



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

**Y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc  
The Children and Young People Committee**

**Dydd Mawrth, 25 Mai 2010  
Tuesday, 25 May 2010**

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

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

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

Eleanor Burnham	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Angela Burns	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
Sandy Mewies	Llafur Labour
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

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

Peter Duncan	Hyfforddwr a Chyfarwyddwr, Cymdeithion Dysgu a Datblygu Cydweithredol Trainer and Director, Co-operative Learning and Development Associates
Alan Hatton-Yeo	Prif Weithredwr, Sefydliad Beth Johnson Chief Executive, the Beth Johnson Foundation
Rob Roffe	Rheolwr Polisi, Cronfa Loteri Fawr Policy Manager, Big Lottery Fund
Barbara Wilding	Aelod o Bwyllgor Cymru a Phwyllgor Teuluoedd Iach, Cronfa Loteri Fawr Wales Committee Member and Member of the Healthy Families Committee, Big Lottery Fund

**Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol**  
**National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance**

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Abigail Phillips	Clerc Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Siân Thomas	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.15 a.m.*  
*The meeting began at 9.15 a.m.*

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

[1] **Helen Mary Jones:** Bore da, **Helen Mary Jones:** Good morning, friends. I  
 gyfeillion. Croesawaf yr Aelodau, y tystion welcome Members, witnesses and the public  
 a'r cyhoedd i'r cyfarfod hwn o Bwyllgor to this meeting of the National Assembly's  
 Plant a Phobl Ifanc y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol. Children and Young People Committee. You  
 Mae croeso ichi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg neu'r are more than welcome to use Welsh or  
 Saesneg, ac mae clustffonau ar gael i glywed English, and headsets are available to receive

y cyfieithiad o'r Gymraeg i'r Saesneg. Mae'r clustffonau hefyd yn eich galluogi i glywed yn well. a simultaneous translation from Welsh to English. The headsets also amplify the sound.

[2] Gofynnaf i bawb ddiffodd unrhyw ffonau symudol, 'mwyar duon', ac yn y blaen. Nid yw'n ddigon da eu tawelu, oherwydd gallant amharu ar yr offer sain a'r offer darlledu. Nid ydym yn disgwyl ymarfer tân y bore yma, felly, os clywn larwm tân, bydd hynny'n golygu bod problem go iawn a bydd angen inni ddilyn y tywyswyr allan o'r adeilad. I ask everyone to switch off any mobile phones, BlackBerrys, and so on. It is not good enough to put them on silent, as they can interfere with the sound and broadcasting equipment. We do not expect a fire drill this morning, so if we hear the fire alarm, that will mean that there is a genuine problem and we will need to follow the ushers out of the building.

[3] A oes unrhyw Aelod yn dymuno gwneud datganiad o fuddiant o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 31? Gwelaf nad oes. Nid ydym wedi derbyn ymddiheuriadau y bore yma. Fodd bynnag, deallaf fod yn rhaid i Sandy Mewies ein gadael am gyfnod byr, tua 10.30 a.m.. Does any Member wish to make a declaration of interest under Standing Order No. 31? I see that you do not. We have not received any apologies this morning. However, I understand that Sandy Mewies will have to leave us for a short period, at around 10.30 a.m..

9.17 a.m.

### **Ymchwiliad i Fannau Diogel i Chwarae a Chymdeithasu—Casglu Tystiolaeth Inquiry into Safe Places to Play and Hang Out—Evidence Gathering**

[4] **Helen Mary Jones:** Ar gyfer yr eitem hon, croesawaf Alan Hatton-Yeo, prif weithredwr Sefydliad Beth Johnson. Os ydych yn hapus, Alan, symudwn yn syth at gwestiynau'r Aelodau. **Helen Mary Jones:** For this item, I welcome Alan Hatton-Yeo, the chief executive of the Beth Johnson Foundation. If you are content, Alan, we will move straight to Members' questions.

[5] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** That will be fine.

[6] **Helen Mary Jones:** I will ask the first question. Can you outline the functions of the Centre for Intergenerational Practice, specifically as they relate to Wales?

[7] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** Since 2003, we have been commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government, through the older people's strategy, to develop intergenerational practice across Wales. The centre was based initially at the University of Glamorgan, but, for the last 12 months, we have been working in partnership with the Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme Cymru, to develop a network of services, primarily to local authorities across Wales, to support the development of intergenerational practice. That links back to our wider work with the UK and the European centres, which are based in Stoke-on-Trent.

[8] **Helen Mary Jones:** Sandy Mewies has the next questions.

[9] **Sandy Mewies:** Good morning. Can you clarify what role, if any, you have in supporting the Welsh Assembly Government strategy for intergenerational practice?

[10] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** We were responsible for developing the strategy for the Welsh Assembly Government. We undertook the consultation work, we did the policy review, and we then worked with the various teams to develop that strategy document. We receive a small

amount of funding from the Welsh Assembly Government to support its roll-out. The focus has been primarily on trying to embed that practice within local authorities, so that it becomes part of their approach to developing community work, in particular, and support across the generations. It also links into providing opportunities for cross-departmental working. For example, when I leave here today, I am going to a meeting with Cardiff and Swansea local authorities. We are looking at a joint initiative to develop intergenerational practice.

[11] **Sandy Mewies:** That strategy, which was published in 2008, states the intention to undertake further work by October 2009 to draw together and expand on the detailed advice and information that the Assembly Government has received, and to publish this in a further document, which will include case studies, toolkits and good practice advice. Has this work been undertaken, and, if so, at what stage is it?

[12] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** No; that work was delayed because the University of Glamorgan decided to make all the staff that we were employing at the university redundant. Therefore, we have had to reorganise the way that we work in Wales, which is why we have moved to our new partnership with RSVP Cymru. We are currently collecting case studies for that work to be published later this year. However, we lost about six or nine months because of having to completely reorganise the structure of the work in Wales. The decision on the redundancies was announced very late, which caught us out, I am afraid.

[13] **Helen Mary Jones:** Angela Burns has the next questions.

9.20 a.m.

[14] **Angela Burns:** Good morning. I have a few questions about the negative stereotyping of young people and children and how that impacts on the older generation. We have heard from many witnesses that this goes on. For example, the Association of Chief Police Officers states in its evidence that:

[15] ‘We should not ignore the importance of these perceptions because the fear is often genuine and does undermine quality of life.’

[16] That has a negative effect on children because they feel that they cannot go where they want to go. How significant a driver is the issue of negative stereotyping in the work of your centre? If there is a significant issue, what can we do to balance the, at times, conflicting needs of the older and younger generations?

[17] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** We would say that it is very significant. Negative stereotyping goes both ways; it is not just about old people being fearful of children, because children are also fearful of older people. That also places restrictions on people’s ability to play and to feel free. Many young people are not allowed to go out without adult support because of that fear of adults. So, the fact that the negative perception goes both ways is a significant issue.

[18] A large proportion of intergenerational work relates to challenging those kinds of stereotypes. I would not agree totally with what ACPO is saying, because the research that is coming through suggests that much of that negative feeling is not based on evidence. The incidence of crime and victimisation of older people is very low, but the media over-report any crime or anything that happens. That has created a situation in which people are fearful, which is often not based on evidence, but assumption. Intergenerational work provides an opportunity to get underneath what the media are telling us to find out what the reality is.

[19] Another thing that has happened, which we are seeing across the UK, is that adults appear to be becoming much less tolerant of young people. So, complaints are triggered much earlier than they would have been perhaps 10 or 20 years ago. It is interesting, when you work

with older people, to get them to consider the behaviours that they would have been involved in when they were young, because it is almost as if they have forgotten that that is what they used to do. They need to be reminded sometimes of their own experience of being young people. Many of the things that they complain about now are typical of the way in which they behaved. However, 50 years ago people had much more freedom, and as a child or young person you could be much more invisible than you can now, because we have a much more regulated society.

[20] **Angela Burns:** Is there one key in particular that has made adults more intolerant of children? I know that there is a perception in the media and that they only ever report a bad story, but, for individuals, what do you think it is?

[21] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** This will sound quite strange, but I think that it is the motor car, and I will explain why I think that the car has been significant. It has changed the way in which people have contact with each other because we travel differently and therefore have much less contact with each other. At one stage, streets were a place in the neighbourhood where people came together, played and where communities interacted, and they were part of a play space where adults could supervise children, but now the car dominates the street. People are also fearful of their cars being damaged, for example by a football being kicked around and so on. It has become a very important and valuable possession. Streets are now places where you keep your car safe, rather than places where you meet and come together.

[22] Some interesting work has been done in relation to street parties and neighbourhoods, which has involved closing the street for a day and giving people an opportunity to meet each other again. As a result of the use of cars, we have very little contact with one another now. We have gone from a time when people would have known everyone who lived on the street to a situation of possibly only knowing three or four people either side. The car—and some good research has been done about this—has had a much greater impact on our social life than we realise. A big thing for me is the question of how you give streets back to communities. The research that has been done on the street parties and using those to develop community play spaces has been impressive.

[23] **Joyce Watson:** I would like to come in on this because, in a short debate last year, I focused on the car, so I am glad to hear that someone else is focusing on the car as well. I am sure that the Chair would agree that we would like to see the evidence that you talked about on reclaiming the streets and the street party idea, because that would be useful. The other thing about the car is that people travel from their front door to the car and back, never speaking to those around them. You alluded to that, but I want to draw that aspect out a bit more. Have you found it to be the case that people are less tolerant of people they do not know—whichever way that works in age terms—than people they do know, because they have a better understanding of what they are doing and why they are doing it? As you said, the car, which has meant that people only walk up and down their own paths and not their streets, is part of that.

[24] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** I agree with that totally. We would characterise it almost as 'stranger danger'. We have created a society where, because people are unknown, we have become fearful of people. The natural contact that you would once have had, by regularly queuing at the same bus stop with the same people, for example, has disappeared. Many children are now transported to and from school. It is made worse because, as adults, we teach children not to have contact with adults. There was a time when, if you got lost, you went to find an adult to look after you. Now, adults are seen as potentially dangerous. That is one of the things that have restricted much of that contact. We positively encourage people not to meet. If you are an older person, your motives will be suspected. If you are a young person, you may be putting yourself in a risk situation. So, there is less contact, and we are driving a wedge between the generations.

[25] **Eleanor Burnham:** These are very salutary points. It is very difficult; we are living in a very complex age. I was very taken with your point about the negative role of the media. I believe, as you obviously do, and as I am sure that many of us here do, that it does not help, frankly. To what extent can you provide evidence that intergenerational projects have a long-term and widespread impact on improving the relationship between the generations in communities?

[26] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** To be honest, it is still early days with the evidence. One of the weaknesses with intergenerational work is that, although it has been going on for a very long time, that has largely been in North America. It is only in the last 15 years that intergenerational work has been prevalent in Europe and the United Kingdom. So far, the evidence is around short-term projects—things that are starting to build connections—and interventions to do with things such as mentoring, where young people are enabled to achieve. We are still at the early stage of building the evidence base. One of the things that the Generations Together programme in England is trying to do is a wide, overarching evaluation of 12 local authorities to show where the best impact is to be achieved. So, we have early evidence, but I am not able to say that it is completely reliable yet. One of the difficulties is that, in many of the communities where we work, there are often other interventions going on as well, so it is quite hard to unpick what progress is to do with the intergenerational work and what is to do with other interventions.

[27] **Eleanor Burnham:** I suppose that common sense would tell you that—if people do not have extended families, with grandmothers and grandfathers and aunts and so on around them. Quite a lot of interesting work has been done on older people getting involved to talk about their wartime experiences of the Blitz and evacuees and so on. That has been happening quite a lot in parts of England, has it not?

[28] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** Some really good work has been done around the industrial history of Wales. Some great work has been done in the Rhondda around the pits, where people have worked together to capture the history. So, the reminiscences are not just about the war, but about the past, so that people understand where they fit as part of that. One of the things that we are seeing a lot of—and it is particularly relevant in Wales—is the use of storytelling as a way for people to understand their place in communities and to grow closer to each other. In the Netherlands, they have used storytelling as a community-building tool, and there is a strong evidence base in the Netherlands for intergenerational work as a tool for building better connections. So, common sense tells you that there is something in this, but the evidence is quite hard to gather because you are working over quite a long period of time. So, we have evidence of the value of short-term interventions, but we are only just beginning to build and understand that longer-term evidence.

[29] **Eleanor Burnham:** What is your view on the potential for embedding the intergenerational work that we have just been discussing in the school curriculum? The stuff that I have seen was basically about what happened to older people during the war; they were going into schools and so on.

[30] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** There is huge potential. We have been talking to ContinYou Cymru, and we are currently working together on a toolkit to fit alongside the community schools toolkit, so that intergenerational work can be seen as an integral part of the way that schools engage in that community focus. Older people also provide a resource in a range of different ways. We have done a lot of work in the school curriculum in England, particularly with those young people who do not have an adult in their lives to encourage, value and support them. An older mentor can make a huge difference. We can show a significant impact from research that we have done in that area of work.

9.30 a.m.

[31] In addition, in the move towards citizenship, with its concerns around democracy and trying to understand the changing culture and demography of the country, intergenerational approaches are really important. All of those fit well into the school curriculum. We hope to publish the ContinYou toolkit later this year.

[32] **Eleanor Burnham:** Therefore, have you decided which elements would make up such a curriculum? Are you working on it?

[33] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** We are working on it. One of the difficult things with schools is that you cannot bring in new stuff because they are too busy, so it has to be things that add value to what they are already doing. We are trying to find a way of showing how this additional resource will help people to do things better or differently rather than do extra, because if it is extra, people will not be able to engage. There is work on using older people as a resource, as living history—all history is important—and work around the arts, because older people can provide a really interesting resource in the arts. There is some interesting work taking place in Rhondda Cynon Taf at present, which puts it the other way around, as it is about careers. With an ageing population, you will need a workforce in future in which more people will want to work with older people, so the nature of your health and social care workforce will change. The Rhondda Cynon Taf mental health trust has been running a programme that links schools to residential homes for older people so that young people start to get the idea of volunteering and working with older people, so that when they go to college to train, rather than automatically train to be childcare workers, they might see work with older people as an important career option. It can work both ways. That work has been written up as evidence. There has been a lot of interest in that across the UK. It also changes the way in which people see each other, which is really important.

[34] **Eleanor Burnham:** As you said, it is the negative role of the media, which tends to put people in little boxes.

[35] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** The other thing is around ageism with the new move towards equality and so forth, because, from the moment we are born, we are given messages about what older people are like and what ageing is like. That is one of the things that create this model of older people as being in deficit, in need of support, and not being able to give to society, and it suggests that, in certain ways, as you grow older, from 65 years of age and onwards, if you suffer from depression or have a problem of some kind, you should consider it as something to do with your age and not your circumstances. If you are going to challenge ageism, you have to start working with people from the very beginning, because we inculcate these attitudes into ourselves from the moment we are born. At the same time, young people are also victims of ageism because of the way we talk about them and the dialogue that we have about them.

[36] **Eleanor Burnham:** That is fascinating. Can you provide us with any information on any proven cost-effectiveness of your intergenerational approaches and projects—the ones that you know of?

[37] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** We have a very large evidence base. It is actually a matter of how much you want rather than whether you want it. If you indicate particular areas of work, we could provide that resource, as we maintain a massive online database of case studies and evaluation studies. We have also just launched a European website, a learning network. We therefore have an evidence base across Europe of how this work works. We can work with you to put that work together. I was told that you wanted a short paper. *[Laughter.]*

[38] **Eleanor Burnham:** Perhaps you could send us an additional paper.



[39] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** Perhaps we could put together a package of key resources.

[40] **Helen Mary Jones:** That would be great, Alan, if it is not too much trouble. I now call on Joyce.

[41] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning. In your evidence, you state that an as yet unpublished paper was commissioned by the then Department for Children Schools and Families in England. Are you confident that such a paper offers sufficiently practical direction to local government in taking this agenda forward?

[42] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** Yes, because we have been commissioned to write it. We are actually working on it at present to develop that work. We have been funded by the DCSF to develop its programme of intergenerational work for local authorities across England. We are producing a number of toolkits and papers at present, and they are being embedded. We have the local authority learning network in England. We are keen to link what is happening in Wales to that work so that local authorities can share learning, rather than trying to reinvent things. That is particularly relevant economically. There is not a lot of money around, so we need to find ways of sharing it more effectively. That work will be completed by the autumn at the latest.

[43] **Joyce Watson:** We have sort of touched on my next question already. You say that the unpublished DCSF paper references the contradiction between the recorded levels of fear of crime and the statistical, actual reduction in overall levels of crime. What particular evidence is there that intergenerational projects and approaches can have an impact on the recorded levels of crime and fear of crime within communities, because there is a misfit, is there not, between what happens and what people think happens?

[44] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** The recorded levels of crime are almost separate from the fear of crime, in that the actual level of crime that occurs is not the issue, as it is more about people's perception of what is going on. There has been some very good work done in Derbyshire, where there was a project called Generations Together in an area that had a high level of anti-social behaviour disorders and a lot of conflict between the generations. A whole series of events was run there for young people who were seen as being most problematic. Projects were run with older people: they ran motor cycle workshops; they had debates together; and they came together for a digital photography project. There was a significant reduction in reported tension and, interestingly, the level of anti-social behaviour orders also decreased, because people were complaining less.

[45] If you work on building those relationships, you come back to the point that you made earlier that, if you know people, you are not fearful of them. So, in those areas where that work has been undertaken systematically, there has been a significant reduction in tension and in complaints. The level of crime may continue, however, because one of the problems is that a lot of the crime that is blamed on young people is not necessarily being committed by them. There is an assumption that young people are criminals when they are not. It is the next generation up, the 18 to 25-year-olds, who are sometimes the more problematic group. We have seen a lot of work around environmental projects and anti-social behaviour. I did a big evaluation for Groundwork across the UK, which included a project in Wrexham, where we saw the significant impact that intergenerational work had on reducing levels of reported crime and actual crime.

[46] **Helen Mary Jones:** Angela, do you want to come in on that?

[47] **Angela Burns:** I want to pick up on a point that you made, namely that the problems tend to be caused by 18 to 25-year-olds. Do you think that the media and older people

differentiate between age groups, or does 'young people' includes anybody from their mid 20s and under, or do they think of them specifically as being 14-year-olds?

[48] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** I think that the words 'young' and 'old' are really problematic. I do not actually know what an old person is. They are words that get used very casually without any real meaning attached. There is often a stereotype of what an old or a young person looks like. A young person is a 16-year-old in a hoodie slouching around the streets, and an old person is a 97-year-old who is very frail and vulnerable. However, neither of those is true. We are very loose in the way that we use language. There is also an interesting dimension in that, if you are a 12-year-old, an old person is an 18 or 19-year-old. It is to do with you and how you feel about yourself.

[49] **Angela Burns:** Absolutely, and that is why I wondered whether you had any views of the age bracket that people, particularly the more pejorative elements in the media, think of when talking about young people? I often think that newspapers—I do not want to put words in your mouth—think of young people as being a little bit older than a 14-year-old, and they pigeon-hole them into the 16 to 18 year-old bracket. Is that your view and the view of older people you work with? Do you think of them as 14-year-olds or as 18, 19 or 20-year-olds?

[50] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** To be honest, I do not know. It depends on who wrote the newspaper story and how it is reported. The more sensational stuff in the media often concerns 12, 13 and 14-year-olds. The media really gets behind reporting on that stuff because they are somehow seen as children. When you are 16 and over, there is the notion that you are almost an adult. So, anything involving 13 or 14-year-olds will often get the most sensational publicity.

[51] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes, and you can see what has been in the media in the past few days. Do you not think that the media is age-obsessed? If you are interviewed, they are desperate to know not only your address, which you do not always want to give, but also your age. As you said, not every 60-year-old is old and vulnerable. You could be a pensioner and you might only be 55; perhaps you would not be a pensioner at that age, but an old person might only be 55 or in their early 60s.

9.40 a.m.

[52] **Helen Mary Jones:** I cannot quite get my head around the fact that in a few weeks' time, I shall qualify under the older people's strategy because I will have turned 50, which seems a bit young to me. Thank you very much for your evidence today; we would appreciate being signposted towards some of the evidence that proves that intergenerational work does work, although we fully accept what you said earlier about the ongoing longer-term work. You cannot show us what will happen over a 10 or 15-year period yet because the work has not been going on that long in many places.

[53] Finally, accepting that intergenerational work has real value for the issues that we are now looking at regarding young people being free to spend time with each other and to play, what key actions are needed by the Welsh Assembly Government to take forward the intergenerational work agenda? I put that in the context that you have already highlighted the fact that these are particularly difficult times given the amount of resources that will be available.

[54] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** There are one or two points on that. The point about intergenerational work is that it runs across Government departments. Today, one weakness of intergenerational work in Wales, as compared with England, is that it has been largely led by the older people sector, so it has been about older people's views and concerns. If it is to be effective in Wales, it has to be done more across departments, so it has to span children

and young people, and they need to come together and work together more collaboratively. In England, interestingly, intergenerational work is now led by the youth task force and not by the older people sector, because it is seen as being really significant for young people. That would be one important issue, and with that comes economic value because, by sharing, you can do things more cost-effectively.

[55] The second point for me relates to grandparents and older kin. We have not talked much about them, but in the context of your parenting action plan, the people who often support, who are around and who encourage young people to play are grandparents and older kin, who are really important in that respect. We gave a lot of evidence for the parenting action plan. I do not know at what stage that is now, but recognising the role of older adults in the family is quite significant.

[56] Thirdly, and this might sound slightly flippant, it is important not to see play as something that only children and young people do. One reason why Scandinavian countries have been good at what they do is that play is something that the whole community engages in. We play throughout the whole of our lives, so we should not assume that you stop playing once you reach a certain age, but think about play opportunities that naturally bring people together such as green gyms. In Scandinavia, they are even building multigenerational playgrounds. So, we need to think about play in a different way. We always segment things into different groups. I hope that I will spend the rest of my life playing. I do not want to stop playing once I reach a certain age. Those are my three key points, none of which cost any money, but all of which are quite important.

[57] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you very much, Alan. That has been a useful and valuable session.

[58] **Mr Hatton-Yeo:** I will put some stuff together for you next week.

[59] **Helen Mary Jones:** Brilliant; thank you. That is much appreciated.

<p>[60] Symudwn felly at yr ail eitem o dystiolaeth y bore yma. Croesawaf Pete Duncan at y bwrdd. Diolch am ddod i'r cyfarfod ac am eich papur. Bydd yr Aelodau'n ymwybodol ein bod yn ffocysu ar hyfforddi pobl yng ngwaith chwarae.</p>	<p>We will therefore move to the second item of evidence this morning. I welcome Pete Duncan to the table. Thank you for attending today's meeting and for your paper. Members will be aware that we are focusing on training people in play work.</p>
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[61] I will start with the first question. Thank you for your paper; it was really useful. Thinking about the quality of play work training in Wales at the moment, to your knowledge, is there a shortage of qualified play work professionals in Wales?

[62] **Mr Duncan:** There is a whole spread of people. At a very basic level, there are lots of people who do summer play schemes, and they only need a bit of training to do those four weeks in the summer. As capacity goes up, Play Wales has been working very hard to train more skilled play workers and to build up play work as a profession.

[63] **Sandy Mewies:** North East Wales Play says that the play work approach should be promoted and extended to encompass people such as park rangers, teachers, lunchtime supervisors, police youth workers, and so on. In your written evidence, you say that while the current P3 training is excellent for those who see play work as their chosen career, entry-level casual workers who are employed for a month in the summer would see the amount of training as onerous. You have just mentioned the different levels. Do you agree that the play work approach should be extended to other professionals, and is there a need for increased variety in the levels and depth of play work training for staff who will not take up play work

as a full-time career?

[64] **Mr Duncan:** There is a whole spread of stuff. I have been doing lots of work in England on the play shaper project, which is looking at police officers and all kinds of people, such as caretakers, and looking at why play is important in communities. I am aware that the P3 courses, in the years subsequent to my involvement in setting them up, have been taking lots of people from those professions and having a play perspective for the early years education and community cohesion agendas. So, yes, there is a need for awareness of play, and a need to explain play work principles to many more people.

[65] **Angela Burns:** Good morning. You say in your written evidence that you are aware of

[66] ‘some miss-interpretation of the reflective practice as non-intervention’.

[67] I would like you to provide further details on that, and also for you to explain what ‘reflective practice’ is. I read your paper and drew the conclusion that is just not getting involved, but I am sure that I misunderstood.

[68] **Mr Duncan:** It is a bit more than that. We have something called SLAR—stop, look and reflect before you act. The philosophy of play work is that play is principal—it is about letting children play, and play out whatever they are trying to do. People would not jump in and say, ‘That’s dangerous—stop, stop’. They would weigh up what was happening, reflect and watch the process continue.

[69] **Angela Burns:** Is that not what they do now, then?

[70] **Mr Duncan:** Yes, that is what they do now, but when new people come into the profession, they tend to think that they have to organise activities, or put on a sports event, or help children to make a mask, or whatever. People coming in from childcare and education in particular would have a more interventionist style. The play work professionals’ view is that you need to stop and reflect before you intervene. We got some feedback that people thought that we were saying that you should just leave children alone and let them get on with it, but that is not quite the same thing. That became most evident with Ali Wood, who is one of the people who train the trainers; she spoke about aerial runways and slides, but then, when we went to a conference in Bournemouth, someone said, ‘Ali said that it is okay to play on airport runways’. Obviously, that is not the same as aerial runways. How did they get that far from what we were saying? The fact that you need to reflect before you intervene does not mean that you do not need to intervene at all. We found that out after the second set of train-the-trainer sessions, so we were very keen to check through the pack and ensure that people understood that it does not mean that you leave children alone to get on with it, but that you watch, you make some interventions, you help them to reflect, and you provide different sorts of opportunities.

[71] **Angela Burns:** So, it is more a case of nudging them along a particular path rather than—

[72] **Mr Duncan:** Yes. Take rough-and-tumble play fighting; it may be that we should provide more opportunities for soft play with toys such as foam swords so that children can explore that without injuring themselves. Children want to play and test out physical stuff, and if you make it too safety-oriented, they lose interest.

[73] **Angela Burns:** That ties in very tightly with Play Wales’s strategy, and what it has to say about children having to constantly explore and push the boundaries. If you do not let them do that, they cannot learn. It is very much tied in with that, is it not?

[74] **Mr Duncan:** It comes with risk-benefit analysis, weighing up what is likely to happen. We have a big section on tree-climbing—the benefits of climbing, and the risks of falling out or breaking bits of a tree. We look at those benefits and risks, and how you manage those perceptions.

[75] **Angela Burns:** Thank you for that. I assumed that that was what people did, but I understand now.

9.50 a.m.

[76] **Mr Duncan:** They do. However, sometimes people arrive and say, ‘Oh, I have to organise a giant game of rounders’, or, ‘We are all going to make masks’. Our view is that we should let them get on with it—it might not look like the mask that you want, but you are getting them to learn how to use scissors, and a knife, and so on.

[77] **Helen Mary Jones:** Eleanor Burnham has the next questions.

[78] **Eleanor Burnham:** I think that this is wonderful. I am far too old really. I remember going to play in dens, and so on, on the farm. My father had assessed the risks—we were not allowed to go anywhere near tractors or moving parts and implements, but I managed to get a lot of scrapes. However, I was lucky in that my mother was a nurse.

[79] It is wonderful to hear you say that you are training people to deal with play in a far more constructive way. Observing is all very well, but, as you say, you need a certain level of intervention. I love the part of your paper that mentions circuses. When I dealt with 14 to 16-year-old excluded kids, across north Wales, we used to take them to the circus. I do not remember where it was based—I believe that it was Mold. That was brilliant. Sorry, I am reminiscing.

[80] The committee has heard wide-ranging evidence about bullying, and its significance in inhibiting children from going out to play. Representatives from Barnardo’s told us that they know a few play and youth workers who have said that anti-bullying is an adult agenda, and so do not intervene to stop bullying, whereas in other areas play workers build children’s awareness of bullying issues and their capacity to deal with it. What is your experience of this, and how do you react to what I have said?

[81] **Mr Duncan:** I am aware of the evidence from Barnardo’s. I have many debates with play workers about when they intervene, and what is an appropriate level of mickey-taking, name calling, and how children learn to be resilient and sort that, as well as physical challenge and how they organise pecking orders. I stopped calling myself a play worker, after some of them and said, ‘Actually, I am a children’s rights worker, and I make interventions much earlier than you’. For me, play is not the only thing going on, and it is not the principal thing—it does not take precedence over other things. So I stopped calling myself a play worker, in the sense that I do not believe that play takes precedence.

[82] **Eleanor Burnham:** So, your issue is about the intervention of youngsters with each other?

[83] **Mr Duncan:** I intervene earlier than some play workers do.

[84] **Eleanor Burnham:** Sorry, I meant to say that you are dealing with the interaction of young people, rather than play.

[85] **Mr Duncan:** Yes.

[86] **Helen Mary Jones:** Or rather than play alone.

[87] **Mr Duncan:** Yes. I would look at it in that way. There are other things going on. If the way that children are playing stops others coming to the play site, that is not on. Therefore, as a worker, I would intervene. I am not involved in play schemes in particular, but I am involved in play sites and festivals—fields for children—and I make interventions there, because I see that some children's play disables others from getting involved.

[88] **Eleanor Burnham:** It is an interesting point. My kids are in their 20s now, but even when they were young it was almost *verboden* for an adult to talk to another child. We used to have parties for the children and so on, and many parents would not want another adult to talk to their children—they believed that people should not do that. Therefore, I suspect that you have a lot of intervening to do.

[89] **Mr Duncan:** Sometimes. Sometimes I let people try things out that others perceive as dangerous; I am interested in how you measure what is a perceived danger and what is a real danger.

[90] **Eleanor Burnham:** That is fascinating. It is about moving the boundaries, is it not?

[91] **Helen Mary Jones:** That would relate more to physical danger, would it not? I am picking up on what you have just said about if a child's play behaviour makes it impossible for someone else to use the play space there has to be an intervention.

[92] **Mr Duncan:** There is a whole spread. I am with children for a short time, over a weekend or a festival. I would assume that if you are on a permanent play site you have more contact and more awareness of the young people; you could judge their emotional resilience better with regard to name calling, teasing, and so on.

[93] **Helen Mary Jones:** Joyce Watson has another question building on these themes.

[94] **Joyce Watson:** In your written evidence, you say that play workers

[95] 'would endeavour to allow young people to have space to resolve their conflicts, giving them space and support to do this. They would believe that this resolution would be more sustainable as young people learn skills and reach more permanent solutions without external interventions.'

[96] Therefore, do you believe that current play work training provides sufficient guidance to workers in respect of this complex and skilled role that they play in addressing potential and actual bullying?

[97] **Mr Duncan:** I believe that it does. Jess Milne, who is the worker who ran it with Ali and I, did a whole section on ethics and responsibilities, rights and wrongs, and how young people explore that. There is guidance on safeguarding children and on duties and responsibilities. We do all sorts of activities on whether people are comfortable or uncomfortable with different things, and what pushes some people's buttons and gets them scared. There is a good grounding in the duty of care and responsibility, so I think that the training is all right. The feedback is that it is really good and changes people's perceptions and practice. I am aware that people from England are sneaking over the border to go on the courses in Powys.

[98] **Helen Mary Jones:** I hope that they are paying for it. [*Laughter.*] Do you want to come back on this, Joyce?

[99] **Joyce Watson:** I do. I am particularly interested in bullying, because my son spent his entire school life being bullied. People thought that he was dealing quite happily with it, but he was not. So, my question is going to be rather blunt and pointed: when and how do you assess—in your opinion, because this is a matter of opinion—that a person has the emotional capacity to deal with something? They might be hiding how they really feel.

[100] **Mr Duncan:** Are you asking how I assess it personally?

[101] **Joyce Watson:** In your programme.

[102] **Mr Duncan:** In the programme, we look at different sorts of play and how play works and providing a compensatory environment so that children can explore different stuff. We look at dealing with emotions and disclosure, and being accessible as play workers, so that children can talk to you. We look at being observant of different sorts of behaviour and group dynamics. These are all fairly well covered in the programme.

[103] **Joyce Watson:** Finally, are you happy that, at the end of the day, all of the systems and procedures would have worked effectively in every case?

[104] **Mr Duncan:** I am not sure. I do not work on a play site, although I have been to many play sites where there are rules about not hurting other people, and enjoying play and having the best time possible without hurting others. I am aware of specific sites having rules about behaviour, implementing them and having sanctions or consequences for children. So I think that there are systems that play workers build in that are site-specific. Within the training, we explore how you set those, I guess. I am happy that the training covers it, and I have been to sites where I have seen it happening. I also know what I do. I do not know what else I can offer you.

[105] **Angela Burns:** I want to ask a quick question: are your play workers trained on how to deal with the parents of a child who they think has bullied someone, or, indeed, is being bullied? I am talking about being able to say to the parents, ‘Look, your child keeps whacking all the other kids on the head, and he says it is because you do not tell him off and that is a problem.’

[106] **Mr Duncan:** Yes, there are sections and discussions within the training around managing neighbours and managing parents and other people’s concerns and perspectives.

[107] **Angela Burns:** Different families have different mores, do they not?

[108] **Mr Duncan:** They do, and different neighbours have different levels of tolerance with regard to what is play, what is anti-social behaviour and what constitutes acceptable noise. So, it is bits of this and bits of that.

[109] **Helen Mary Jones:** Joyce, I believe that you wanted to come back in on this.

[110] **Joyce Watson:** I did, because I need to get an answer on something. It is very easy to spot physical bullying. It is fairly obvious that somebody has whacked someone over the head with something. However, there are many more subtle forms of bullying than that. My question to you is: how well trained or well supported would those play workers be to deal with that form of bullying? How would they spot it?

[111] **Mr Duncan:** We use the model from Sheffield University on conscious persistent harm, and categories of bullying that are not only physical but also emotional—the ostracising of children, for example. So, that would be explored. The other bit would be

observation: looking at how children are interacting and behaving. For some of it, people would look at compensatory behaviour, in ensuring more opportunities for social play, role play or imaginative play, so that the children can come back in and try to act in different roles and in different ways. So, there is an expectation that play workers should observe young people and their behaviour and look at whether someone was being ostracised or was often unhappy and intervene around that.

10.00 a.m.

[112] **Angela Burns:** I want to talk about inclusive play, particularly with reference to children with disabilities. Barnardo's, in its evidence, said that

[113] 'parents worry that the training provided for play and youth workers does not have enough focus upon disability'.

[114] It went on to say that

[115] 'until parents' fears are listened to and parents are reassured regarding staff skills, many disabled children will not attend generic or inclusive play schemes or clubs'.

[116] When I read your evidence, I thought that you said that, in a way, but also did not say that. You seem to imply that there will be tensions anyway and talk about the real and perceived need for provision. I wonder whether you are saying that the parents of a disabled child might perceive that their child needs more support than they really do.

[117] **Mr Duncan:** That is very true. Within the course, we cover medical and social models of disability and work around inclusion and participation. We have a whole range of activities to explore that, providing creative ways of explaining why social models of disability are a more effective way of thinking. We have some activities related to innovation and inclusion. However, in my experience, it is often the parents who are disabling the child, saying 'Oh, they can't possibly do that' or 'They don't want to do that'. Their perception of what their child would like and what their child is capable of is sometimes quite different, and if you can get the parent away, the child often tries a whole range of other things. That is sometimes surprising for the parent, as well as the carer, the teacher and lots of other people who are connected to the young person.

[118] **Angela Burns:** Is there more that could be done in that respect, or do you think that play workers are trained to understand a parent's fear but to maximise the child's opportunities? Love can also sometimes smother; I am a smothering mother, so I understand it completely—my eldest daughter was about three and a half years old before she was allowed to go down a slide without me holding her hand. That was the first child; the second child was just thrown down the slide, but you learn these things as you go along.

[119] **Mr Duncan:** Getting people to understand the medical model sometimes causes a bit of dissonance, with people saying that they understand the world in a certain way that is different to the medical and social model, which causes tension. There is also the issue of trying to work out what is a reasonable fear. When we asked at what age parents would let a child strike a match and light a candle, people answered, 'At the age of 16' or 'They don't need to light candles', whereas I was thinking about the age of four. We asked at what age they would leave a child in the bath by themselves, and some answered '12'. A 12-year-old would not let you in the bathroom with them. People say that children can drown in 2 inches of water, but presumably they would make a splashing noise first. You can have some interesting discussions about real and perceived risk. I think that play workers are okay, are they not?



[120] I brought these juggling knives through security. [*Laughter.*] There is a difference between blunt and sharp: juggling with things that are really sharp is stupid and juggling with things that are really blunt is not. It is not dangerous at all; I can catch it the other way around. People look at it as something that is really dangerous. It is a question of getting people to stop to think about it. We do those kinds of things. There is a whole industry around disability and separate schools and special provision, so parents are supported but get into the mindset that their child is disabled. Therefore, getting children into a space where their abilities are seen is different and sometimes quite startling for the young person and the parents. The circus that I am part of is phenomenal for getting children out of wheelchairs, walking on broken glass, building human pyramids and doing things that are very different for them. Does that make sense?

[121] **Angela Burns:** Yes, it does. One thing that you say is ‘All means all’, so what you are saying is—I am not rocking any boats here—perhaps we focus too much on the ‘dis’ rather than the ‘able’, and that we need to look at children and bring out all the things that they can do, rather than constantly focus on all the things that they cannot do.

[122] **Mr Duncan:** Children are seen as the problem, rather than our provision. It is a critical part of the training, when the penny suddenly drops for people, and they realise that their one-size-fits-all provision is more of a problem than the children.

[123] **Eleanor Burnham:** We are living in a health and safety conscious environment, in which insurance and the legal parameters restrict us. I had to deal with the health and safety aspect of taking a group of wonderful scallywags out in a minibus on my own, which was breaking the law in itself. It is very difficult, is it not, to get the balance right while trying to give people experiences but knowing that you are moving the boundaries before you start? Is that where we have to re-educate the people who are in charge of and setting the parameters, particularly in legal and insurance terms?

[124] **Helen Mary Jones:** Are there also some issues about what people think the parameters are for what you can and cannot be insured for? People tell me that you cannot get insurance for community carnivals, but you can; you just need to know where to look for it.

[125] **Eleanor Burnham:** But it is difficult, is it not?

[126] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, so it is an interesting question as to what extent it is a real problem and to what extent people’s perception of its being a problem get in the way of allowing some of the more physically risky experiences.

[127] **Eleanor Burnham:** We live in a litigious situation, should anything go wrong; that is the point. You do your best as an adult, you hope that you have ticked all the boxes, but if things go wrong, you are in the you-know-what.

[128] **Mr Duncan:** ‘Managing Risk in Play Provision’, the Play England policy, is a strong document, which is supported by the Health and Safety Executive, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and so on. We use that, which includes a risk-benefit analysis, and we do a card sorting exercise that asks ‘If you play something for 100,000 hours, what are your chances of going to hospital?’ With rugby, you will have 300 visits to hospital, but from going to a playground, you will have two; it is just above table-stick sports, which include snooker. There are nearly as many injuries from playing snooker as there are from going to a playground. However, people do not see that. They will not ban rugby, but you are more than 100 times more likely to go to hospital if you play rugby than if you go to a playground. We have used ‘Managing Risk in Play Provision’ as an example and have held myth-breaking exercises. People kind of know that, if you send your children canoeing, they could die—they could tip out of the canoe and bang their heads—but you know that, if they go canoeing down

the Ardèche for two weeks, they will come back having had an amazing time and feeling different about themselves. So, you weigh up those risks and benefits.

[129] **Helen Mary Jones:** You certainly do. Do you want to come in, Sandy?

[130] **Sandy Mewies:** My question has been covered completely.

[131] **Helen Mary Jones:** You are right. The last question is from me and it is about funding. In its written evidence to us, North East Wales Play says that the Welsh Government

[132] 'should inject significantly more resources into the long term professional development of play workers'.

[133] In your evidence, you reference the funding of one aspect of training, saying that your understanding was that funding was 'fraught with stops and starts', with money coming through at some points but not at others. From your perspective, what are the key funding issues relating to play work training in Wales?

[134] **Mr Duncan:** I do not feel qualified to answer that. A lot of money is coming from Europe, and the P3 was set up, which was different and well received. It was going to be assessed and included a surrounding infrastructure. My understanding is that some bit of the European money did not arrive, Play Wales could not provide all the infrastructure and it all got a bit wonky. However, I do not know enough to feel—

[135] **Helen Mary Jones:** I was very much asking for your perspective and experience. We would not expect you to have the full global overview. That is fine.

[136] **Angela Burns:** I have a quick question, which is not connected to Helen Mary's question. Do you think that teachers have enough training in play? Do teachers need training in play to understand the play aspect of what children do when they are not sitting in a lesson, learning in a school environment, at both primary and secondary levels?

[137] **Mr Duncan:** Yes, they do. Teachers think that playtime is the bit between the learning sessions and they are quite disparaging of it. There are massive opportunities for play in school settings, within the school day and after school. Teachers could do with a bit of playfulness training and play training. However, it is hard, because of how they have set themselves up as a profession, to jump between being playful and being a teacher. I have been doing work in Bristol where dinner ladies are employed as play workers as opposed to meal supervisors, which has been quite effective. I have been involved in training young people as play or game initiators. So, you have a play stop instead of having a lonely bench where you sit when you have no mates. The play stop is like a bus stop where children queue, and if there are several children in the queue someone goes over to them and starts a game.

10.10 a.m.

[138] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a good idea.

[139] **Angela Burns:** I brought that up because, particularly in a primary setting, when children go outside, they play and they explore and push the boundaries, but the teacher, who is perceived as the authoritarian figure, stands there telling them to walk and not to run and so on. That is why I asked that question. I think that you have answered my next question. We need to train teachers more, but you probably cannot say whether teachers would be ready to accept that play is a natural state for children.

[140] **Mr Duncan:** I think that they are okay with it. We invented a game about cognitive

dissonance with maps to show what happens when you start with the wrong frame, which proved to be very effective. The idea was that we would get people to give instructions regarding how to get from my son's school to the railway station. We gave some people a globe, some an A to Z of Swansea, some an A to Z of Bristol, and some an old map of Swansea from 20 years ago. When you start giving instructions, the person with the globe is completely lost; the person with the A to Z is doing okay; and, for the person with the A to Z of Bristol, it does not matter which way they turn the map around, they will not be able to understand it—you ask them whether they can see the railway station and the motorway and they might answer 'Yes', but they are different landmarks. So, even if you have the same vocabulary, it does not make sense. When you show them, even with the best will in the world and the right instructions, they think about the world differently, and it does not work.

[141] So, people who work in education, particularly nursery nurses and those working in early years, think about things differently. That is okay, because it is all right to do so where they are working, but to have a different picture of how play works, they need to have a different sort of head. Once they understand that, it is all right, but sometimes there is a lot of confusion. For example, risk would be very different for play workers than it would be for teachers. Bullying might also require different interventions.

[142] **Eleanor Burnham:** I suppose that what we are doing here is quite significant in many respects, particularly if we could include this in the training of all of those working with young people. When I worked with my wonderful excluded kids throughout north-east Wales, I used to have lunch in the canteen, and I thought that the dinner ladies were really important people who had an enormous influence on kids, because they had time to talk to them. So, training for anyone who is involved with children is extremely important. One of the issues that you have touched upon, which we know about from other areas, is bullying. I was very taken by Joyce's points, because bullying takes many complex forms these days. This is the time when people like dinner ladies can have a significant role.

[143] **Mr Duncan:** I have been doing lots of work on Play Shaper, which featured in Play Wales's evidence. It is a programme about using public spaces. If we talk to architects, planners and others about play, why it is important, and what happens if you design towns that do not have much space to play, they will then start to look at what kind of citizens we will get. So, planners are starting to rewrite specifications and police officers are putting footballs in their cars. All kinds of interesting things are happening in relation to understanding the importance of play and what happens when someone is deprived of play opportunities.

[144] **Sandy Mewies:** It seems like an opportunity for the police to play.

[145] **Helen Mary Jones:** I was rather struck by the evidence from the previous witness who said that most people want to play. It depends what you call it, but people want to have fun and enjoy the environment and so on.

[146] **Eleanor Burnham:** We are too conditioned to work.

[147] **Helen Mary Jones:** I was paddling at the weekend. Does that count as play? I think that it does. I did not even have the excuse of having a child with me.

[148] **Mr Duncan:** We do play memories when we do the play shaper. We ask people where they played, what they remember doing and who they were playing with. Very few of these were in an area with a fence around it, a bouncy floor and a springy chicken, nor did many feature a corporate logo. People remember free play by the river, on the railway line—possibly forbidden—or building a den. So, you start to look at what you learn from that play and how that fits.

[149] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you, Pete, that is really useful. I also thank you for your written evidence, and for a really valuable session.

[150] Yr ydym wedi gorffen ychydig yn We have finished a little earlier than I had expected. I thank the witnesses and Members very much for succinct questions and responses.  
gynharach nag yr oeddwn wedi disgwyl.  
Diolch yn fawr i'r tystion a'r Aelodau am gwestiynau ac atebion eithaf cryno.

[151] Croesawaf, o'r Gronfa Loteri Fawr, I welcome, from the Big Lottery Fund, Barbara Wilding. Mae nifer ohonom yn Barbara Wilding. A number of us know adnabod Barbara o fyd ychydig yn wahanol. Barbara from a slightly different world.

[152] We are familiar with your previous roles.

[153] Croeso hefyd i Rob Roffe, rheolwr I also welcome Rob Roffe, policy manager for the Big Lottery Fund. Thank you both for being with us today. We will go straight into questions, if that is okay.  
polisi Cronfa Loteri Fawr. Diolch i'r ddau ohonoch am fod gyda ni heddiw. Awn yn syth i mewn i'r cwestiynau, os yw hynny'n iawn.

[154] Thank you both very much for coming. We are running a little ahead of time, which is extraordinary for any Assembly committee, but absolutely extraordinary for this one as we really like to get into the details of things. Thank you for making the time to be with us today. I will begin the questions. We are looking at the Welsh Government's play policy and implementation plan. In his written evidence, the Deputy Minister for Children told us that the Welsh Government had made significant progress in enhancing play and leisure provision for children and young people across Wales. From the lottery's perspective, do you have a view on that?

[155] **Ms Wilding:** We started building our programme before 2006, and we found that we had to put the programme into two stages because there was very little infrastructure for play. Our grant-giving project had two stages. The first was to build the infrastructure and then to receive applications to run the play activities around that infrastructure. So, you can take it from my comment that the opportunities for play were rather poor in 2006.

[156] **Helen Mary Jones:** Do you want to add anything to that, Rob?

[157] **Mr Roffe:** On the play policy implementation plan more generally, progress has certainly been made. However, from our perspective, there are two areas where the progress has stalled or may be in danger of stalling, that is, the time that it is taking to prepare the statutory guidance to define what constitutes good play opportunities, which we think are vitally important, and also the appropriate training opportunities for play workers. That is not to say that there have not been any developments around providing play opportunities for play workers. We have the national play work centre that is housed by Play Wales. However, I understand that funding for the play centre only lasts until December of this year, having spoken to colleagues in the play sector. Beyond that, the funding is uncertain, subject to an ongoing review by the children and young people's strategy division of the Welsh Assembly Government.

[158] In our programme, we could potentially fund 120 play workers across the whole of Wales, so it is important from our point of view that there is a sufficiently trained pool of play workers to fill those roles.

[159] **Helen Mary Jones:** Before I bring Eleanor in, Barbara, you mentioned that there was

insufficient infrastructure. Were you thinking of the human infrastructure that Rob has just been talking about in relation to trained play workers, or the physical infrastructure? Or were both infrastructures problematic?

[160] **Ms Wilding:** It was a combination of both. I am talking about 2006 because that is what our programme was based on.

[161] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is very helpful.

[162] **Eleanor Burnham:** Good morning. In your written evidence you outline how the child's play programme was developed in response to gaps in provision identified by the play policy implementation group. You go on to say that many of the issues identified by the play policy implementation group still require action. Can you provide further detail on the actions that have not been progressed? What more should be done, and by whom, to progress these actions? Also, do you have the funding for that?

[163] **Ms Wilding:** As you know, any programme has a life and ours comes to an end after three years. Is that correct, Rob?

[164] **Mr Roffe:** It lasts for up to five years, or something like that.

[165] **Ms Wilding:** We were awarded the final contracts only about three or four weeks ago, and only yesterday I signed off another couple of applications. So, it will be formally announced next week who the applicants were and who received the funding for five years or thereafter. This one programme is worth £13 million. As you will be aware, the lottery gives about £1 million a week to Wales from its various programmes. Crucial to any investment that the Big Lottery Fund makes in Wales, and to the ability to build on that investment, is the involvement of local authorities.

[166] **Eleanor Burnham:** May I clarify that annex 2, which summarises the infrastructure projects funded by the Big Lottery Fund, refers to historical projects and not the ones that you have just referred to?

10.20 a.m.

[167] **Ms Wilding:** No, these are the ones to which we awarded money to build the infrastructure.

[168] **Eleanor Burnham:** When was that?

[169] **Mr Roffe:** The programme was launched in 2006, and the awards were made in 2007. Some are due to end towards the end of this year and others will end next year. That has been followed by the round 2 projects, which we have just awarded.

[170] **Eleanor Burnham:** So, you have set up the infrastructure as specified in annex 2.

[171] **Ms Wilding:** That is correct.

[172] **Eleanor Burnham:** Okay. Thank you.

[173] **Helen Mary Jones:** Our next set of questions is about the involvement of local authorities. Angela Burns has the first questions and you may be able to expand a little, Barbara, on your findings on this issue.

[174] **Angela Burns:** Good morning. In your evidence, you mention that there is 'some

local authority ambivalence towards projects’—that is one nice, neat little phrase. You also note that the involvement of local authorities is variable, and that local authorities need to take greater responsibility for delivering play. Why do you believe that is and how significant, in the long term, are the implications for play provision across Wales?

[175] **Ms Wilding:** We have always viewed local authority involvement as part of the sustainability plan of this investment. As Mr Roffe has already said, the applications involve the employment of 120 care workers over the five-year period. However, play does not stop at the end of the five years. The important thing about this is that it is safe, supervised play. Therefore, if you were to remove those play workers—the supervisory element—the safe play could suffer to some degree. We have always included the local authorities and we had hoped that they would embrace the play programme more enthusiastically than they have done. That is perhaps why some of the terminology appears as it does.

[176] I believe that it comes down to the fact that there is no statutory definition of play. We accept that many local authorities have invested hugely in leisure. However, leisure is not the same as having somewhere to play or to hang out on your doorstep. It is wonderful that the title of the committee’s inquiry includes the words ‘hang out’, for the time when young people no longer want to play on a roundabout, or a swing, or whatever. As we know, young people who wander the streets, kicking a ball around, perhaps creating fear among some communities, just want somewhere safe to go. I know from my experience of talking to children in some of the Valleys that, although you can travel for free to the leisure centres, they do not want to go because they are in the next valley. It is about what they can do in their own community. Quite a lot of this play, and certainly from the round 2 applications, is mobile—it goes to them.

[177] Therefore, there are two elements. First, we would like the local authorities to come on board in a bigger way than they have done, because of the sustainability of the £13 million investment. However, secondly, they, and probably others, are waiting for greater guidance on the definition of play, so that they can show in their plans how they are embracing the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

[178] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you; that is helpful.

[179] **Eleanor Burnham:** May I ask a quick supplementary question?

[180] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, if you are brief.

[181] **Eleanor Burnham:** I presume that our previous witness, Peter Duncan, would be able to apply for lottery funding for his play set up?

[182] **Helen Mary Jones:** The applications have been co-ordinated through Play Wales.

[183] **Ms Wilding:** Yes. In fact, the second round of applications has closed, and they have been awarded—I finally signed them off yesterday.

[184] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. Joyce Watson has the next questions.

[185] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning. Thank you for your paper, and for its honesty. I wish to further explore local government’s ambivalence towards projects. You note in your paper that, in your opinion, there are departmental silos that are proving difficult to penetrate—I have some sympathy with that opinion. How significant a barrier is cross-departmental working? Are there any specific local authority departments—not authorities—that are more problematic to engage with in joint working?

[186] **Ms Wilding:** I will address the first part of the question, and then I will turn to Mr Roffe to answer the part on the difficulties in engagement. For those of us who have been in public life for so very long, it is no surprise that an awful lot of public bodies operate in silos. From our perspective, I think—in fact, I know—that we have found it difficult to get people understand the importance of play, and what it means to health, education, family cohesion and to greater communities. Play is a huge element in cohesion and getting people who feel isolated in their homes out into the environment, mixing with other parents when they feel that they are on their own, and making those informal networks, which are hugely important to building confidence. From what I have seen, it can affect economic inactivity by giving people confidence and making them think, ‘I can do a bit more’.

[187] Coming back to your specific question, that is not particularly acknowledged in the service delivery or the structure of some public sector bodies that oversee this. Indeed, we found that play is an element that is almost given to the lowest common denominator to push forward. Very few chief executives would talk about play, and very few directors would talk about how play affects their particular department, be it the health department, the education department or any other, and yet it is hugely important. Perhaps I need to pass over to Rob, who can talk about some of the blockers that we have experienced.

[188] **Mr Roffe:** In relation to the silos to which you referred, when we reviewed our programme last year our applicants and grant holders were telling us that play is not necessarily seen as being the business of local government, partly because in Wales, traditionally, it has been taken forward by the third sector. When you dig down into local authorities and individual departments, if you want an all-encompassing and proper approach to play, you need to engage with planners, community safety partnerships and a whole host of bodies like that. They do not necessarily see play as being part of their remit. A lot of that is to do with awareness raising and educating individuals in local authority departments by saying, ‘You might be dealing with transport, but if your transport policy or approach to transport means that someone cannot access a local play opportunity or an open space, that is a problem that needs to be addressed and you have a role in addressing that’. That is what we were referring to in the evidence when talking about the silos that need to be broken down.

[189] I want to re-emphasise the fact that, in our experience, the play agenda is not addressed at a high enough level in local authorities. The young people who have been leading on our applications from the local authority’s side tend to be play officers or play workers—quite junior members of staff in local government departments. Once you start going above that, there might be some chief leisure officers who show an interest, but beyond that, it is not on the radar. So, the issue is about awareness raising.

[190] The advent of the Measure in particular, and the requirement to plan and provide an audit of play provision, should knock that up the agenda in local authorities considerably. I would suggest that, given that we have already invested in a play infrastructure, part of a local authority’s responsibility has already been to audit in relation to play opportunities. We have put money into projects that we have recently assessed, so there are play opportunities there. We feel strongly that there is an opportunity for local authorities, if they have not done so already, to engage with those, and it will ultimately support them in taking forward the requirements in the children and families Measure.

[191] **Joyce Watson:** You have not really told me anything that I do not know, because I used to be a county councillor. Another thing is going on alongside this, and I do not know whether you want to express an opinion on it. It has been the case for some years that, in relation to play areas—however you define them, but let us take that as meaning a space with some structures on it, such as a slide, a swing or whatever, for older or younger children—some authorities have made a policy decision to hand those back to that community, thereby handing over the responsibility for organising play and keeping the equipment in a safe

manner to people who are, in my opinion, ill-equipped to carry out those functions. With that, play has ceased. Alongside that, they have encouraged those organisations, if you can loosely call them that, to access funds—probably some of your funds. What is your take on that? It is certainly my observation that, once they have done that, they feel that they have satisfied the need because they have farmed it out, despite the fact that they have farmed it out to people who cannot actually cope with it. What is your opinion of the sustainability of community ownership of play facilities, when people are not equipped to deal with it? Are you finding it to be the way I fear it is?

10.30 a.m.

[192] **Mr Roffe:** With regard to the long-term sustainability of some of the applications that we have funded, they are looking to hand things over to the community in the longer term. By and large, upfront and initially, we are funding play worker-led play opportunities across Wales. The idea is that those play workers will go into communities and facilitate play opportunities, utilising the resources available in the community. The play worker post will exist in the community for up to five years to facilitate that play. When the grant funding comes to the end of its five years, either more funding will be found and the projects will continue as they have done or other options will need to be considered.

[193] One option considered by our applicants was the idea of transferring this across to the community in the longer term. However, it would not just be a case of handing it over and saying, ‘There you go; get on with it’. It would be handed over with the play worker having been there for that period of time, working with the local community raising awareness of play and educating people about play, which is something that is embedded in the objectives of the programme; it is a very important aspect. So, provided that communities are given the support that they need to fulfil those obligations in the longer term, that might be achievable. Clearly, it would not be appropriate to say to a community group, ‘There is the kit; go and get on with it’.

[194] **Ms Wilding:** I would like to come in on that. As we know from a very good report that was prepared for the social statistician for the Assembly, community cohesion is very variable across Wales. In particular, there is very strong community cohesion in some of the Community First areas and in Gwent. So, you could not have one plan for everyone. One size would not fit all.

[195] **Helen Mary Jones:** I have a question about the participation of children and young people in decisions relating to play. The committee is looking at whether children and young people have the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect them, such as about their having safe places to play and hang out. We have had quite variable evidence so far, as you would probably expect. In your experience, what evidence is there that local authorities and others are supporting children’s being involved in making decisions about, and developing, play and leisure provision in their areas?

[196] **Ms Wilding:** Again, it is variable. We know that some local authorities have youth councils and youth mayors and involve children and young people in most of the decisions that affect young people, while other local authorities do not. From our applications, it is not just about them rocking up and giving something but seeing what the need is in that area.

[197] **Mr Roffe:** The play audits that have been conducted by the infrastructure projects have been informed by young people in the communities they are seeking to serve. The importance of engaging with young people in designing what the play opportunities that we fund would ultimately look like was instilled in us at a very early stage of developing the programme. Play Wales told us that in no uncertain terms when we started working with the programme. My opinion, rather than that of the Big Lottery Fund, is that the third sector is



much better at engaging young people in the decision-making processes than local authorities whose approach in the past has been to say, ‘We have built a fixed-equipment play area over there, and we have provided for children’s play opportunities’, which is not necessarily what the children need or want, and it certainly does not reflect the ethos and the approach of the play policy implementation plan.

[198] **Helen Mary Jones:** To develop that theme slightly, when applications come in—because your main role is as a funder, although you set the programmes within which you want people to make applications—is it a requirement on organisations applying to you for funding for this kind of work that children and young people should have been involved and consulted? I ask this from a resource point of view, because some of the evidence has shown us very clearly that quite expensive investments, either in people or in buildings, such as skate parks or whatever, have proved to be completely useless because young people were not consulted, the resources were put in the wrong place, the families of younger children were not consulted, and the facilities were available at the wrong time or whatever. Therefore, do you expect that element of consultation of people who apply to you?

[199] **Mr Roffe:** It is a general rule across the board with our applications that those applying to us will need to demonstrate that they have consulted with the ultimate beneficiaries of the programme. Whether it is a community group or children who will benefit from play opportunities, the applicants need to adequately demonstrate as part of the assessment that they have had that consultation. If it is not strong enough, they will ultimately not be funded because the need would not have been demonstrated. Young people have certainly been consulted and involved in the development of those applications.

[200] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is helpful. I think that Eleanor has some questions about sustainability.

[201] **Eleanor Burnham:** If we had more women in these situations, and more of them were chief executives, leaders of councils and heads of department, we might have a different view of what is happening. Who knows? However, within the context of the very onerous current economic climate, how confident are you that local authorities will use existing budgets to sustain the projects that you have funded; and if not, what else could be done, by whom, and at what level? Should it be the UK Government, because the Treasury gives the diktat on these things? I do not think that there are many people who would have much to say about play in the Treasury, perhaps. Alternatively, should it be the Welsh Government or local government? You mentioned previously that you are only dealing with people at quite a low level. It is not a derogatory observation; it is just that we are discussing how to influence this at the very highest level, so that it percolates throughout. What confidence do you have that we will make strides, because you have allocated your money now and so that much has been decided?

[202] **Ms Wilding:** Graham Benfield, the director of the Big Lottery Fund and the chair of the Children’s Play programme—and I was a member of the committee that oversaw the awarding of this second round of grants committee—met Huw Lewis, the Deputy Minister for Children, and from that meeting came a suggestion that there be a national steering group that would be able to look at how these programmes were developing, how local authorities were embracing this and looking towards the future. One of the first things that we would want is to say what the definition is so that local authorities could see where they can engage and where their gaps are, against which they will be monitored. Therefore, we would very much want that committee to meet. The meeting scheduled for March was, sadly, cancelled the day before it was due to be held. There is now a date in the diary for 10 June, and we are very hopeful that that meeting will take place. We want it to be a proper committee, with terms of reference and with minuted meetings so that the issue of sustainability can be thrashed out right from the very beginning. We can work towards it over a period of years, so that it does

not catch anyone by surprise at year 5. If that committee does come into being and does operate in the way we envisage, we think that we can work towards sustainability with more confidence than we would without the committee.

10.40 a.m.

[203] **Eleanor Burnham:** Could that work not be done by the Welsh Local Government Association?

[204] **Helen Mary Jones:** No, not if the third sector is going to be involved.

[205] **Ms Wilding:** It is at ministerial level.

[206] **Eleanor Burnham:** Okay. It is at the highest possible level, so it is something that we could be monitoring.

[207] **Helen Mary Jones:** It is a recommendation that we could make, that the steering group be set up with proper terms of reference, with a clear membership, minuted meetings and all of those sorts of things.

[208] **Eleanor Burnham:** That is so that we could monitor it from this committee and in Plenary.

[209] **Ms Wilding:** The WLGA could be a member of that group, of course.

[210] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, it would not have to play a key role.

[211] **Angela Burns:** As I understand it, if you award all of these projects, you will have about 120 play workers. Are there 120 unemployed play workers loitering around, and if not, how are you going to find and train them? What involvement do you have in providing that training?

[212] **Ms Wilding:** I will pass on to Rob in a moment about recruitment. As mentioned earlier, the training facility that has been set up is apparently excellent, and it has been training people for a little while. However, the funding runs out at the end of this year, so our concern is, in the natural churn of people among those 120, where they will get quality training and so on. So, we see the national training as a key part of underpinning the £13 million that we have put into this endeavour. As for the recruitment, Rob knows about that and will have more to say.

[213] **Ms Roffe:** Recruitment is fundamentally an issue for the individual projects that we fund. They obviously need to demonstrate that their plans are credible and realistic and, if that is the case, they are awarded funding and they can recruit accordingly. The crucial point, as Barbara just said, is training. If the training is there, then the play workers can be trained, and there is a pool for us to draw from to fill those 120 play worker places. Play Wales is comfortable with that number; it thinks that there is a suitable pool of talent to be able to fulfil that. However, that becomes questionable if the training is not there to ensure that those individuals are at the top of their game and have the qualifications that they need to be able to fulfil those roles.

[214] **Angela Burns:** As part of your project requirements, are you at all prescriptive as to the type of training or play workers that you want involved, given that, as we have learnt, there are different styles and emphases on different types of play involvement?

[215] **Mr Roffe:** That is very much a matter for the individual projects. We do prescribe

some things, but we are not prescriptive to that level. We must recognise circumstances and approaches and give the projects the flexibility to recruit on that basis. As long as the recruitment is within certain parameters and is nothing illegal or untoward is going on, we are content for them to proceed on that basis.

[216] **Ms Wilding:** Looking towards sustainability, one would hope that engaging the people who have used the facility with their own children is a way of recruiting from within communities as the programme rolls out.

[217] **Joyce Watson:** I want to ask a little more about the issues affecting the play experience of particular groups of children, such as disabled children. A report published by the Children's Commissioner for Wales in 2008 reviewed local authority strategies for disabled children and young people's access to play. The report found that fully inclusive play has yet to become a reality for some children and young people. Have you found evidence of this during the work you have undertaken on the child's play programme?

[218] **Ms Wilding:** Applications do not come before the committee unless they have satisfied all of our equal opportunity standards—the equal opportunity standards apply throughout the BIG. Every applicant must satisfy that requirement and demonstrate how they will address it. The BIG comes from a background of inclusivity, in that we do not do something specifically for one particular group. This is about being inclusive and ensuring that any programme can be and is inclusive. The reason for that is that if we were to award a project just for disability, for example, that could start to isolate those individuals. The style of this programme is about safe, supervised play. We hope that not only would they be encouraged to join, because that is the nature of the applications, but also that, once they have gone there, they will feel safe and will be encouraged to go back again of their own volition. That really is the ethos of how we approach awarding the money. They have to be able to demonstrate that all their work will be open to everyone and that they can deliver against those requirements.

[219] **Mr Roffe:** To add to that, one thing that came out of the consultation that we have done and the discussion that we have had with others is that there is a fear, or even intimidation, on the part of parents about the prospect of their children, particularly disabled children, engaging in the sorts of play opportunities that we are funding.

[220] The programme could help on two levels, potentially. First, the focus on community-based play means that the environment is very familiar and non-threatening to those individuals, and another element of that is that the parents also know that it is being delivered locally. The second point relates to our strong emphasis on staff play provision. We have fully trained professionals and play workers who are aware of disabilities and special needs and who can work with those children and others to overcome the barriers and stigmas that they face. They can instil in those families and the children the sense that they are fully engaged, which, above all, ensures that it is a pleasurable experience for them and that they enjoy it.

[221] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you; that is very helpful. I think, Eleanor, that the question about the national steering group has been answered.

[222] **Eleanor Burnham:** Do not worry. I have another question.

[223] **Helen Mary Jones:** I am not worried at all. Do you have another question?

[224] **Eleanor Burnham:** I do, indeed. Thank you for your indulgence. We know that many leisure facilities are coming to the end of their useful lives, particularly swimming pools. I was sitting with a very important person from Gwynedd only last week at the sports Wales event, and it is obvious that there are many issues, particularly for rural areas. Previous

testimony has suggested that, even if there were facilities, there are transport issues and so there could be difficulties, as you mentioned. What constitutes supervised play? I know that I must not stray onto the Chair's next question, but I am interested in whether this will just be a transitory matter or whether you will be involved in setting up any infrastructure, bearing in mind what I said earlier.

[225] **Ms Wilding:** That relates back to the work of the steering group and how the content of the definition is described, to give local authorities some direction as to what they should be looking at. It also comes back to the fact that, perhaps in the past, a great deal of money was invested in nice buildings and leisure and all the rest of it, but that was not what the community wanted. At the heart of whatever the future looks like, what people want has to be taken into account. For example, if they do not want swimming pools and would rather have something different because life has changed and they have moved on, that is what should happen. However, that should not mean that there is no provision for play because they have taken the swimming pool away. It has to be about what the community wants, which is why we put so much emphasis on the steering group.

[226] **Eleanor Burnham:** Will the steering group go out to ask these communities what they want, through the local authorities or through some other medium?

[227] **Ms Wilding:** That is exactly the sort of thing that the steering group will be saying to the local authorities, namely that, in building provision, they have to demonstrate how they are taking into account the views of those who live in that community.

10.50 a.m.

[228] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is really helpful and is very useful evidence indeed. There is a final question from me. Through the Child's Play programme, the BIG is aiming to invest, as you have told us, up to £13 million in the Welsh play sector. You have touched on this at several points, but I want to give you the opportunity to build a little on what you have said. That is a big investment, so what are the key actions that need to be taken by the Welsh Government to maximise the influence and long-term sustainability of that investment? Bear in mind that the role of this committee is predominantly to make recommendations to the Welsh Government, although we are also able to make recommendations to others. However, the recommendations to the Government are the ones that we are best able to monitor and deliver on. What are those key actions that the Government needs to take if this investment is to be sustainable, and to make the most difference?

[229] **Ms Wilding:** Our top priority would be for the contribution of both our play projects and play infrastructure projects to be recognised in any statutory guidance supporting the play requirements within the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. In addition, for the purposes of that Measure, play should be defined in line with the approach outlined in the play policy implementation plan, and the infrastructure projects funded through BIG's Child's Play programme should be used to support local authorities to audit play provision in their area. The contribution of play projects funded by BIG should be considered when local authorities seek to secure adequate play provision for children in their localities. A lot of work went into building this programme, and we would like to share those audits and that work with local authorities, so that we can see where the baseline was, where it is now, and look towards the future.

[230] **Helen Mary Jones:** To build on what you said, a key way of making that happen is to get the steering group up and running, with proper terms of reference and minutes, so that there is transparency and we all know where it is going with that.

[231] **Ms Wilding:** Yes, and the measurables will come with that, building a programme

with performance measurement, and so on.

[232] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you both very much. That has been incredibly useful. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

10.52 a.m.

### **Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion**

[233] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yr ydym o hyd ychydig ar y blaen, ond yr wyf yn awgrymu ein bod yn symud at yr eitem nesaf ar yr agenda, sy'n sesiwn breifat. Cynigiaf fod **Helen Mary Jones:** We are still running a little ahead of time, but I suggest that we move on to the next item on the agenda, which is a private session. I move that

*y pwyllgor yn cytuno symud i sesiwn breifat o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 10.37.* *the committee agrees to go into private session under Standing Order No. 10.37.*

[234] Gwelaf eich bod yn fodlon. I see that you are all content.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.  
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.54 p.m.  
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.54 p.m.*