, it may have been a bit of a surprise, but it was excellent. Thank you both very much.

12.19 p.m.

**Adolygiad Polisi ar Gamddefnyddio Sylweddau—Atal (Trafod Tystiolaeth a
Fformat yr Adroddiad)
Policy Review of Substance Misuse—Prevention (Discussion of Evidence and
Report Format)**

[354] **Mick Bates:** Unfortunately, Dr Richard Pace is not available to attend this morning's meeting. There is a précis of chapter 5 of the report, which looks specifically at school and education-based prevention initiatives. If you have any particular issues to raise, please send them to the committee's secretariat. Do you have one now, Laura? I see not. That is fine. As I said before, the report will be discussed in Plenary in January.

12.20 p.m.

[355] **Laura Anne Jones:** I would like to raise one thing. I think that I also speak for Leanne in saying that I am disappointed with the time that we have had to discuss prevention. We think that it is a very important part of the review and I do not think that we have had enough time on it. You say that this is the final meeting, but I do not think that we have looked into it enough.

[356] **Mick Bates:** I am sorry, but I am not really in a position, as temporary Chair, to give you a full answer to that.

[357] **Laura Anne Jones:** I would just like to put it on record that I am disappointed with the timescale.

[358] **Mick Bates:** Sure, but I think that there might be process issues behind that.

[359] **Laura Anne Jones:** At some point in the future, I would also like to be able to talk about licensing. That was talked about today, but I want to talk with the people who might have some influence over local government representatives, for example. I would also like to discuss laws on the classification of drugs and that sort of thing. To me, that would be a key part of prevention, and I am disappointed that we have not been able to cover that.

[360] **Mick Bates:** The latter part of that, of course, is not within the Assembly's jurisdiction.

[361] **Laura Anne Jones:** I know that it is not, but it is something that would be nice to discuss.

[362] **Mick Bates:** I think that it is a very relevant issue and that perhaps we should emphasise that in the report. However, I will turn to Virginia to answer the first point about the time given to discuss prevention.

[363] **Dr Hawkins:** Back in July, when the forward work programme was before the committee, we discussed whether we had time to consider both the youth homelessness and the substance misuse prevention policy reviews, given that the Minister had to have time to reply before the Assembly breaks for the election. It was agreed that the committee wanted to do both and this is the only way in which we can fit them both in, unfortunately. They have to go to Plenary in January or February for the Minister to respond to the recommendations. So, we did discuss it at our meeting in July.

[364] **Laura Anne Jones:** I understand that, but it is a shame that we have not talked about extremely important issues when dealing with prevention. Perhaps we could e-mail suggestions to you, or could you provide us with other people to talk to, or ask for evidence from other people?

[365] **Mick Bates:** I was just about to suggest that if you have evidence that you wish to put before the clerk, it would be quite in order for you to send that evidence in. I am not certain that there would be more time at this stage to gather further evidence, as we have done this morning. There was always an issue. This morning, we have had people giving evidence and time for questions is also important. You could invite more people to give evidence but then you will feel that you have not done them justice in allowing them and Members enough time for questions. So, I accept that it is a difficult balance. However, as Virginia said, there was a discussion in July about our desire to undertake the youth homelessness report too.

[366] **Laura Anne Jones:** Both are important; I understand that.

[367] **Mick Bates:** I have been reminded that evidence was taken in north Wales about this prevention issue, but your comments are important and are noted. Are there any further comments on the substance misuse report? I see that there are not. In that case, I thank you all for attending. The next meeting is on Thursday, 19 October. It has a 9.30 a.m. start. There is a briefing session in 25 minutes' time on the budget.

[368] **Leanne Wood:** Are we not interviewing any young people or any people who have

been through a programme as part of this substance misuse review? In the Plenary debate on the last part of the substance misuse review, I recall that we talked about not talking to people who were receiving these services, and there was consensus, I think, that we should do that at the next one. We have now conducted another review without speaking to those people who have gone through any kind of programme.

[369] **Mick Bates:** That is an important point to note. I hope that that message is clear for the youth homelessness report. In terms of gathering evidence, we have just had a discussion and Laura made the point that she felt that we did not really have enough time to look at prevention issues. I have suggested that, if Members know of evidence that could be submitted as part of this report, then please submit it. It may be too late to undertake further evidence-gathering sessions but, if you have statements from young people from your background, they may form a useful part of evidence. Could that be included in the report?

[370] **Dr Hawkins:** Yes.

[371] **Leanne Wood:** It is not quite the same though, is it?

[372] **Mick Bates:** I agree that it is not quite the same; however, you raise a valid point that the client's view—the young people—is not part of the study. That can be achieved, I am sure, if you have contacts who could provide you with young people's evidence about the services that they have received, or the opportunities to receive support.

[373] **Leanne Wood:** So, we could receive some written evidence, for example, from people in heroin programmes now, saying what did not work and what might have worked for them in school. That is the kind of thing that I am trying to get at.

[374] **Mick Bates:** Absolutely. I think that that is a fair comment. I am sure that we could contact organisations asking for that type of evidence to be included as an annex to the report.

[375] **Leanne Wood:** It would be useful.

[376] **Mick Bates:** I think that it would; that is a really good point.

[377] **Leanne Wood:** I would particularly like to know whether they think that intervention by police officers is useful.

[378] **Mick Bates:** Again, that is an interesting point. Our own experiences sometimes lead us to different conclusions about the way in which a uniformed officer operates in school. However, the main message was that the multidisciplinary approach, having all types of people there working in partnership and relaying a consistent message, is the best way forward. To exclude anyone from this process would be difficult. The message was reiterated this morning that people need to work in teams; it is a much more effective way of presenting evidence and helping people to face up to the challenges that they are going to meet, whether in terms of drug or alcohol abuse.

[379] **Mark Isherwood:** I endorse the comment that we have not taken much evidence, if any, from service users. I meet a lot of service users and drugs organisations who are very keen to speak to us individually, but also collectively. I commend again the evidence from the DAWN project conference, which came from service users. That evidence was of their perceptions, knowledge and understanding of the situation on the ground—however we may like to interpret it. We looked at the Choose Life programme for the previous report. Choose Life and other equivalent projects work on the basis of treatment and so on, but they also now take drug awareness education and so on out into the community. Again, although it is too late to take evidence from them, we should be mindful of their contribution as a written

communication.

[380] **Mick Bates:** I think that the message is clear that we can. If Members have sources of evidence, including statements from young people, they should be submitted to the clerk.

[381] **Mark Isherwood:** I have.

[382] **Mick Bates:** Secondly, I think that the serious bit is that we are undertaking a review of youth homelessness, and we need to talk to young people who have been through the system or who are currently in it. That is the vital message that we need to take forward. If there are no other points, I declare the meeting closed.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 12.27 p.m.

The meeting ended at 12.27 p.m.