



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau**

**The National Assembly for Wales
The Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
Committee**

**Dydd Mercher, 20 Medi 2006
Wednesday, 20 September 2006**

Cynnwys
Contents

- 3 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau
Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest
- 4 Adroddiad y Gweinidog
Minister's Report
- 20 Rhagolwg ar Is-ddeddfwriaeth
Secondary Legislation Forward Look
- 21 Dechrau'n Deg a'r Cyfnod Sylfaen
Flying Start and the Foundation Phase
- 36 Adolygiad Polisi Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig—Rhan Tri—Casglu Tystiolaeth:
Elite Supported Employment Agency Cyf
Policy Review of Special Educational Needs—Part Three—Evidence Gathering:
Elite Supported Employment Agency Ltd

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

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

Aelodau Cynulliad yn bresennol: Peter Black (Cadeirydd), Christine Chapman, Jeff Cuthbert, Jane Davidson (y Gweinidog dros Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau), Irene James, Janet Ryder, Owen John Thomas.

Swyddogion yn bresennol: Christopher Burdett, Pennaeth yr Is-adran Strategaeth Plant; Keith Davies, Pennaeth yr Is-adran Perfformiad a Gwella; Richard Hart, Pennaeth yr Is-adran Gynllunio a Chyllido; John Valentine Williams, Cyfarwyddwr y Grŵp Cymwysterau a Chwricwlwm.

Eraill yn bresennol: Jane Coia, Scope, Canolfan Datblygu Sgiliau Cwmbran; Kathy Rivett, Elite Supported Employment Agency Cyf; Andrea Wayman, Cyfarwyddwr, Elite Supported Employment Agency Cyf.

Gwasanaeth y Pwyllgor: Steve George, Clerc; Ruth Hatton, Dirprwy Glerc.

Assembly Members in attendance: Peter Black (Chair), Christine Chapman, Jeff Cuthbert, Jane Davidson (Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills), Irene James, Janet Ryder, Owen John Thomas.

Officials in attendance: Christopher Burdett, Head of Children's Strategy Division; Keith Davies, Head of Performance and Improvement Division; Richard Hart, Head of Planning and Funding Division; John Valentine Williams, Director of Qualifications and Curriculum Group.

Others in attendance: Jane Coia, Scope, Cwmbran Skills Development Centre; Kathy Rivett, Elite Supported Employment Agency Ltd; Andrea Wayman, Director, Elite Supported Employment Agency Ltd.

Committee Service: Steve George, Clerk; Ruth Hatton, Deputy Clerk.

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.00 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.00 a.m.*

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

[1] **Peter Black:** Good morning, everyone. I welcome Members, officials and members of the public back to the Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee for the new term. I have some housekeeping announcements to make, as usual. If there is an emergency, the ushers will indicate the nearest safe exit. Headsets are available for translation and amplification and, if you are unclear about how to use them, the ushers will assist you. For Members, channel 1 is for the translation and channel 0 will give you the language of the floor, if you need to use it as amplification. I ask everyone to switch off their mobiles, BlackBerrys and any other electronic devices completely, because they interfere with the sound system. I also remind people that the microphones are working perfectly, so please do not touch the buttons as you will disrupt everything. We have received an apology from William Graham, who is not very well this morning, and I understand that the Conservatives may send a substitute later, which will be fine. That is the only apology that I have had notified to me. I now invite Members to make declarations of interest under Standing Order No. 4.6.

[2] **Jeff Cuthbert:** It is a point that I have made before, and it will be relevant when we get to item 1 of the Minister's report. I am a former employee of the Welsh Joint Education

Committee.

[3] **Peter Black:** Thank you, Jeff.

9.02 a.m.

Adroddiad y Gweinidog Minister's Report

[4] **Peter Black:** I invite the Minister to make a brief introduction to her report.

[5] **The Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Davidson):** I am pleased, as usual, to present my report to the committee. The report covers specific areas identified by Members, ongoing programmes of work, as well as issues of current interest.

[6] In relation to item 7 on higher education, Members will be interested in the independent Institute for Employment Studies report on graduate employment and employability in Wales, which was published on 31 August. The report provides robust evidence about the graduate labour market and its buoyancy in Wales. The value of a degree remains high, and rising numbers of graduates have been absorbed by an increase in the demand for graduates. Between 2003 and 2005, the average graduate wage was £27,900, compared with £19,200 for those with qualifications to A-level or its equivalent, and £13,400 for those with lower qualifications. The report also confirms that most of Wales's graduates still enter graduate jobs, with more than four out of five graduates working in graduate-level jobs, such as managerial or senior official posts or in professional occupations. The report showed that there is no greater brain drain from Wales than from other parts of the United Kingdom; postgraduate opportunities are buoyant, and Wales is seen as being at the forefront of employability initiatives in the United Kingdom. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales will arrange for copies of the report to be sent to all Members.

[7] **Peter Black:** We will deal with any questions on that as soon as we get to item 7 in your report. Item 1 is the Welsh baccalaureate qualification external evaluation final report. I think that we are going to have a separate item on that at the next meeting anyway, so Members will have much longer to scrutinise it then. However, if Members want to ask any questions on the matter now, I am sure that the Minister will deal with them.

[8] **Jane Davidson:** Perhaps I could clarify the situation. What we have put on the agenda today is the independent report for Members' comment; what we will bring forward at the next meeting, with the contributors who have been involved in the pilot work, is the way forward. Therefore, the opportunity for Members to influence the way forward on the back of the independent report is now.

[9] **Peter Black:** Will that opportunity not be available at the next meeting as well?

[10] **Jane Davidson:** Clearly, it will, but we will be discussing then a planned way forward, which I will be tabling before Members at that meeting, alongside presentations from people who have been involved in the pilot schemes.

[11] **Peter Black:** Thank you for that clarification, Minister.

[12] **Janet Ryder:** In light of the Minister's comments, when you read this report, you cannot escape the high levels of concern among students, parents and people in higher education, who will, eventually, accept the baccalaureate. Despite what the reality might be, those concerns have come through very clearly in this report. I do not know whether the

Minister wants to answer now or next week, but I would like to know how she intends to respond to those concerns, and whether they alter, in any way, the way in which she intends to market and portray this examination.

[13] **Peter Black:** I will bring Owen and Jeff in first.

[14] **Owen John Thomas:** In point 2 of the report—

[15] **Peter Black:** Let us do all of the questions and then the Minister can come back. If you want to come back again, you can do so.

[16] **Owen John Thomas:** Okay, fine. Diolch yn fawr. My question is on item 2.

[17] **Peter Black:** I am sorry, but I thought that you wanted to come in on the Welsh baccalaureate.

[18] **Owen John Thomas:** The Welsh baccalaureate is in there, is it not?

[19] **Peter Black:** Point 2 is on the external examination results; we will come back to that.

[20] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I am very pleased with the report and the evaluation. Not surprisingly, there are issues of concern with it, which is what you would expect after piloting a brand new qualification—issues of acceptability and the understandability of the qualification, particularly by higher education institutions and employers. All of that is there, and I am not in the least surprised to see them. Other issues about the volume of work clearly need to be addressed. I do not want to anticipate what Owen John will raise under point 2, but not everyone who enrolled for it completed it. There will be reasons for that, but, nevertheless, the great bulk of them did. I think that that is to be recognised, and we ought to congratulate all of those involved in the design of the baccalaureate and the implementation of the pilot phase.

[21] In terms of feedback, I think that it is worth reminding ourselves that the Welsh baccalaureate is a qualification in its own right. It is not merely a qualification for higher education; it is not just an entry into higher education. The point is made in the report that it is a valuable qualification for employment. I think that there is more work to be done with employers to make sure that they are on board and that they understand some of those key issues. Either now, in the Minister's reply, or next time we discuss this, can we have some ideas about how that can be achieved?

[22] It is particularly pleasing to note that we will be moving towards piloting a foundation baccalaureate, so that it will be available across all age ranges from 14 upwards. I would welcome any further comments on how that pilot will be organised. I think that it is worth noting that because the baccalaureate has key skills at its heart—within the core—it is bound to be the case that those students who successfully complete the core will have that extra rounded qualification, well suited to the world of employment. I think that the notes in point 2 that show the number of key skills achieved endorse that fact. Do you agree, Minister?

[23] **Peter Black:** Thank you, Jeff, but you do not always have to phrase your comments as a question.

[24] **The Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Davidson):** Thank you very much indeed. I want to say how much I welcome the report. We have always been very clear, from this side of the house—and I know, strongly supported by members of the committee—that, in piloting the Welsh baccalaureate, we had to have a qualification that

was fit for purpose and that would enhance opportunities for young people from Wales, and not restrict them in any way. The evaluation, which is utterly independent, tells us that we have done that. In a relatively small number of centres, we have been piloting the overarching number of people who are taking level 3 and level 2 qualifications, and, from this term, we are also piloting it at foundation level. The most important aspect of that is that we will be coming in pre-16 and, therefore, it will fit with the 14-19 agenda in offering the foundation level, the intermediate level, and then level 3, which is the A-level equivalent.

[25] Your question, Janet, is absolutely fundamental to level 3. It is obviously an area that the baccalaureate team, which runs the baccalaureate centres, has continued to look at very strongly. Until we confirm the roll-out of the baccalaureate, the major marketing campaign cannot start.

9.10 a.m.

[26] I am delighted with the number of universities that have accepted the baccalaureate so far. All the Welsh universities have been happy to support it. If you look at the UCAS form, you will see that the Welsh baccalaureate is tariffed at 120 points, which is equivalent to an 'A' grade at A-level. Students with the baccalaureate qualification are also being taken into account at Russell Group universities this year. That is why I wanted members of the committee to hear from those who were involved in the delivery of the pilot scheme about their experiences. Quite clearly, as we roll out the baccalaureate, we need to ensure that universities right across the United Kingdom are accepting the baccalaureate in the tariff form in which the UCAS has recognised it, where they are using the UCAS tariff points. Of course, not all universities use UCAS tariff points, and it is important that people understand that. Entry requirements are a matter for individual universities.

[27] We have not had feedback that I am aware of this year—and I will ask John or Keith to comment—of any difficulty with baccalaureate students using their baccalaureate qualification. In fact, a number of universities have actively welcomed it, because the baccalaureate contains the key skills that universities and employers have been saying, this year and other years, that they want. They want to know that students are literate and numerate, that they have independent skills to produce their own research work, to work as a part of a team, and so on.

[28] To take you back to the key skills statistics that we have already presented to the committee, the knowledge that key skills in Wales are growing at a much faster rate than in England is important. We have the highest percentage of key skills awards at the A-level equivalent of any region of the United Kingdom, which is 16 per cent of all awards and 29 per cent of all level 3 application of number awards. So, we are seeing this drive for key skills being taken forward. There were 25,800 wider key skills awards in 2004-05, which is 25 per cent of the wider key skills awards across the United Kingdom, compared with, for example, 1 per cent awarded in Northern Ireland.

[29] This agenda has really been driving forward. The big push now, as I bring the plan to you in the next committee, is to take it forward with employers, because they are the other key audience in terms of ensuring that the baccalaureate is fully recognised and that they understand that it contains exactly those key skills that they have been calling for. The big push in universities across the whole of the United Kingdom is ensuring that they all recognise the UCAS tariff points and what the baccalaureate is.

[30] **Janet Ryder:** I am a little confused, because the Minister said that there seemed to be some uncertainty about the roll-out of the baccalaureate. I presume that there is not an uncertainty and that the Minister will definitely pursue the roll-out. Will you explain where the uncertainties lie in relation to the roll-out programme?

[31] I am glad that you touched on the point about employers. They have all cried out for key skills, but they do not, at the moment recognise, that this qualification has them. When will we see, perhaps in the response in the next committee, a publicity campaign to turn that around? The other issue is with regard to the perception of the workload—although it may not be a perception. It certainly concerns those students who are continuing to do A-levels, because, while that A-level qualification remains in existence, that will be the main focus for many of them. If they are going to university, they know that they will have to hit certain grades in those subject areas. For some of them, either they are not seeing the value of pursuing it or they perceive it to be too heavy a workload. I know that there is talk of increasingly using the coursework that they do for their A-levels to complete some of the core work, but we will certainly be looking in the next committee to see how that can be overcome.

[32] Other issues that we will be looking at are some of the financial issues that were raised in this document. There seems to be a number of people who anticipate that, when it is rolled out, there could be, on present budgeting, a significant shortfall. Some respondents said that they did not feel that the full cost of rolling this out in schools and colleges was being picked up in the core costs, so we would like a response on those financial issues either now or, if the Minister so wishes, at the next meeting when we have the full debate.

[33] **Jane Davidson:** I did not indicate any uncertainty in my remarks. I have maintained the same position throughout, which is that as an evidence-based Minister, subject to the evidence demonstrating that we had a fit-for-purpose qualification, the Assembly Government would want to roll out that qualification. The importance of having independent evaluation—and the evaluation report suggests that we should continue evaluating independently as we roll this out—is to consider the best way of doing that. That is what I will bring to the committee at its next meeting. For example, the report recommends that we have a phased evaluation and, even if the report had not recommended that, I would have wanted to do that because we are only just starting the pilot of the foundation baccalaureate this term. It is crucial that we test these mechanisms before we roll out the qualification.

[34] I will bring evidence to the next meeting, supported by the expertise of people who are delivering this at the moment, so that you can interrogate them fully on what has been going on and how those people think that we should take the baccalaureate forward. I will bring an action plan to the committee from the Assembly Government on our proposals for delivery. It will focus, in particular, on the areas of the report that are crucial to taking this forward—the marketing and publicity and how we engage with the university sector and employers. There are other issues that you will want to discuss with the Welsh Joint Education Committee in terms of the qualification itself. It is interesting to note that the report acknowledges that, although there was an increased workload for teachers in the initial delivery of the baccalaureate, once they had fully understood the processes and were delivering it, that additional workload was mitigated. There were some reports on the financial input, but others said that they were perfectly content that the financial input that had been put in place was fit for purpose. Our officials are exploring a number of areas in detail with others.

[35] On the student workload, the students themselves are the best ambassadors for this, because those who are taking the baccalaureate are talking about an entirely different kind of experience in college and sixth form, where they have had a much greater input—they have had a greater number of visits and guest speakers and have had much better work experience. Some, as a result of doing their short language module, have been encouraged to go on to take languages, so it is a very positive experience. We also need to use those student ambassadors, along with others. I will now ask Keith and John if they have anything to add at this point.

[36] **Mr Williams:** I can only echo what the Minister has said. All the evidence points in that direction. Clearly, there are issues around the initial workload, but whenever you introduce a new initiative, there will always be that set-up workload, which, of course, then disappears when people get used to it. Much work has been done with HE and its success has been summarised by the Minister. There are issues relating to completion, but the good news there is that the non-completion is not out of line with non-completion in other qualifications. That is not a recipe for sitting on our hands—we need to consider whether there are issues around the completion of the baccalaureate that are peculiar to it. However, all these issues will, hopefully, be addressed in the presentation at the next committee meeting.

[37] **Jeff Cuthbert:** There are some important points here. As I said earlier, concerns are flagged up in the evaluation that need to be addressed, such as the volume of work and the availability of resources. Those are perfectly understandable issues. However, on the key skills, there should be no doubt in the minds of employers, in particular, that they are embedded in the core. This is a two-way process. I would hope that organisations like the Confederation of British Industry, for example, would ensure that its members understand that the key skills are embedded in the core and are there for a good reason—to improve employability and to give that extra breadth of understanding to the young people who pursue this qualification. If that has to be made clear then I am sure that we will do it, but it needs to be a two-way process.

9.20 a.m.

[38] In terms of the volume of work and A-levels, when the baccalaureate was developed, it was regarded, widely, that it might not be successful. In that case, you could not leave those learners without a valid qualification. So, naturally, A-levels and/or the vocational equivalent were included within the general diploma, but separate from the core, so that there was no question of students not achieving a recognisable and significant qualification. In time, I hope—and if I have any influence, I will certainly argue the case—that we can look for better ways of cross-referencing evidence, so that the actual volume of work can be reduced while the quality and value of that work remains. I am sure that, with modern methods of assessment and credit transfer, we ought to be able to tackle that in time. However, those are practical issues that I am sure will be addressed.

[39] **Jane Davidson:** Jeff has drawn our attention to some very important issues. We already have a credit and qualifications framework for Wales. We are part of a national qualifications framework. We are all moving towards greater accreditation as part of a way of recognising achievements. The key skills, as part of the core of the baccalaureate, do that already; you acquire separate credit values in the key skills, which also boost your UCAS points. This is important with regard to the debate, for example, as to whether the individual investigative studies should be graded and so on, which has not been resolved as yet. The other important point is how this links with the proposed new diplomas that will be piloted in England from 2008 onwards. There will be five available in that year, and further diplomas will be available in future years. One of the real advantages of the baccalaureate is the fact that it is so flexible, because it is a core-and-options model. So, provided the credit values for the options and the levels are appropriate, students can take whatever new qualifications come into the system. It is an exciting time for us in Wales: to be at a point where we have just had our first ever major qualification validated independently by a major British university. We should celebrate that fact.

[40] **Peter Black:** We will move on to item 2, which is the external examination report.

[41] **Owen John Thomas:** Yr wyf yn falch o weld fod y nifer o bobl sy'n ceisio am Safon Uwch, Safon Uwch Atodol, a TGAU **Owen John Thomas:** I am pleased to see that the number of people sitting A-levels, AS-levels and GCSEs has increased.

wedi cynyddu. Fodd bynnag, yr hyn sydd ar goll yw'r canran o bobl na safodd yr arholiadau. Mae hi'n bwysig iawn i ni weld y llun llawn. Pe bai canran sylweddol o bobl heb sefyll yr arholiad ar ôl astudio ar gyfer Safon Uwch, Safon Uwch Atodol, neu TGAU, byddai hynny'n adlewyrchu'n wael ar y system. Os ydym am ddarganfod y gwir cynnydd, mae'n bwysig i ni wybod y canran hwn. Nid wyf yn deall pam fod y ffigurau pwysig hyn yn absennol o'r adroddiad hwn. Hoffwn dderbyn gennych y canran o bobl sydd wedi sefyll arholiadau ar bob un o'r lefelau: Safon Uwch, Safon Uwch Atodol a TGAU.

[42] Hoffwn symud ymlaen i edrych ar y fagloriaeth Gymreig. Yr wyf yn cefnogi'r fagloriaeth, ond gwelaf fod 82 wedi methu â chael y dystysgrif craidd, ond nid oes sôn am 86 o'r myfyrwyr. Hynny yw, os edrychwn ar y ffigurau, mae 632 allan o 800 wedi cwblhau'r fagloriaeth, ac mae 82 wedi methu â chael y fagloriaeth, felly mae 86 ar goll. Ni welwn y llun llawn yma chwaith. Hoffwn gael hynny.

[43] Symudaf ymlaen i'r eitem olaf dan eitem 2, hynny yw, ieithoedd modern tramor. Mae'n ddiddorol iawn, a gwelaf y frawddeg,

[44] 'GCSE results showed excellent performance at the higher GCSE grades for MFL in Wales compared to the National picture'.

[45] A oes pobl yn gweithio inni yn y Cynulliad nad ydynt yn sylweddoli fod Cymru yn genedl? A ydynt yn dweud fod Cymru a Lloegr yn genedl? Sut all dau genedl fod yn genedl? Yr wyf yn deall y cymysgwch sy'n codi ynghylch y Deyrnas Unedig a'r cyfeiriad at 'cenedlaethol' yn y cyd-destun hwnnw. Gallaf esgusodi hynny. Fodd bynnag, mae ceisio troi Cymru yn atodiad i Loegr yn warthus.

[46] Fodd bynnag, y prif bwynt yw er bod hwn yn adroddiad ar ieithoedd modern tramor, ac ar faint o bobl sydd wedi sefyll arholiadau, neu pa ganran sydd wedi pasio neu beth bynnag—adroddiad bach ydyw, sy'n eithaf tenau—nid oes sôn am y Gymraeg fel ail iaith. Faint o bobl sydd wedi cael gradd A i C mewn TGAU yn y Gymraeg? Faint na wnaeth sefyll arholiad o gwbl, gan fod pob

However, what is missing is the percentage of people who did not sit the exams. It is important that we see the full picture. If a considerable percentage of people did not sit the exam after studying for A-levels, AS-levels or GCSEs, it would reflect badly on the system. If we are to discover the real increase, it is important that we know this percentage. I cannot understand why those important figures are missing from this report. I would like to receive details from you of the percentage of people who have sat exams at all levels: A-levels, AS-levels and GCSEs.

I would like to move on to look at the Welsh baccalaureate. I support the baccalaureate, but I note that 82 failed to get the core certificate, but there is no mention of 86 students. That is, if we look at the figures, 632 of the 800 have completed the baccalaureate, and 82 have failed to get the baccalaureate, so there are 86 missing. We do not see the full picture here either. I would like to have that.

I move on to the final item under item 2, namely modern foreign languages. It is very interesting, and there is the following sentence,

Do we have people working for us in the Assembly who do not realise that Wales is a nation? Are they saying that Wales and England make up a nation? How can two nations be a nation? I understand the confusion that arises in relation to the United Kingdom and the reference to that as 'national'. I can excuse that. However, trying to turn Wales into a bolt-on to England is disgraceful.

However, the main point is that although this is a report on modern foreign languages and the number of people who have sat an exam or what percentage has passed or whatever—it is a brief report and quite thin—there is no mention of Welsh as a second language. How many people have attained A to C grades in GCSEs in Welsh? How many did not sit their exam at all, as every child is now taught

plentyn yn ei ddysgu yn awr mewn ysgolion uwchradd? Gofynnaf yr un peth am Safon Uwch a'r Safon Uwch Atodol. Mae'n warthus fod y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol yn methu rhoi adroddiad ar yr iaith Gymraeg fel ail iaith fan hyn, yn arbennig wrth sôn am ieithoedd modern tramor a'r llun cenedlaethol.

Welsh in secondary school? I ask the same question about A-levels and AS-levels. It is disgraceful that the National Assembly fails to provide a report on Welsh as a second language in here, particularly when reference is made to modern foreign languages and the national picture.

[47] **Janet Ryder:** My point is very similar to Owen John's; I would like to know whether figures are available for those who may have completed the AS-level, but do not go on to take an A-level and whether we can see those. I would be interested to know whether such figures are showing a trend for any particular subject. Possibly, you could take it down to an individual school level, although that might involve extremely detailed work. However, I would be interested to know whether there was a trend in any particular subject of students not completing a full A-level, but going to the AS level, and whether there was a difference between college and school settings in that, so that we could get a fair picture. We talk about the number of students who do not complete the Welsh baccalaureate, but we do not often look at the number of students who do not complete A-level courses, and it would be interesting to see what work might be needed in those areas.

[48] On the Welsh baccalaureate, 800 candidates were entered for it, but 40 per cent did not complete the whole thing. Some 21 per cent did not complete it at all and 40 per cent of them did not complete both the core subjects and the optional subjects. I wondered whether there is a correlation between the students who are not completing the optional subjects or both the optional and the core subjects and those who are taking A-levels as well. Does such a correlation exist?

[49] I would like to pick up on something that Jeff talked about earlier—moving towards a full qualification that will be an equal qualification across both practical and academic subjects that encompasses and then, hopefully, at some future stage, does away with A-levels and all our other qualifications, so that employers are not confused by all the qualifications, but see one qualification and have confidence in it. Like many, I think that it is very unfair to students, who work so hard, that every summer we have the same debate in the press. They are only conforming to the system that we have set, so, if there is a failure in the A-level system, it is not the students who are failing; it is we, who make the processes, who are failing. That is why we really must get this right, and that is why we would support what Jeff has said. We want to look towards the day when we have one qualification, which does not confuse everyone and is valued by everyone. That is why this preparation work that is building up to it is so essential and necessary to get it right.

[50] **Irene James:** I certainly welcome this year's excellent results; we should recognise the hard work of pupils and teachers right across Wales. However, in terms of Government policy, there is a disparity in achievement across local authority areas in Wales, which seem to draw across lines of deprivation. What analysis has been done of the results of projects to show how measures such as those under the Narrowing the Gap initiative are working to overcome this inequality?

9.30 a.m.

[51] **Peter Black:** Christine has also indicated that she has a comment.

[52] **Christine Chapman:** Minister, looking at the report, I was just wondering about the picture with science qualifications. This is quite topical, really, as we debated a science policy in Plenary. Do you have any information on how we are doing as far as science subjects are

concerned?

[53] **Jane Davidson:** I will respond to some of the broad issues and then I will ask John to come in on some of the statistical issues. What we have given you here is, in a sense, a very brief analysis of the results, but information is publicly available from the awarding bodies, for example, in very detailed analysis of how many students entered and what their pass rates were at every level of the system. So, we made an assumption that that information was already available to Members, if they wanted to peruse it in detail.

[54] It is also important to say that the whole point about introducing the AS level into the curriculum in 2000 was not that every student would take the AS level, on to A-level but that it would give students a broader base in the number of subjects that they took in the first year, post statutory schooling. What we also saw was the standard of A-levels going up, because students dropped their weakest subject. So, there is always going to be a great deal of fluidity between AS and A-levels, because they are different kinds of subjects. What we have also seen, which has been great, is the entry level for AS going up each year, broadly because that has been about more young people feeling confident to take an examination above GCSE, even if they are not confident to take that examination on to A-level. So, we have seen a broadening of the base there.

[55] You can add the figures up here and if you get a 99.96 per cent pass rate achieving grades A to E at A-level, you know that you have a 0.04 per cent failure rate. So, in a sense, you can deduce the negative figures from the figures here. I point out, in terms of the Welsh baccalaureate, that we are talking about 66 per cent getting the full diploma. It is equivalent to an A grade at A-level. If you had everybody going through it, you would not have a qualification that was equivalent to an A grade at A-level. What the baccalaureate does, which currently the modules within AS levels and A-levels do not, is enable you to acquire key skill values in their own right, so that you do not come out of the baccalaureate process with no further qualifications, whereas if you fail an A-level or an AS level, you do. So, the baccalaureate is very important in terms of taking that agenda forward.

[56] Irene, you are absolutely right; if you look across authorities, you will see a huge variation. You will see some authorities, and Neath Port Talbot authority is an obvious example, where the interventions, or the focus, in the schools in terms of Narrowing the Gap have seen the authority perform well above expectation, if you look at the deprivation figures for that authority against others. Several other authorities are on track, but we still have to focus very hard on some authorities. Blaenau Gwent authority's results were very low compared with those in the rest of Wales, yet there are individual schools in Blaenau Gwent that are able to achieve much higher with the same base. So, that is the point of the raising attainment and individual standards in education in Wales funding, in terms of driving that agenda forward. I am sure that this committee will remain really interested, as we look at that over the next few years, in whether or not that intervention is being effectively targeted.

[57] I fully accept the point about parity of esteem. That is why the baccalaureate is particularly flexible, because it can take the vocational qualifications on board, or what we might call the traditional academic qualifications on board, and have an equality of outcome. If you achieve the baccalaureate, whichever route you go through, you get the 120 UCAS points, and that is very important for the future.

[58] The only reason for our adding modern foreign languages to this report is that, in previous years, this committee has always asked about whatever issue was running in the press on the day. Of course, this year, the issue running in the press on the day was modern foreign languages, because there has been such a massive decline in England—'nation' means the whole of the UK in this context. As somebody who uses the word 'nation' for Wales, I am perfectly happy to scrutinise these reports more closely in the future to make that clear.

However, where we are seeing big reductions in the number studying modern foreign languages, because of a later implementation of policies making them voluntary, our figures stood up pretty well against that. At a time when we are seeing the outcomes in terms of modern foreign languages, that is, the standards of qualifications, being higher than ever before, where we are seeing more of those young people move on from GCSE to AS level, when we are seeing more of those young people who take modern foreign language qualifications at A-level going on to university, it was rather galling, in a sense, to be asked to comment on other countries' figures because the BBC could not be bothered to operate on a Welsh angle in these statistics. In terms of the figures for Welsh as a first language, Welsh as a second language and the Welsh short course, which Estyn is currently evaluating, we know, from evidence that we have had in committee, that Welsh as a second language is not as popular a qualification as we would like it to be. That is, therefore, being reviewed in terms of the new skills-based curriculum for 2008. As I say, if you have had difficulty in accessing the figures from the independent awarding bodies, then we are happy to make them available to you.

[59] John, I do not know whether you want to come in.

[60] **Mr Williams:** To add a footnote on the first question that was asked, on entry to GCSE, it is a general qualification that is targeted at something like 96 to 97 per cent of the cohort. Given that those children are in compulsory education, one would expect that sort of level, in terms of entry from the cohort. The A-level, of course, is completely different, and it stands alongside other alternatives that 16 to 19-year-olds have, in education and outside education. The AS level, as the Minister rightly said, is a qualification in and of itself, and it has been designed as such. Therefore, no inferences should be drawn from the failure of people to proceed from AS to the full A-level.

[61] **Jane Davidson:** To respond to Christine in terms of science, at GCSE, there was an increase in entries for biology, physics and science, and a small drop in the entries for chemistry. We have the new suite of GCSE science qualifications in place from September of this year, designed to motivate more young people, and we know that science standards in schools are rising, as was noted in the chief inspector's report.

[62] In terms of AS level and A-level, mathematics entries are up at AS-level. There is a small rise in entries for chemistry, a rise in physics and a slight drop in entries in biology. So, we obviously do need to reverse the trend because, although there are pleasing, slight changes here, they are always slight changes, and we want to see greater numbers of people studying science. Also, we need to reverse the trend in physics in particular, where the uptake remains very low compared with other sciences.

[63] **Janet Ryder:** I have a couple of points. [*Inaudible.*] —particularly at college level, who enter an AS-level course. Several of them want to go on to complete the full A-level. Having completed the AS-level, and perhaps the numbers have dropped, that follow-on course, if you like, for completing the full A-level, has been cut, and they are left not being able to complete the A-level. Do any of these figures show a trend in that?

9.40 a.m.

[64] The other issue is that, yes, people can choose not to go on to the full A-level if they have taken the AS course, but you cannot do that with the baccalaureate, and that is what some A-level students are finding, especially when they are in school settings, and the school is adamant that everyone completes the full baccalaureate. They do not have the option of dropping that baccalaureate section. That may go back to some of the issues that were raised in the first debate about the pressure of work. The Minister said that a number of students will take four or five AS levels and drop one or two to concentrate on the three A-levels that they

will need to get into university. In some of the pilot schools, they do not have that option, which is creating a problem. I suspect that some schools are allowing this to happen and that some schools are reacting in a different way, but it is an issue. I will be interested to see, in the next committee report, how the Minister will overcome that issue.

[65] On counties that have radically increased their results, Wrexham must be noted, because it has made massive increases. It did that through a Government grant, which the Minister has cut. It has left three of the secondary schools that Wrexham was supporting without any financial support, other than what they can find in their own resources, because the Minister has personally redirected that money into other schools through the RAISE programme. That has created problems for Wrexham; there may be an impact, but I hope not, because Wrexham has given an assurance that it will do everything that it can to keep supporting those schools, although it will be a big pull on its budgets. However, it should be noted that Wrexham, as a council, has made great strides.

[66] **Peter Black:** Minister, do you want to come back on that?

[67] **Jane Davidson:** Yes. The whole point of the 14 to 19 agenda—to pick up on something that we talked about—is that if an individual institution cannot offer a continuation, the 14 to 19 network will plan for students to be able to take the continuation elsewhere. That is the whole point about focusing on the needs of the learner. I am very pleased to see results rise in Wrexham—they needed to rise because Wrexham was performing well below the cohort expectation. However, just in case people get the wrong impression from your contribution, Janet, what you were talking about in terms of a grant was a small share of £3 million across Wales; it was a very small grant that was made available to local authorities for lower-performing schools. Evidence from local authorities and Estyn demonstrated unequivocally that authorities were not using that money effectively. With the RAISE programme—and all authorities benefit from a contribution in terms of the RAISE programme—we can ensure that the money is targeted effectively. The key issue in terms of Wrexham is that there has been a substantial financial investment from the Assembly Government and the local authority in ensuring that buildings are fit for purpose. There has also been substantial support from the local authority to the schools to ensure that they are focused on the task in hand. I am sure that we will continue to see results rise in Wrexham, as in other authorities where they have focused on school improvement. That is what we are all about in terms of the school agenda.

[68] **Mr Hart:** Chair, just to add that, in support of the 14 to 19 networks, there is the common investment fund that local education authorities and colleges can access to try to promote collaboration and shared activity, such as joint timetabling. It enables videoconferencing suites to interlink with each other, so that groups that otherwise might have been deemed unviable, in terms of the numbers, can go forward. We are looking to see how best we can promote that type of joining together.

[69] **Christine Chapman:** To pursue the science angle for a few minutes, the problem that we are getting is the image of some of these subjects. Jeff made the point about employers engaging with this, and one of the difficulties and challenges that we must face is that employers need to be engaged, because many young people are not always clear as to why they should do physics—they perceive it as a hard subject. It is disappointing to see that there is a slight drop in chemistry, which has also suffered. The University of Glamorgan repackaged its chemistry course—renaming it forensic science, I think—and it saw an increase in the number of students taking up the subject. That shows that the image of some subjects needs to be explored.

[70] I see employers getting involved in this, so that young people can see a relevance to it. We have already mentioned 14 to 19—this aspect of sciences is part of the action plan. We

want to engage much more with employers on this, so I am pleased that we are also considering this in the 14 to 19 action plan.

[71] **Jane Davidson:** There is a small rise in entries for chemistry, and a drop in those for biology. However, I know that members of the committee are extremely supportive of all sciences. I have said previously that we want to make science more accessible, and we believe that the new suite of science GCSE qualifications, which are in place from this term, will contribute towards doing that.

[72] **Peter Black:** I am particularly interested in how that translates into science entries at university level, and what work is being done to consider science across Wales, at a higher-education level as well. Perhaps we can do something on that at a future date.

[73] We will move on to item 3 of the Minister's report. We have spent 45 minutes on the first two items, so, if Members want to get through this report, you may want to speed up a bit. Item 3 is the grants for education support and training report.

[74] **Janet Ryder:** I was worried when reading the annex that notes the recommendations, because four out of seven of them seem to relate to the official workings, if you like, or the support, at officer level, that is given to the programme. The Minister mentions that in her report. Are you satisfied now, Minister, that these problems have been, or will be, overcome, and that officers who administer the grant will know how to assess whether the project has been successful or not, which is one of the issues that was raised here? How many officers are we talking about here? Is it a large or a small department, or is it one officer? What kind of support is being put in? The problems with this seem to be highlighted at an officer level, rather than anywhere else.

[75] **Jane Davidson:** Perhaps I could ask Keith Davies, who is head of the appropriate division in the department, to respond to your issues.

[76] **Mr Davies:** To answer your first question about whether we are confident that these issues are being addressed and will be successfully addressed, yes, I am confident; we have to be confident—we do not have much choice in the issue.

[77] On the number of people involved, the team that administers the grant scheme is small—it consist of five of us, including me, and I do not and cannot devote all my time to the better schools fund. The head of branch cannot spend all her time on the better schools fund, because the branch has other functions and responsibilities. However, a far greater number of people are involved in the whole process of the better schools fund because it funds policy initiatives across those parts of the department that deal with schools. Therefore, it is a large number—I could not give you a figure of numbers of staff off the top of my head, but, for instance, some of the additional needs and inclusion division's policies are supported by the better schools fund, so it also engages in this process. That is across the children and schools group in the new Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills. I could quantify the number of staff, but I could not, scientifically, tell you how much time they devote specifically to the better schools fund aspect of their wider policy functions.

[78] **Jane Davidson:** To add to that, I have had reassurance from the director, Steve Marshall, that he is keeping this issue under constant vigilance, and that he will work with Keith to ensure that there is sufficient support for the better schools fund team to ensure that all critical deadlines are reached. You will see from the response here that substantial work has gone on over the summer to ensure that there is the right kind of support for local authorities, and that the right kind of guidance is issued at the right time, on issues that all committee members would want to be reassured about.

9.50 a.m.

[79] **Janet Ryder:** Given the importance of this and the amount of work that looks like it needs to be done—I will not prejudge what has been done over the summer because the Minister has said that a great deal of work has been done—is the Minister going to assure us that a common level of training and ability to assess a programme, and knowledge of the programme, will be disseminated to every officer who deals with the better schools programme? I would welcome a repeat of this item in perhaps six months, with another assessment as to how those recommendations have been acted upon and what improvement has been made.

[80] **Mr Davies:** Part of the work that we are doing on improving the robustness of the assessments of the spending plans is a generic thing, which will be rolled out to all those who are involved in assessing local education authority spending plans, if they are funded by the better schools fund. I would be happy to come back to this matter at a point of the committee's choosing, because we will be reporting to the Audit Committee in due course. That committee will also be testing our progress on implementing these recommendations, so I am more than happy to do that.

[81] **Janet Ryder:** Chair, I accept—[*inaudible*—]the Assembly. I would appreciate a report back on this, maybe in March, which would be in six months' time, as an update in the Minister's report.

[82] **Peter Black:** Presumably the Wales Audit Office comes back and does an evaluation to see what progress has been made on its report. Is that the case?

[83] **Mr Davies:** Yes, I think that the Audit Committee will ask us to report and the WAO will comment on that, in terms of whether what we are saying is reasonable and whether we are going at the right pace. We work closely with the WAO officers on that job.

[84] **Jane Davidson:** If we bring that report from the Wales Audit Office to committee, it will be a good one for Members to discuss.

[85] **Peter Black:** We now come to item 4, on community education and learning.

[86] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I am pleased to see this here. Community education and learning demonstrates clearly that we have a commitment to lifelong learning. It is important that we consider these issues. I wonder whether we could have, either now or soon, a bit more information about the way in which learning community accounts are working. I see that a pilot is being run and that it is due to end in 2008. However, are there plans to issue an interim report well before then, so that we can see what feedback we are getting? I appreciate that resources are finite, but, nevertheless, it is important that community education gets its fair whack. To people out there, especially older people, who want to learn, it matters little whether the course that they are doing is franchised through the local college, whether it is community education itself or whether it is run by a voluntary group such as the Workers' Educational Association, as long as a suitable course is provided that is right for them. I am therefore keen to see partnership working between the various community providers and I wonder whether we could have a report on, or an evaluation of, how effectively that is working in Wales.

[87] **Peter Black:** Minister, the report largely concentrates on the funding available for community learning. Presumably there are some statistics available in terms of outputs, on the number of people in each area, the range of subjects available, and how that has developed over a period of time, so that we can see whether there are any trends, particularly on an area-by-area basis. It might be worth having a more in-depth look at this. Do you want to come

back on that, Minister?

[88] **Jane Davidson:** The report directly related to a question from Janet Ryder about the funding of community learning. So, that is there.

[89] **Peter Black:** Yes, I understand that.

[90] **Jane Davidson:** Certainly, it would be good to have a detailed item for the committee to look at, particularly exploring some of the outcomes of the pilots of learning community accounts. This links to item 10 in terms of the west Wales and the Valleys convergence programme consultation, because a number of, for example, learning networks are supported by European funding. In that document, we talk about the European structural funding, all of which is led by the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in this context, which focuses on increasing employment, promoting social inclusion and improving skill levels, for example. These are areas in which we will see these kinds of learning approaches expanded. I could put a more complete paper into my Minister's report and bring it up front.

[91] **Peter Black:** That would be quite helpful, as it will enable us to see the trends.

[92] **Mr Hart:** One of the things that we have to agree on, in doing anything like this, is the definition of what constitutes community learning, because we do not want to come back and just report on something that was off the mark. Whenever you get two community education people together, you probably have three definitions. So, we just want to—

[93] **Peter Black:** I think that is why it would help to see the range of subjects, so that we can actually determine that.

[94] **Janet Ryder:** That is where a problem might arise. I am sure that the Minister is aware that there is a growing concern among providers that the increasing concentration on the 14 to 19 pathways and the concentration of financial resources into developing those pathways, in a time of limited resources, as Jeff has said, is causing problems perhaps for courses that are available for adult learners. I appreciate what you were saying about the ability of a 14 to 19 student to do an AS level at one place and finish the A-level at another place. However, an adult learner does not always have that support. It is a matter of trying to get that balance right. I would appreciate a more detailed paper from the Minister on this.

[95] **Jane Davidson:** I think that it is important to understand that the Assembly has different legal duties enshrined in legislation in terms of learners of different ages. The duty in terms of 16 to 18 is a far stronger duty, as it were, than that in terms of post-18. So, we also sit inside a legislative framework, and within that framework you will find that organisations such as the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education have commended us for ensuring that we keep roots in adult and community learning. We have maintained our commitment in that context.

[96] **Mr Hart:** One of the ways in which we have honoured that, or have been able to maintain that, to some extent, is that, unlike in England, we have never earmarked or hypothecated that part of the further education budget, which is for pre-19 and post-19 education, because we have always looked to the autonomy that comes with the corporate status that colleges have to meet the statutory need and the local demand within that same financial envelope. So, they have slightly more freedom. That is why it can be difficult to identify how much of the further education budget goes on community education. Ms Ryder mentioned adult education as opposed to community education, but if you have a 17-year-old accessing something on a Wednesday evening in a village hall, is that community learning? It is that kind of thing. So, we could be spending £80 million on the subject.

[97] **Janet Ryder:** Finally, that is one thing. Once you move into adult education you get pockets of money pulled in, not just from the education budget, but perhaps the Communities First budget, or other budgets, such as the economic development budget. That is why I think that it would be valuable, if it were possible, to pull that together in one committee paper so that we can get an all-round picture of what is going into adult education or community education.

[98] **Mr Hart:** We know that Assembly funds are being used to match voluntary agencies as well.

[99] **Peter Black:** Owen also wants to come in.

[100] **Owen John Thomas:** I want to come in on item 5, Chair.

[101] **Peter Black:** You are confusing me, Owen; you are signalling too early. Let us move on to item 5, which is the commencement of the Children Act 2004. Owen, you want to come in first.

[102] **Owen John Thomas:** Aeth sawl blwyddyn heibio ers inni benderfynu yn y Cynulliad, drwy 'Iaith Pawb', ein bod am greu Cymru ddwyieithog. Mae pawb yn cytuno mai'r brif ffordd o wneud hynny yw drwy gyfrwng addysg Gymraeg; nid oes dadl ynghylch hynny o gwbl. Os edrychwn ar atodiad C gwelwn fod 40 o adrannau. Dim ond un ohonynt sydd heb ei gweithredu, ac adran 29 yw honno. Dywed y Gweinidog ei bod yn bosibl cynnal arolwg o'r galw am addysg Gymraeg heb fynd at adran 29. Dywed hyn ym mharagraff 4 ar dudalen 8. Serch hynny, dywed:

Owen John Thomas: A number of years have gone by since we decided, at this Assembly, through 'Iaith Pawb', that we want to create a bilingual Wales. Everyone agrees that the main way of doing so is through Welsh-medium education. There is no debate about that. If we look at annex C, we see that there are 40 sections. Only one section has not been implemented, namely section 29. The Minister says that it is possible to undertake a survey of the demand for Welsh-medium education without implementing section 29. This is stated in paragraph 4 on page 8. However, it states:

[103] 'subject to obtaining the necessary consents.'

[104] Y cydsyniad sydd ei angen yma, yn bennaf, yw cydsyniad rhwng yr awdurdod addysg lleol a'r ymddiriedolaethau iechyd lleol er mwyn i'r awdurdod addysg lleol ddod o hyd i'r gronfa ddata er mwyn gallu cynnal arolwg yn hawdd.

The consent required here is mainly that between the local education authority and the local health trusts in order for the local education authorities to access the database so that a survey can easily be undertaken.

10.00 a.m.

[105] Weinidog, os ydych wir eisiau creu Cymru ddwyieithog, a wnewch chi weithredu heb oedi ymhellach, gan ysgrifennu at awdurdodau addysg lleol ac at yr ymddiriedolaethau iechyd lleol i'w hannog i ddod ynghyd i ddod i ddealltwriaeth ac i rannu'r gronfa ddata, fel ein bod yn cael yr arolwg hwn ac yn darganfod beth yw'r galw ym mhob ardal o Gymru am addysg cyfrwng Gymraeg, a hynny ymhlith rhieni plant o dan tair oed. A wnewch chi hynny os gwelwch yn

Minister, if you genuinely want to create a bilingual Wales, will you act without further delay and write to local education authorities and local health trusts in order to encourage them to reach an understanding and to share that database, so that this survey can be undertaken and so that we can discover precisely what the demand is for Welsh-medium education across Wales, among the parents of children under three years of age. Would you do that, please, Minister?

dda, Weinidog?

[106] **Peter Black:** Could I ask two additional questions? First, what is the other provision of the Act that has not yet commenced, referred to in paragraph 2? Secondly, is the fact that section 29 has not been commenced a capacity issue or a policy issue?

[107] **Jane Davidson:** I will respond with a couple of remarks, and then I will ask Chris Burdett, who is leading for the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills on the Children Act 2004 commencement. I have said to the committee before, and I also say it in the paper, that section 29 does not preclude local authorities from undertaking surveys to assess future demand for Welsh-medium education. As an Assembly Government, we have strongly supported the idea, in the context of single education plans, that local authorities should use surveys. All authorities are required to assess the need for Welsh-medium school places and to report on that in their single education plans. That is already in legislation. We recommend in our guidance on the single education plans that local authorities should undertake the surveys. We particularly focused on authorities where there is a lower-than-average percentage of Welsh speakers and where there is most likely to be growing and possibly hidden demands—obviously, that latent demand is what we want to bring out to ensure that people have access to support in the school system.

[108] Of the 14 LEAs that fell into that category, 11 have already undertaken or are planning the surveys. At least one of them has undertaken the survey using live birth data from the LHB, cross-referenced with the electoral register. Others have contacted parents through the early years settings and/or through schools. So, the mechanisms are already there in terms of the delivery of the survey request. It is important to say that this particular commencement might have an additional benefit in the context of Welsh-medium provision, as it will in terms of looked-after children or children at risk of abuse, with the sharing of information around those areas, which is, of course, the primary purpose of this particular piece of legislation. However, simply commencing it would not provide local authorities with automatic access to personal information held by local health boards or NHS trusts, because the same legislative framework that both enables and constrains the use of personal data will continue to apply.

[109] I have answered this question now in every committee, to make it absolutely clear that we will be commencing section 29 in due course. We will want to take forward all the opportunities from it, but the opportunities come out of the Bichard inquiry, and we must remember why section 29 was set up in the first place. It was actually about exchanging information about vulnerable children and children at risk between health, social care, education, offending, the police and other organisations. Some are devolved; some are non-devolved. That is the primary purpose of these legislative issues. Work has started in England on which we could piggyback, but there are capacity and policy issues in the context of this, because we would have to look to develop the right framework in Wales. We have to have the right partnerships in place, as the papers suggest. Chris might want to give some more information on this.

[110] **Mr Burdett:** It was section 51 of the Children Act 2004, relating to the Estyn inspection of the joint planning arrangements, which was technically flawed and has now been amended by the Childcare Act 2006. So, we will be able to.

[111] **Jane Davidson:** Is it in the secondary legislative timetable?

[112] **Mr Burdett:** Yes.

[113] **Peter Black:** Chris, do you want to come back on anything else?

[114] **Mr Burdett:** Not at this stage, no.

[115] **Owen John Thomas:** Hoffwn gael adroddiad oddi wrth y Gweinidog yn enwi'r 11 o gynghorau sydd wedi addo gwneud hyn a'r tri sydd heb. Os ydych am iddynt barhau gyda hwn, rhaid sicrhau fod y dystiolaeth honno yn nwylo Aelodau'r Cynulliad fel eu bod yn gallu mynd ar ôl y cynghorau sydd yn eu hetholaethau. Mynychais gyfarfod ag arweinydd y cyngor lleol yng Nghaerdydd a oedd yn ddigon bodlon ei wneud, ond dywedodd un o'i swyddogion nad oedd yn bosibl. Yn ôl yr hyn a ddywedwch, nid yw'r swyddog hwnnw'n dweud y gwir. Felly, mae'n bwysig ein bod yn gwybod yn union beth yr ydych yn ei ddweud am yr 11 o'r 14 awdurdod. Hoffwn gael yr wybodaeth honno fel bod y bobl hynny sydd eisiau annog awdurdodau addysg lleol i gynnal arolwg yn gallu gwneud hynny'n rhydd, heb oedi.

Owen John Thomas: I would like to have a report from the Minister naming the 11 councils that have promised to do this and the three that have not. If you want them to proceed with this, you must ensure that that evidence is in the hands of Assembly Members, so that they can follow it up with the councils that are in their constituencies. I attended a meeting with the leader of the local council in Cardiff, and he was prepared to do it, but one of his officials said that it was not possible. According to what you say, that officer was not telling the truth. Therefore, it is important that we know exactly what you are saying about 11 of the 14 authorities. I would like to have that information so that those who want to encourage local education authorities to conduct a survey can do so freely, and without delay.

[116] **Jane Davidson:** Mae'n bwysig i bobl gael dadl effeithiol yn eu hardaloedd, ac yr wyf yn hapus i gael llythyr gennyh ynghylch y mater yng Nghaerdydd i'w wneud yn glir yr hyn y mae'r awdurdod lleol yn gallu ei wneud. Rhwymedigaeth yr awdurdodau lleol ac nid Llywodraeth y Cynulliad ydyw. Mae swyddogion Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn annog pawb ac yn gweithio'n galed iawn gyda'r awdurdodau lleol i sicrhau eu bod yn gwneud digon i ddarganfod faint o alw sydd am addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg, ac i annog mwy i'w defnyddio. Yr wyf yn hapus i ateb eich llythyr am y barnau gwahanol yng Nghaerdydd.

Jane Davidson: It is important for people to have an effective debate in their areas, and I would be happy to receive a letter from you on the issues raised in Cardiff to clarify exactly what the local authority can do. The obligation lies with the local authorities and not with the Assembly Government. Assembly Government officials encourage every authority and work diligently with local authorities to ensure that they are doing enough to establish how much demand there is for Welsh-medium education, and to encourage more people to access it. I am happy to respond to your letter on the differing views in Cardiff.

[117] **Owen John Thomas:** Beth am enwau'r awdurdodau lleol hynny sy'n fodlon gwneud arolwg ac enwau'r rhai sydd ddim?

Owen John Thomas: What about the names of those local authorities that are prepared to conduct surveys and those that are not?

[118] **Peter Black:** Can I suggest that you inquire via a written question or a letter to the Minister?

[119] **Owen John Thomas:** Yr wyf eisoes wedi gofyn y cwestiwn.

Owen John Thomas: I have already asked the question.

[120] **Peter Black:** You can table a question to the Minister to get that, largely factual, information. I am sure that the Minister would be happy to circulate that information to committee, if it is available.

[121] **Jane Davidson:** The obligation on local authorities is to deliver what is required of

them. It is not appropriate to provide a list of names to committee of local authorities that may be delivering on their local obligations, but not to the satisfaction of Owen John Thomas.

[122] **Owen John Thomas:** Yr ydych am **Owen John Thomas:** You wish to keep the gadw'r gyfrinach i'ch hunan, felly? secret to yourself, then?

[123] **Jane Davidson:** The key element is to ensure that local authorities deliver on their obligations. That is the job for me and officials. I am happy to report to committee on whether we have concerns about any of our local authorities that are not delivering on their statutory obligations. However, I am also happy to confirm that, because we already encourage local authorities to conduct surveys and because the opportunity is there in the context of the single education plan, if you were to write to me about an individual authority where that was under dispute, the Assembly Government would be able to give you a categorical answer.

[124] **Owen John Thomas:** Yn y **Owen John Thomas:** In the future— dyfodol—

[125] **Peter Black:** There are other avenues through which to pursue that, Owen John, so please do not heckle. If you heckle in Welsh, it does not get translated, so I do not know what you are saying if you heckle in Welsh. We have run out of time for the Minister's report, so we will move on to the next item.

10.09 a.m.

Rhagolwg ar Is-ddeddfwriaeth Secondary Legislation Forward Look

[126] **Peter Black:** There are seven new items on this report of which one, ELL 23-06, appears to contain a package of three sets of regulations. The additional items are: ELL 18-06, the Tax Credits (Approval of Childcare Providers) (Wales) Scheme 2006; ELL 19-06, the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children Act 1989 (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2006; ELL 20-06, the Approval of Qualifications under section 99 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000; ELL 21-06, the Education (Admission Appeals Arrangements) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2006; ELL 22-06, the Designation of Schools Having a Religious Character (Wales) Order 2006; ELL 23-06, the Placement of Children (and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2007, the Children's Homes (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, and the Local Health Board Functions (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2007; and ELL 24-06, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Order 2006.

10.10 a.m.

[127] As I have said previously, should Members wish to raise issues on any of these or ask for any to be brought before us, please let us know, outside of committee. Would anyone like to raise anything on these regulations?

[128] On the Children's Homes (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, with the fostering services, residential family centres and the adoption and support agencies, the timetable is tight, so, if Members want to look at that, we would not be able to do so within the timetable laid down. The committee has only just been notified of this. It has been on the Health and Social Services Committee's forward look for some time, but it has only just appeared on the our forward look. Although they are largely health regulations, they have implications for us, particularly in terms of looked-after children.

[129] **Jane Davidson:** And children with statements.

[130] **Peter Black:** Yes, exactly.

[131] **Jane Davidson:** This is highly relevant in terms of the work that this committee is doing.

[132] **Peter Black:** If we were to ask to legislate that, it would upset your timetable, because we are in Denmark for the meeting on 5 October.

[133] **Jane Davidson:** Yes, but I think that you would want to support this today.

[134] **Peter Black:** I am sure that we would; I am just making Members aware of that information, because Members have a right to ask for that. I will leave it to Members to bring forward any proposals that they wish to bring to us.

10.11 a.m.

Dechrau'n Deg a'r Cyfnod Sylfaen Flying Start and the Foundation Phase

[135] **Peter Black:** The purpose of this item is to receive an update on the implementation and progress of the foundation phase. I ask the Minister to introduce this item.

[136] **Jane Davidson:** Thank you very much. The Flying Start and foundation phase are central pillars to our made-in-Wales approach to early years. Flying Start services will start delivery in the next few months. The foundation phase pilot entered its third year at the beginning of this term, so the two initiatives are at completely different points. The foundation phase, when fully rolled out, will be universal; Flying Start is specifically targeted at particular disadvantaged areas. However, it is important to see them as part of a unified approach deploying international evidence to give our youngest children high quality services and education. This paper highlights information in terms of the workforce that the committee asked for, recognising that we must ensure that there are enough people in the system with the skills to meet the aspirations of these policies through the media of both English and Welsh. So, it is an update on all of those issues. In our November meeting, we will be receiving the evaluation report on the foundation phase.

[137] **Irene James:** How are you working with teachers, who will deliver these initiatives, not only in terms of training but also in ensuring that they have a vested degree of ownership of the scheme? How do Flying Start and the foundation phase work within the framework of other initiatives directed at the most disadvantaged areas across Wales? What feedback have we had from teachers' representative organisations about progress with training?

[138] **Jane Davidson:** Each local authority is given some funding to upskill teachers in their area, and I think that, this year, it is £15,000 per local authority to focus on training teachers. Flying Start is integrated with Sure Start. Following the consultation, we changed the allocation mechanism—we reported that to the committee previously—to the Cymorth funding formula. The note from the Members' research service explains that. So, Flying Start links closely with Sure Start in local authority areas. One of the opportunities of the additional funding in Flying Start will enable us to bring more of the Flying Start schools on into the foundation phase, in terms of extending the pilot there. The foundation phase, because it operates from ages three to seven, also crosses over in some of the most disadvantaged areas with the RAISE funding—raising attainment and individual standards in education in Wales—which goes into the schools. However, the foundation phase is a universal service, so the RAISE programme will help to support the delivery of the foundation phase of the curriculum in the infant part of the school as well.

[139] In terms of progress on training, the report points to a number of major areas of workforce planning that have taken place since we last discussed this in the committee. We were pleased to note that 80 per cent of those in the maintained sector and 70 per cent of those in the non-maintained sector already have qualifications at level 3. We know that 40 per cent of schools already have sufficient staff in place, from the data that we have had back from 13 local authorities, in terms of delivery, but we are obviously working with individual local authorities on this workforce planning. We know that 11 per cent of the maintained sector and 22 per cent of the non-maintained sector have staff already trained to level 2, and we want to lift that up to level 3. We have also appointed two additional workers to work with the Care Council for Wales to drive forward the development and network in terms of workplace planning issues. So, an awful lot has gone on in terms of taking us forward to where we need to be for the roll-out in September 2008.

[140] Chris, do you want to add anything?

[141] **Mr Burdett:** I will merely expand a little on what you said about the links between Flying Start and the other initiatives, Minister. In looking at the proposed areas for Flying Start, we have taken account of the fact that it deliberately builds on Sure Start in the existing Cymorth scheme and we have looked at how it relates to the Communities First areas and the relevant areas' rankings in the index of multiple deprivation.

[142] **Janet Ryder:** As the Minister knows, Plaid Cymru is supportive of this; we want to see this emphasis on the early years. However, our concern is with the quality of the workforce, and that is what came through in the early evaluation of the foundation phase. The biggest factor in making it a success is the quality of the teacher or the adult in that circumstance. That is why I want to pick up on some of the issues relating to the workforce, which come through very clearly in this. Is the Minister satisfied that the foundation phase is being fully acknowledged in the initial teacher training scheme that we are seeing put forward in Wales today, so that we will see teachers coming through who are specifically trained for Welsh needs? That is the main thing.

[143] In addition, are you satisfied that we will be training enough staff? The massive response has been that people want to keep the 1:8 ratio. That 1:8 ratio needs to be with a teacher, because the responses that have come in from teachers suggest that 70 per cent of them feel that they are becoming managers rather than teachers. If that means that the work with children is being done by classroom assistants, then the training at that level becomes crucial, because the classroom assistant will have a massive impact on each child's development. Plaid Cymru has made no secret of the fact that we would like to see that 1:8 ratio with teachers, because that is the ideal situation. However, until we can reach that stage, classroom assistants have to be trained up. Are you therefore satisfied that sufficient training opportunities exist in Wales today to upskill a sufficient number of people to roll this out by 2008? If not, what needs to be done to ensure that appropriate training places are available so that our classroom assistants get an equitable standard of training, so that we have a positive career pathway for classroom assistants and that they know as well that it is a valued job and that they will be trained up to that level?

[144] There has always been, and will always continue to be, a problem when you are talking about Flying Start and how it fits into the foundation phase. In Flying Start, you are talking about a lot of people, many of whom are volunteers in a Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin or Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association circumstance, and who may not have adequate training. You detailed in the response the amount of workforce training that needs to happen and talked about a need for an additional 3,350 classroom assistants. That is a massive ask in terms of training classroom assistants. How will you make those training places available? Are they available and will that affect that 2008 roll-out? What are we going to do to go on

addressing the situation among the providers of Flying Start opportunities to ensure that they, too, are trained to an adequate level? Quality is crucial. How do you ensure that the Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association, Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and private providers have a very good level of training? Can you set a standard for the voluntary and private sector?

10.20 a.m.

[145] **Jane Davidson:** I will answer some of those points and then I will ask Chris to come in on others. In terms of standards, we set the standards across all sectors, because we have made it absolutely clear that Flying Start and the foundation phase are going to be delivered in a mixed economy of settings and we have been absolutely clear about the standards necessary in terms of delivery.

[146] In initial teacher training—and I have reported on this to committee before—the new qualified teacher standards make explicit mention of the foundation phase and they are in place for those teacher entrants who are coming in now. Also, specialist DVD information about the foundation phase has gone to all the ITT institutions. Our staff and the Care Council for Wales are in touch with those ITT institutions in terms of taking forward the training of the current group of teachers and the group of teachers who will qualify next year and in subsequent years.

[147] It is also important to say, in terms of the foundation phase, as you will see in the report, that Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, the Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association, the National Childminding Association and the National Day Nursery Association are all part of the current foundation-phase pilot schemes and that is crucial in ensuring that we learn the lessons of delivery. We know from the interim report that the lessons of delivery are that it is harder in the voluntary sector. Therefore we have to address that in terms of the standards issue in the delivery of the foundation phase, and not address it by saying, ‘Well, we will only deliver it in the maintained sector’. That is a very important message for the whole of Wales.

[148] We have already maintained our commitment to the idea of a 1:8 ratio for three to five-year-olds and a 1:15 ratio for five to seven-year-olds, because that fits in with the fact that this Government introduced a class size reduction to 30 pupils in infant classes and we do not intend to in any way renege on that commitment. The numbers that we have outlined are the numbers in respect of that.

[149] The committee can have a great deal of confidence in the notion that 40 per cent of schools already have sufficient staff resources to meet the proposed ratios, and that is with collecting detailed information from just over half the local authorities. Our officials are working extremely hard with the other local authorities in terms of ensuring that we have detailed workforce planning data in from them in terms of taking that forward.

[150] You will see from other parts of the report that we are working very closely with the further education sector. We have a particular sectoral strategy about care, just as we have on construction, because these are two of the biggest growth areas in Wales. We have seen growth in the further education sector and we now need to look at specific opportunities. Fforwm is working very closely with us on looking at what is being delivered across all the colleges at present and at what new opportunities there are, not just for courses that start in the autumn term, but for courses that can be run throughout the year, and upskilling courses for those who already have qualifications, because there are a large number of people who take childcare courses and do not necessarily then practice. With the foundation phase and the new statutory duty on childcare by 2008, we are likely to see a real expansion in terms of the workforce issues.

[151] **Mr Burdett:** In terms of voluntary sector staff possibly not having the necessary

skills for Flying Start, all of the settings that provide childcare for two-year-olds will have to comply with the care standards regime, which requires, as a minimum by 2008, the leader to have level 3, and 50 per cent of those working there to have level 2, but in our guidance for Flying Start we are asking for more than that. We are recommending a level 3 qualification for all staff as soon as possible. There is generous funding with this to get the sort of intensity of intervention that we want. We are looking at around £2,000 per child per year, so the funding is there to get the quality, which is so key to getting this initiative right.

[152] The other aspect that I would pick up is that, while I am not wanting to underestimate the magnitude of the task at all, the 3,000 or so extra classroom assistants will not all be wanted by year one of the roll-out, as it is a three-year roll-out, and the numbers will build up over the three years.

[153] **Jane Davidson:** On the allocation to the local authorities in this year, 2006-07, there is £4.1 million for the planning and workforce expenditure, out of the £15 million. So, we are putting a very large amount of money into that, with £3 million for capital investment, so that we can ally that with the foundation stage, because we also see the opportunity for more integrated centres, which are such a popular initiative, coming through as a result of the Flying Start money. Then, £5.9 million is for the start of the delivery of Flying Start services—these are substantial amounts going in.

[154] **Janet Ryder:** On the training issue, we have all talked about the development of a foundation education degree, and such a degree is discussed in this paper as being a possible qualification. To my knowledge, that degree is not up and running anywhere yet. How will that impact on this? Are we going to start seeing a career pathway for classroom assistants? We have an all-degree teaching profession now; are we talking about an all-degree classroom assistant career structure now, as well? Associated pay scale and national pay levels could go along with that, creating a proper, clear career pathway for people who do not perhaps want to go into teaching, but want to take that classroom assistant career further.

[155] By 2008—and you are talking about roll-out for more schools included in the foundation phase—that first cohort of children will be approaching entry into years 3 and 4 in ordinary schools. The teachers now delivering those years in schools will themselves need training, because the children that will come through will have different skills. They will have learned to learn in a different way, and it is vital that we upskill, if you like, those already teaching years 3 and 4. What plans are in place now to ensure that in-service training?

[156] **Mr Burnett:** To start with the question on a career route for teaching assistants, we definitely want to develop that and, in the medium term, to develop the concept of the early years professional at level 4 leading a setting, which is part of our drive to increasingly professionalise the childcare profession and enable people to move from the voluntary sector into education and out again, as a way of attracting more people in and establishing the profession. That is definitely the plan, but it is at a fairly early stage at the moment.

[157] In terms of key stage 2, you are absolutely right; the need for training staff to cover the transition issues has been recognised. I do not have a detailed plan to bring to you today, but it is definitely on the list in the action plan.

[158] **Jane Davidson:** I have a couple of other points to add. We have an opportunity, which we have talked about before in committee, as a result of the Furlong review and the commitment not to take student places out of the university system, for the conversion of those places. We have been talking to the higher education sector about the primary area in which we would like it to look at developing courses—and that is at foundation level, as well as others—which is the childcare-related field, because people in Flying Start and the foundation phase will need similar kinds of qualifications in terms of delivery.

[159] We are just about to train our next set of higher-level teaching assistants, and, as more are trained, we are training to a higher level, which means that we keep the standards up, and we will see people coming in with specialist childcare skills.

10.30 a.m.

[160] The other point is just in terms of key stage 1 to transition, because, when we bring the report to committee, we will also bring an action plan for how we take this agenda forward. For example, last year we introduced specific additional inset days focused on transition in terms of the primary and secondary sectors, because of the Assembly Government policy commitment and the new statutory requirements. We can do exactly the same in terms of mechanisms for the overarching group of primary schools, because we must get the right link between the infant and the junior section. That was identified right at the beginning, and I have said in the report that transition between non-maintained and maintained schools is crucial—for example, those who come in from Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and childminding into school. Those who come through the foundation phase to key stage 2 form the other of the two key transitions. We will need to manage major, in a sense, global programmes in terms of the delivery, working with local authorities and the voluntary sector in that area.

[161] **Owen John Thomas:** Yr wyf wedi gweld pwyslais yn cael ei roi yn barod ar ddefnyddio dalgylchoedd ysgolion mewn ardaloedd difreintiedig i dargedu, gan ddefnyddio hynny fel canolbwynt gwasanaethau Dechrau'n Deg. Mae hynny yn aml yn golygu bod addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg ar y tu allan, neu, os yw'n cael ei lyncu, y duedd wrth fynd at y cyfnod sylfaen yw bod y plant yn aros mewn un ysgol. Mae hynny'n golygu bod y plant sydd am gael addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg mewn ysgol cyfrwng Saesneg. Felly, mae'n hanfodol o'r dechrau ein bod yn parchu'r ffaith bod ar addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg angen awyrgylch ac ethos ei hun, gan fod y mwyafrif llethol o blant yn dod o gartrefi di-Gymraeg. Yr ydym yn gytún bod angen trochiad cyflawn ac amodau ac amgylchiadau ar gyfer hyn. Ni welaf ddim sy'n sicrhau hyn yn y rhaglen.

Owen John Thomas: I have already seen an emphasis being placed on using school catchment areas in deprived areas for targeting, using them as the focus for the Flying Start services. That often means that Welsh-medium education is on the periphery, or, if it is included, the tendency in moving towards the foundation phase is that children stay in one school. That means that children who want a Welsh-medium education are in an English-medium school. So, it is crucial from the outset that we respect the fact that Welsh-medium education requires its own environment and ethos, because the vast majority of children come from non-Welsh-speaking homes. We are agreed that they require full immersion and that the conditions and circumstances for this need to be right. I do not see anything in the programme to ensure that that will happen.

[162] Gwelaf hefyd nad oes cynrychiolaeth i'r Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin ar y fframwaith plant a phobl ifanc sydd gennym ym mhob sir. Felly, pan fydd cynlluniau Dechrau'n Deg neu'r cyfnod sylfaen yn cyrraedd y Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, mae'r penderfyniadau wedi eu gwneud yn barod, ac nid oedd cyfle gan y mudiad ar y dechrau i ddisgrifio ac esbonio anghenion addysg drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Felly, mae perygl—

I also see that Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin does not have representation on the children and young people framework that we have in place in all counties. Therefore, when Flying Start or foundation phase schemes reach Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, the decisions have already been made and it has not had an opportunity at the outset to set out and explain the needs of Welsh-medium education. So, there is a risk—

[163] **Jane Davidson:** That is wrong.

[164] **Owen John Thomas:** Yr ydych yn dweud hynny, ond yr wyf yn derbyn fy ngwybodaeth gan bobl sy'n ymwneud â hyn. Yr wyf am ichi gadarnhau y bydd anghenion addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg yn cael eu parchu wrth ddatblygu hyn, ac y bydd mwy o gyfle i'r Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin gyfrannu at y broses hon o fewn pob fframwaith sir. Fel arall, ni fydd yn cael cyfle i ddylanwadu ar y fframwaith cyn iddo ddod yn ffaith. Os bydd plant yn mynd i ysgol cyfrwng Saesneg ar gyfer Dechrau'n Deg a dechrau'r cyfnod sylfaen, y tebygolrwydd yw y byddant yn aros yn yr ysgol honno, a bydd yr ysgol cyfrwng Cymraeg leol yn colli allan gan na fydd yn cael y plant hynny. Nid yw'r cynllun yn cydnabod mai'r hyn sydd dan sylw yw addysg yn gweithredu gyfochrog â'i gilydd—un drwy gyfrwng y Saesneg, a'r llall drwy'r Gymraeg. Os na chaiff hynny ei barchu yn y cynllun o ran y ffordd y caiff ei ddatblygu, bydd yn niweidiol i addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg.

[165] **Jane Davidson:** Yr ydych yn hollol anghywir. Mae'r Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin wedi bod yn bartner inni ers y cychwyn, ac mae wedi gweithio gyda Choleg y Drindod, Caerfyrddin, i ddatblygu cyrsiau eraill. Yr oeddwn yn gweithio gyda'r Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin yn ystod yr haf i roi gwobrau i fyfyrwyr ledled Cymru am ennill sgiliau Cymraeg.

[166] Mae'r cynllun peilot yn cynnwys ysgolion Cymraeg. Mae cwricwlwm y cam sylfaen yn annog pethau dwyieithog. Yr wyf yn drist iawn i'ch clywed, dair blynedd yn ddiweddarach, yn dweud pethau fel hyn pan yr wyf wedi adrodd i'r Cynulliad dro ar ôl tro am rôl pethau Cymraeg yn y cam sylfaen. Gallwn ddefnyddio'r cam sylfaen newydd i annog mwy o bobl i fod yn ddwyieithog. Mae adran arbennig yn y cwricwlwm hefyd ar gyfer hynny. Gobeithiaf y darllenwch fwy am y cam sylfaen. Os oes gwir broblem, ysgrifennwch ataf gyda thystiolaeth a byddaf yn hapus i edrych ar hynny. Credaf fod y cam sylfaen yn darparu'r cyfle gorau erioed i annog mwy o bobl i ddefnyddio addysg Gymraeg.

[167] **Owen John Thomas:** Nid fy ngofidion i oedd y rhain, ond gofidion pobl sy'n gweithio i Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin ar

Owen John Thomas: You say that, but I receive my information from people who are engaged in this. I would like an assurance from you that the needs of Welsh-medium education will be respected in this development, and that there will be more of an opportunity for Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin to contribute to the process within all county frameworks. Otherwise, it will not have an opportunity to influence the framework before it is set in stone. If children attend an English-medium school for the Flying Start period and the beginning of the foundation phase, the probability is that they will stay in that school, and the local Welsh-medium school will lose out, because it will not receive those children. The scheme does not acknowledge that what we have is education happening side by side—one through the medium of Welsh and one through the medium of English. If that is not respected in the development of the scheme, it will be very damaging to Welsh-medium education.

Jane Davidson: You are totally wrong. Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin has been one of our partners from the outset, and it has worked with Trinity College, Carmarthen, to develop other courses. I worked with Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin during the summer recess to give awards to students across Wales for gaining Welsh-language skills.

The pilot scheme includes Welsh-medium schools. The curriculum for the foundation phase encourages bilingualism. I am very sad to hear you saying things like this, three years on, when I have reported to the Assembly time and again about the involvement of Welsh things in the foundation phase. We can use the new foundation phase to encourage more people to be bilingual. There is also a designated section in the curriculum for that. I hope that you will read more about the foundation phase. If there is a real problem, write to me with the evidence and I will be happy to look at it. I believe that the foundation phase provides the best ever opportunity to encourage more people to use Welsh-medium education.

Owen John Thomas: These were not my concerns, but those of people who work for Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin at grass-roots

lawr gwlad. Maent yn gweld hyn yn digwydd wrth i ganolfannau gael eu creu. Gallwch weld hyn yn digwydd yn unrhyw le y dewiswech edrych. Er enghraifft, yng Nghaerdydd—nid wyf yn sôn am Gaerdydd yn unig, gyda llaw—mae wyth ysgol cyfrwng Saesneg i bob ysgol cyfrwng Cymraeg. Felly, os ydych yn sefydlu canolfan ar gyfer Dechrau'n Deg, mae'n debygol y bydd yn cael ei sefydlu mewn ysgol cyfrwng Saesneg. Bydd hynny yn sicr o ddenu plant, gan gynnwys rhai a fyddai wedi mynychu ysgol Gymraeg.

[168] Y mae gennych rhyw fath o freuddwyd am bethau dwyieithog. Yr unig ffordd y gall dwyieithrwydd ddod i Gymru yw drwy drochi pobl yn y Gymraeg, gan fod pawb yn gallu siarad Saesneg. Pe baech yn dechrau o'r pwynt hwnnw, byddech yn sylweddoli ei fod yn bwysig bod Dechrau'n Deg yn cael ei ddefnyddio yn y system Gymraeg yn ogystal ag yn y system Saesneg. Dyna yr wyf yn ei ddweud a dyna y mae pobl yn ei ddweud wrthyf fi.

[169] Yr wyf am wybod sut yr ydych yn gweld hyn yn datblygu. Mae rhyw syniad gennych eich bod yn gallu taflu plant i adeilad, dweud ei fod yn ysgol ddwyieithog, ac y bydd pawb yn dod allan yn ddwyieithog. Fel rhywun sy'n byw yng Ngwaelod y Garth, dylech wybod am hyn, gan fod ysgol o'r fath yno; mae'r plant yn yr ysgol Gymraeg yn siarad Cymraeg a'r plant yn yr uned Saesneg yn siarad Saesneg. Nid ydynt yn dylanwadu'n ieithyddol ar ei gilydd; nid ydyw fel pe baent yn neidio mewn i bwll nofio a dod allan yn ddwyieithog. Nid yw'n gweithio felly. Nid oes mwy o Gymraeg gan blant uned cyfrwng Saesneg Gwaelod y Garth nag sydd gan y plant mewn unrhyw ysgol cyfrwng Saesneg arall yng Nghaerdydd, ac fe wyddoch hynny.

[170] **Jane Davidson:** Credaf fy mod yn adnabod Ysgol Gwaelod y Garth yn eithaf da gan fy mod yn arfer bod yn gadeirydd bwrdd y llywodraethwyr. Nid rhaglen ysgol yw Dechrau'n Deg, Owen; rhaglen ydyw ar gyfer plant 0 i 3 blwydd oed, cyn iddynt ddechrau yn yr ysgol. Nid yw'n darparu arian i ysgolion; mae'n gweithio mewn ardaloedd penodol gyda phlant bach sydd mewn tlodi, i wneud yn siŵr bod y plant hynny yn cael

level. They are seeing this happening as centres are created. You can see this happening anywhere that you choose to look. For example, in Cardiff—I am not talking about Cardiff only, by the way—there are eight English-medium schools for every Welsh-medium school. Therefore, if you are to establish a Flying Start centre, it is likely that it will be located in an English-medium school. That will certainly attract children, including those who would have gone to a Welsh-medium school.

You have some sort of dream about bilingual matters. The only way in which Wales will become bilingual will be through immersing people in the Welsh language, because everyone can speak English. If you were to start from that point, you would realise that it is important that Flying Start is used in the Welsh system as well as in the English system. That is what I am saying and that is what people are saying to me.

I want to know how you see this developing. You have some idea that you can toss children into a building, state that it is a bilingual school, and that everyone will turn out to be bilingual. As someone who lives in Gwaelod y Garth, you should know about this because there is such a school there; the children in the Welsh-medium school speak Welsh and the children in the English-medium unit speak English. They do not rub off on each other; it is not as if they can jump into a swimming pool and step out as bilingual children. It does not work like that. The children in the English-medium unit in Gwaelod y Garth do not have more knowledge of Welsh than children in any other English-medium school in Cardiff, and you know that.

Jane Davidson: I think that I know Gwaelod y Garth school quite well, because I was the chair of the board of governors. Owen, Flying Start is not a schools programme; it is a programme for children aged between 0 and 3, before they start school. It does not provide money to schools; it works in specific areas with children who live in poverty, to ensure that those children are given opportunities, which may be in Welsh

cyfleoedd, yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg. Nid or in English. It does not provide any money
yw'n darparu arian i ysgolion o gwbl. to schools.

[171] **Peter Black:** I think that we have exhausted that topic.

[172] **Jane Davidson:** I think that Chris needs to help you.

[173] **Mr Burdett:** The guidance on Flying Start specifically addresses the Welsh-language issue. It says that the programme should be available in Welsh where the parents require it and if there is no Welsh-medium provision in the Flying Start area, a bursary should accompany the child to a Welsh-medium setting, outside the area. That is something that we have discussed specifically with Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin.

[174] **Owen John Thomas:** Could that be—

10.40 a.m.

[175] **Peter Black:** There is of course a verbatim record of the committee, so you can—

[176] **Owen John Thomas:** Yes, that is fine; but I am acting on behalf of other people.

[177] **Peter Black:** We have a verbatim record, which you can print off and send to whoever you wish to send it.

[178] **Owen John Thomas:** Yr wyf yn **Owen John Thomas:** I am very grateful.
ddiolchgar iawn.

[179] **Peter Black:** Thank you. Unless there are any more contributions on this, that is the end of this item. I suggest that we now take our refreshment recess. I request that we reconvene at 10.55 a.m..

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.40 a.m. a 11.02 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.40 a.m. and 11.02 a.m.*

[180] **Peter Black:** Welcome back to the Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee. I welcome Jane Coia from the Scope Cwmbran Skills Development Centre, who has come to talk to us as part of our evidence gathering on special educational needs.

[181] I apologise, because it appears that the new technology has failed us, and we will not be able to use the overhead PowerPoint presentation. However, every Member should have a copy of the slides, which Jane should be able to refer to during the presentation. Before I invite Jane to make her presentation, I remind you that there will be a verbatim record of the proceedings, which you will be able to see in due course before we publish it. So, that will also be available to you. I ask you to start by giving us a brief presentation, Jane, and then we will go to questions.

[182] **Ms Coia:** First, I would like to apologise because the director of Scope Cymru, Jacqui Christy James, has been ill and I have picked this up at the last minute so that Scope can give a presentation.

[183] Scope Cymru is almost, if you forgive the expression, a cradle-to-grave organisation, working with community development and Craig-y-Parc School, which is probably one of the best schools in the United Kingdom for people with profound and multiple disabilities. I manage the Cwmbran Skills Development Centre, which I will go into a little later. We also have employment services and work preparation services for people with cerebral palsy.

Scope's respond service is a service for parents with newly diagnosed children, infants and babies. The Sully Skills Development Centre is just outside Barry, and we also have 12 shops within Wales.

[184] Cwmbran Skills Development Centre provides services for adults with cerebral palsy and other associated disabilities from the age of 18 onwards. We help people to develop the skills to enhance their daily lives and to use adaptive technology. We are recognised within Gwent as being the experts on adapted information technology. We try to promote a broad outlook and we look at computer skills, literacy and numeracy, and also fitness, arts and crafts, and personal wellbeing, because the long-term implications of social isolation are linked to mental ill health. We promote advocacy through Scope itself and through Advocacy Wales, and we try to promote as much social integration as possible.

[185] We try to provide positive choices to adults who attend our service. A number of services are aimed at getting people with disabilities help and support and encouraging education for those who seek voluntary placements and those who are planning to work. We deal with many disabilities at the centre in Cwmbran, ranging from profound and multiple disabilities to a very slight learning disability. You cannot judge a book by its cover. I have some service users with profound and multiple physical disabilities who are extremely academically able. However, because of those difficulties, the economic marketplace does not provide them with the opportunity to work, so we place them in voluntary placements. I have one person who designs the website and does the accounts for the disability action project in Gwent and a young lady who does the books and the web access for the citizens advice bureau. They both do that as volunteers. So, we have to make the work provided to them intellectually stimulating and challenging.

[186] At the moment, Scope is working in a multi-agency environment. We work in partnership with the local authorities and local education. We are currently in the last year of our European social fund project, which is CARAL—computers as a route to accessible learning. I inherited this project half-way through, and it was quite difficult to meet the performance indicators that my predecessor had highlighted. So, as part of the project, we have done some serious focusing, and following my first year of dealing with a social fund project, I decided that we had to do something positive with it. So, as part of our outcomes, range and objectives, we are undertaking research into learning and teaching styles and needs in the Valleys to find out what is available. I did not want to put in a bid for another European-funded project only to find that we were missing the boat or that we were not going to meet appropriate targets. We identified, through the CARAL project, that we were doing outreach work and educating people in the Valleys. Unfortunately, the staff who were working with the people whom we were educating were not as IT literate as the beneficiaries of the project. So, we have now highlighted the need to cascade the information down from the staff to the beneficiaries.

[187] We are currently working with the RISE network, and we used part of the research that we did for the CARAL project to identify a range of beneficiaries who wanted to work, but the technology was not out there to support them. Those beneficiaries were visually impaired. So, when the RISE project came through, we spent £15,000 on the software and the licences to be able to teach people with visual impairment how to use a computer and how to access academic qualifications. It costs £1,000 for every programme and £500 for every licence. So, the cost of that software has been prohibitive and at the moment we are only placing people at locations that have the equipment to teach people with visual impairment.

[188] We do not just teach IT skills at the centre; we also provide personal-centred planning and every individual is given a skills assessment to help plan their training needs and develop individual action plans. We encourage the service users to develop in all areas of life skills, which include physical, functional and social integration. My aim is to provide meaningful

daytime activities for people, which encourage self-esteem and their ability to integrate socially. Not everyone with a disability can continue to learn academically, so our aim is to match life experience with chronological age so that they have the same life experience as anyone else of the same age. The picture here shows a trip to the Newport agricultural show, to which we took a group of profoundly disabled people.

[189] Through our partnership working, we are working on health and social wellbeing and we encourage physical fitness and healthy eating programmes. Clearly, if you have a disability, the more physically fit you are, the better able you are to get on with your daily life. So, we worked in partnership with the local authority and the Disability Sport Wales officer, who helped us to access the WAG free-swimming initiative in Cwmbran. We had 12 service users who had swimming lessons at Cwmbran stadium. We hope to pick that up again in September at Pontypool. I was sent a slide last night, which is not on your sheet, which I will get to later.

11.10 a.m.

[190] Getting support from the local authority is not as straightforward as it seems. Local authorities are facing a cash crisis, as we all know. They do not automatically provide funding for everyone post-18. It is a lottery with regard to whether you get services. If you live in Monmouthshire or Newport, the local authorities will pay for day services for you; if you live in Blaenau Gwent or Caerphilly, they will not. The physical disability team does not have the cash to pay for day services. I was approached by a 24-year-old from Caerphilly who has cerebral palsy. She went through mainstream education. She is hemiplegic, which means that she is paralysed down her left side. She has difficulty with numeracy and literacy, because of the schooling that she missed due to ill health. She would like to learn IT skills in order to get a job; she wants to work in her local community. Unfortunately, Caerphilly County Borough Council's adult team does not have the funds to send her to me for that education. So, I have passed her on to an advocate to try to get some sort of day service for her. However, the most that she has been offered by Caerphilly is to work with animals. She is a socially isolated young lady. She lives on her own and would benefit from IT, numeracy and literacy training. She really does want to go to work.

[191] I have here an e-mail from my colleague, Andy Lusk. I work in day services for adults; Andy works in education. He noted that Wales has no specialist college under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 for the category of students with profound multiple disabilities. So, all our children who come from Craig-y-Parc School or our children who go through school with profound and multiple disabilities are sent to local education colleges in England. This is an equalities challenge as non-disabled learners have a choice to pursue further or higher education within the country. The provision is hit and miss. For some students, it depends again on the local authority and whether they can attract the funding to send them out of county to college.

[192] Scope operates a specialist provider in Beaumont in Lancaster, but is hoping to develop core locations for all further education colleges for these learners, so that they are integrated into mainstream education and not in separate provision. Scope feels that it would be feasible to co-locate specialist colleges inside the existing higher and further settings in Wales, and we would like more of an opportunity to feed more information to this committee before Christmas, if that were possible.

[193] **Peter Black:** Thank you very much indeed. Are there any questions? You take most of your clients from a particular school, as I understand it—

[194] **Ms Coia:** No, I take adults from the greater Gwent area. I cover five local authorities.

[195] **Peter Black:** Is there any continuity between what happened in terms of the support that they had at school and what happens when they come to you, or do you find yourself picking up the pieces and starting all over again in many cases?

[196] **Ms Coia:** It is very much a lottery. It is picking up the pieces. One young man in Blaenau Gwent came from Craig-y-Parc School. He was home for 11 months without day-care support, because adult services had made no provision for him.

[197] **Peter Black:** Do you think that that is a funding issue, or is that an issue in terms of the way in which existing resources are used?

[198] **Ms Coia:** The resources at the moment are piecemeal. Children go through special education, be it in special schools or special units. They can then go on—if possible—to further education colleges, if their parents have enough insight to push for them and if they have a social worker. However, there is no guarantee. Often, after the three or four years in further education colleges, for example, Cross Keys College or Usk College, there is no further provision for them. The local authorities no longer automatically provide day services.

[199] **Peter Black:** Given that resources are limited and scarce, and working on the assumption that it will stay like that for some time—I think that that is the reality—what could be done within those existing resources to improve that situation?

[200] **Ms Coia:** Scope is not looking at building institutions; it does not want to build another free-standing college for people with disabilities. What it is saying is that it could work with partners to provide education in the existing local colleges. Scope has the knowledge and expertise on the specialist education and all the adapted equipment needed, but we have to find a place within the mainstream settings to establish that.

[201] **Peter Black:** Have you found existing colleges to be receptive to that approach?

[202] **Ms Coia:** The existing colleges will take a lot of people with special needs, but there is a gap in the market for people with profound and multiple disabilities. The colleges do not have adapted rooms, lifts or any residential accommodation for them. We have no residential accommodation for people with a profound disability in Wales at all.

[203] **Janet Ryder:** I have other questions but I will follow up what the Chair has been asking. It may not be feasible to ask every college to develop those skills, but what would your assessment be of asking a specific college per region in Wales—a larger region, or even in the north and south—to develop a specific unit like that?

[204] **Ms Coia:** There are existing colleges already in Wales. There is one in Newport and the new college that is developing in Ebbw Vale. There is a lot of potential for working with what is already going on.

[205] **Janet Ryder:** Do those colleges have specific units within them?

[206] **Ms Coia:** Yes.

[207] **Janet Ryder:** In south Wales?

[208] **Ms Coia:** Yes, there are.

[209] **Janet Ryder:** Is there anything in north Wales?

[210] **Ms Coia:** Not that I am aware of.

[211] **Janet Ryder:** Right.

[212] **Ms Coia:** Most people from north Wales go across the border to England and Lancaster.

[213] **Janet Ryder:** So, it is a question of looking at the provision in north Wales.

[214] **Peter Black:** You said that a certain number of your clients go to college in England. What sort of proportion are we talking about, and what sort of numbers?

[215] **Ms Coia:** All children or young people with profound and multiple disabilities who want to go on to further education have to go to England. We do not have any other provision in Wales. We find that, for even the most profoundly disabled students, three years away from home, socially, help to provide the life skills that will keep them in the community for longer. The other possible outcome is that they will eventually have to go into some sort of residential care or some sort of care in the community. We find that going away to college assists those that do so to pick up the skills needed to stay within the community for longer.

[216] **Christine Chapman:** You talk about volunteering placements and work experience. What are your experiences of trying to find actual employment? Are employers as engaged as they should be?

[217] **Ms Coia:** Do not get me on my soap box. Scope has a totally inclusive policy and we have to reserve one in three posts for people with disabilities. I have just spent £5,000 recruiting for three posts, one of which I reserved for a person with a disability. I interviewed a young man with cerebral palsy; he is very articulate and more than capable of doing the work, but he asked to work part time—it was only a year's project as part of the European funding, so the post was limited to a year—so as not to disrupt his disability and housing benefits and so on. We agreed that that would work in the programme. He went to Citizens Advice before I took him on, where he was told that he could probably work for 15 hours a week. So, we worked out a timetable for him to teach 15 hours a week, but then, when he started, I was told that he would have his housing benefits taken away and that he would not be able to work for that number of hours.

[218] The reality of getting someone into work is a nightmare. People are penalised when they start to work. For this young man to lose all his benefits for taking a year's post and then have to try to get them all back at the end of that year is criminal.

[219] **Christine Chapman:** So, they would not want to take that risk on.

11.20 a.m.

[220] **Ms Coia:** Even if I have someone with a profound disability who can do a job, can I, morally, put them into a position where they are in a financially vulnerable state? I have another young man who works as an insurance clerk. He gets up at 5.30 a.m. in order to shower, be in his wheelchair and be in work for 9 a.m.. He lives independently in the community. In terms of getting home, by the time he transfers from his car to his chair, gets to his house, gets his food, cooks his food and clears up, it is 8.30 p.m.. He then has to shower for bed, because he has to be back up at 5.30 a.m. the following morning. His quality of life to maintain a full-time job is very poor. He is becoming more and more fatigued and that is the reality if you have a profound disability and you try to maintain a full-time job. If he gives it up, he will have to go onto benefits. Morally, it is not firm ground.

[221] **Christine Chapman:** The points that you have raised are very relevant and

appropriate, but, as far as employers are concerned, are you getting a wide pool of employers who want to engage with recruitment on this or should we be putting pressure on employers or discussing this with them?

[222] **Ms Coia:** To be honest, I am not an expert on the employment side of things. My expertise is in skill development. At Scope, we do have an employment service that tries to support people in work.

[223] Another thing that came out as part of the CARAL project was that part of our instructions related to economic regeneration, and we tried to get people into training for work. In Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent, we are working with the Jobcentre to get people with disabilities enough skills to do work placements. We have had, I think, 15 people into work placement. We have taken them along, we have trained them in IT skills and we have supported them through the Jobcentre. However, once they are in that work placement, there is no continued support. That is another arm of research that we have been doing and we have identified that, if we have to put people into work, we need to look at a way of supporting them and their employer while they are at work.

[224] **Janet Ryder:** The local authorities are having difficulty in getting funding for continued support and care. Is there anything that we could suggest that might address that situation, apart from an increase in funding for local authorities? Are there any mechanisms or a practice that might need changing, or is it just that authorities do not have that money?

[225] **Ms Coia:** There is a pot of money for day services for people with learning disabilities because that is the structure and the department. Physical disability teams do not have access to the same pots of money. I do not know the reason why or how. It is people who have a physical disability and not a learning disability who have the difficulty in getting that support. I think that it is the ideology around what the team expects to do for people with physical disabilities.

[226] **Jeff Cuthbert:** That is extremely interesting. You mentioned that it was a bit of lottery with local authorities. You said that if you had disabilities in Monmouth or Newport, you would get the support, but not if you were in Caerphilly or Blaenau Gwent.

[227] **Ms Coia:** That is only from my experience.

[228] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Absolutely, I am not holding you to that. However, that suggests to me different priorities and values in those local authorities, and I would be very keen to explore what is behind that and why those judgments have been come to. Is there any more information that you could perhaps provide us with, particularly case studies of good practice in Monmouth and Newport? We would certainly want to take those to the social services and education departments of our respective local authorities. Is there also a role for the local health boards? Is it a partnership or is it just about the local authorities?

[229] **Ms Coia:** The last young man that I had from Blaenau Gwent waited for 11 months before he was sent to a college in England. He was supported by the health board. We went to appeal, because I felt that it was neglect to have a young man whose needs had been identified and yet who had been left for 11 months.

[230] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Right. The other point that you mentioned was this clash for someone who might be working for 15 hours and might run the risk of losing benefits. Obviously, there is a dichotomy there, but state benefits are not a devolved matter; we cannot deal with that directly. Nevertheless, we are interested in the other side of it—and this is why you are here—and that certainly is a devolved matter.

[231] So, we need to get more information about this problem. In general terms, there is a difficulty with working and benefits but, in a specific case like this, where, for the reasons that you have outlined, it is important to work a limited amount of time for very good personal reasons, more work needs to be done in collaboration between the Assembly and Westminster to try to get a fairer situation. So, any more detailed information that you could give us would be useful.

[232] **Ms Coia:** It has a profound effect on people's self-esteem to have a workplace and a pattern for daily living.

[233] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I am sure that no government official is consciously trying to make life difficult for people—it probably has just not been thought through properly. So, we would want to take on any information that you can give us with Westminster colleagues to say that something needs to be done here.

[234] **Peter Black:** Are there any other questions? I see not. In terms of multi-agency working, you obviously work with many different agencies. Do you find that you must take the lead on that for much of the time, or do you fit in with other people? Who tends to take the lead in that type of way?

[235] **Ms Coia:** As part of the CARAL project, we have taken the lead—my outreach workers works with local authorities, education and Jobcentres. The RISE project is a massive project in the Valleys with ELWa and the education department, and we are only a very small part of it. We provide a local learning action centre, with expertise on adapted equipment. If people need to access or need information about adapted technology, we provide that part of the partnership.

[236] **Peter Black:** When you work with other agencies, are there any particular barriers or difficulties that we need to be aware of as part of that work?

[237] **Ms Coia:** No, not particularly.

[238] **Peter Black:** Are there any funding issues? Well, there are always funding issues.

[239] **Ms Coia:** The funding issue will become more apparent later. My centre is aimed around meaningful activities for people. Meaningful learning experiences are useful to everyday life to integrate people into the community. As the funding is changing and evolving, it will be more difficult for us to access those streams of funding, because it will be more around economic regeneration, and I am more around education and social regeneration. So, we are taking an active part in the community through volunteering and being out there, but I do not see that we will be able to hit the target for economic regeneration.

[240] **Peter Black:** Is that European social funding?

[241] **Ms Coia:** Yes.

[242] **Peter Black:** Okay. Jeff, did you want to come back?

[243] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Yes. There was a specific point. What happens in the 12 shops that you have throughout Wales?

[244] **Ms Coia:** The shops are part of the charity side. We have had to close two or three in Wales in the last year because they had not made a profit in the past three years. Scope has had to say that the shops must be financially viable. The money from the shops goes to Scope central, which helps to support the political and residential side of Scope. Not all our

residential services cover their own costs. Scope is trying to make services fit for purpose and financially viable. It is not out to make a profit; it is just out to run the services.

[245] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Do you break even, though?

[246] **Ms Coia:** Yes, but the shops at the moment are helping to support those services.

[247] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Right. I must admit, I cannot recall going to a Scope shop. Do the people who work in them carry out the full range of services that you would expect in any shop, in dealing with cash and so on?

[248] **Ms Coia:** Yes. Scope used to be called the Spastics Society, and everyone knew what the Spastics Society was. The shops are now charity shops, and they are going through a revamp, because part of the culture now is about signposting people so that people see Scope as whole unit. If you go into a Scope shop, they will explain who they are supporting, who people with cerebral palsy are, and how we are supporting them, where the skills are and what the signposts are for people with children with disabilities. We have various internet sites and so on, and, as part of the shop, will have a stand that signposts people to the help that Scope can provide.

11.30 a.m.

[249] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I am sorry if you have answered this and I missed it, but will people with profound disabilities work in the shops?

[250] **Ms Coia:** Some people with lesser disabilities—not those with profound disabilities—will work in the shops.

[251] **Jeff Cuthbert:** May I ask one more question? I will shut up then, I promise.

[252] **Peter Black:** That is fine; carry on.

[253] **Jeff Cuthbert:** My question is to do with the discussion that we had earlier about educational qualifications and key skills, for example, issues like number application, communication, key skills at levels 1 and 2 and problem solving. Would they be working towards such qualifications in that environment?

[254] **Ms Coia:** Yes. We are doing a number of qualifications through the National Open College Network. We are also looking at other basic skills, such as communication skills, health and safety skills and food hygiene skills—things that will help people in their daily lives.

[255] **Peter Black:** I think that that is all the questions that we have. Thank you for coming along and making a presentation; you are welcome to stay for the next item. Andrea and Kathy, would you come to the table now? They are from the Elite Supported Employment Agency Ltd and you are welcome to stay, Ms Coia, and take part in this item as well, if you wish to do so.

11.31 a.m.

**Adolygiad Polisi Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig—Rhan Tri—Casglu
Tystiolaeth: Elite Supported Employment Agency Cyf
Policy Review of Special Educational Needs—Part Three—Evidence Gathering:
Elite Supported Employment Agency Ltd**

[256] **Peter Black:** The second presentation today is from Andrea Wayman and Kathy Rivett, from the Elite Supported Employment Agency. Have I got that right? I must apologise in advance that our PowerPoint technology is not working, but we all have a copy of your slides and you can take us through them. You may want to start off by making a presentation and we will ask questions after that, if that is okay. There will be a verbatim record, so whatever you say will be taken down and you will be able to look at that before it is published.

[257] **Ms Wayman:** Thank you very much for inviting me today, I do appreciate it. My name is Andrea Wayman and I am the director at Elite; this is my colleague, Kathy Rivett, who is the deputy director. Please bear with me, as the PowerPoint is not working this morning, while I go through my presentation.

[258] I would like to start by giving a bit of background information about Elite as an organisation. Our vision and mission statement are clearly stated on the handout. We were set up in 1994 with a very small amount of money from the then local authority of Mid Glamorgan, and we have progressed with a variety of funds since then. We have also broadened our horizons in terms of the geographical area that we cover, the age range of our client group and the range of disabilities that we work with, in the past 12 years. Looking at the agenda that you had today, I will point out that we have progressed to working with people as young as 14 and up to 65, who may have never had any type of work experience or employment whatsoever.

[259] The angle that supported employment is coming from is a belief that everybody can work. If the right niche is found for them, the right job match is made for them and they are given appropriate support, then people can work. However, that may not fit the stereotype that we have of employment, of full-time work at 37.5 hours a week, because it can range from as little as two hours a week for the individual concerned. I have demonstrated in the handout the range of funding bodies that we have and I have done that for a particular reason: there is no central source that would cover all the costs of the organisation that we have. The majority of the work that we do is dependent on funds from trusts, the lottery and Children in Need and so on.

[260] To give you the background to what supported employment is, in very simplified terms, the person is hired and paid by an employer, so we deal with only open employment. That can be in any type of workplace that anyone would work in—not a sheltered workshop—and the employee receives the full benefits, the same as anyone else. The job that we find for someone meets their aspirations, and their work, and how they carry out their tasks, meets the employer's requirements as well. The important thing about supported employment is that it gives just enough support to both the employer and the employee, so that they can both manage that employment and the employee is independent and enabled at that workplace.

[261] I wanted to demonstrate the situation for our client group. Particularly for people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties, as well as people with physical and sensory impairment, the routes to employment can be very complex for a young person. It is complex for most able-bodied young people, but many people with disabilities do not know what is out there, despite a lot of input from Careers Wales and so on, because there will be a reflection on their limitations rather than on their abilities and how they will develop in that time, and

that is due to their support requirements, mostly. So, there is a range of things out there, but for our part, for the individuals that we work with, we are actually providing a flexible person-centred approach to employment for the individual on any planning process in their transition from education into adult life.

[262] To cover a little bit of a transition project that we have had in operation for the last three and a half years, it was funded by the Big Lottery—originally the community fund, when we applied for the funding—and the purpose of the project was that we would get young people into paid employment through a stepping-stone approach, which would be necessary for the individual. It would be tailored to meet each person's needs. With regard to the services that were offered during that time, supported employment starts with a thing called vocational profiling, which is a very specialised form of assessment, and that not only matches up people's abilities to the future career that they should go into, but also how environment affects them, how they socialise and where their skills could be developed and how you anticipate the way in which they could be developed, as well.

[263] Within the project that we operated, we commenced by providing a vocational course for each young person in the educational establishment that he or she was at, which was either a school or a further education college. That was quite successful, as it got those young people on board and engaged them in what to expect in the future. We linked that up to visits to employers, based on the fact that, if you do not know something about employment, it is difficult to choose what you want to do with the rest of your life. Originally, employment choices would be based either on people not knowing anything about a certain employment, and therefore not being able to choose it, or based on what their mother or someone else that they knew did at work. The employer visits linked into that might cancel out that employment as an occupation. For example, if they said, 'I want to work in a factory', we work in a very Valleys area, and manufacturing is one of our largest industries, as well as retail. They would go in and the noise and whatever might mean that the employment did not meet their requirements, and worked against their needs, because of their concentration levels and what they could cope with environmentally. We did supported work placements with every person who came on to the project—some people declined to take that up, but that was mostly for health reasons; we had a low drop-out rate on that side of things—and that was very successful as it gave people a taste of what employment could be like for them. The whole time that they were in that placement, they were supported on a one-to-one basis, so we were continually enabling them and stretching them as much as we possibly could. Throughout the time that they were on the placement, from day one, they were continuously evaluated against the training plan that we tailored to them and their success rate in that employment.

[264] We also had them evaluate themselves as to how well they thought they had done there, and, perhaps for the first time ever for someone with a learning disability, they were questioning themselves, and that had a huge impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence. Through that, the individuals gained a lot of soft skills, as well as vocational skills.

[265] We did travel training with many people because, typically, they would have been used to being bussed to a special school, bussed to college and taxied around, or transported by mum and dad, and might never have used public transport. That was quite a huge breakthrough: if you cannot get to work, how can you expect to work? So that had to be a starting point.

[266] A huge part of the impact on the young people related to social skills and integration in the workplace. They have the skills required to do the job; they get used to it and they are trained to do it. However, how they interact with colleagues at their workplace, particularly in the same age group, was another matter, and we had to deal with that carefully.

[267] The project's main impact was that we had people working in paid jobs, whether

Saturday jobs during college, or after school and so on, or employment after leaving education. That was our main goal, really. Throughout the time of entering paid employment, they were supported on a one-to-one basis, and we gradually withdrew our support as their independence progressed and they stood on their own two feet, maintaining their employment.

11.40 a.m.

[268] I will give you a quick case study to show the level of input that we must have with young persons. There was a young gentleman by the name of David who lives in Maerdy. I do not know whether anybody knows the Rhondda Valley but employment is extremely limited in Maerdy with the closure of heavy industry there, and manufacturing is also closing down. We picked David up at a local college. He is one of a set of triplets who all have disabilities. Their parents' aspirations for the children were non-existent. Their aspirations were that they would all live on benefits. They were second-generation unemployed. We liaised with the parents and education. We had to prove a point to the parents and we did a range of transition work with David. We did the course at college with him, we did some travel training and we paired him up with a peer buddy from a local school, who was the same age as him but able bodied, and they did travel training together. They then went into a Saturday job together after he had done a placement with our adult staff, and that Saturday job worked extremely well and he held it down for several months until he left college. On leaving college, he went into a full-time job literally on his doorstep—within walking distance. People were saying, 'This is unheard of. He lives in Maerdy and a job has been found for him in Maerdy.' However, that did not work out for him. He found it quite difficult to fit in socially, the age range of the people in that environment did not suit him and he could not cope with the full-time hours, so we had to look at an alternative for him. We did not want him to fall out of employment and stay at home and watch daytime television or go to the local day centre. An opportunity came up in McDonald's, of all places. We could say that it was a baseline job or whatever but, for David, the age range of the people who worked there and the hours that were offered helped him to fit in. He has now been in that job for 18 months, I believe, and it has worked extremely well because he has fitted in socially. He does not miss a day's work and the employer has just awarded him a star employee award. McDonald's has a very structured way of working, which has suited him ideally and he has coped with it fine, travel-training wise. We will monitor the situation, and, in a couple of years or months, we may pick up that he may need to move on.

[269] To give you an overview of the project, 147 people in the last three and a half years have gone through that project. One hundred per cent receive vocational profiling, and 96 per cent participated in work experience, which we feel is a really good outcome. A total of 98 per cent of participants improved their soft skills. When we first met people, they had no eye contact with us, let alone the ability to socially interact with us, and 89 per cent achieved accreditation through the open college network in qualifications that we designed. The biggest impact, which shows that supported employment works, was that 41 per cent of those young people went into paid employment. That was quite a substantial breakthrough. These were people who, although no-one would use the term 'unemployable' to describe them, had been classed as people who would not move into employment, would be dependent on social services day care and would be living on benefits for the rest of their lives.

[270] To give you an overview of supported employment in Wales in general, it is about working with a range of disabilities. We are supporting people in full and part-time employment. We assist people into a very wide range of jobs—anything and everything that suits the client. It has been identified through research that, £1 for £1 that you spend on a social services day centre, you get nothing back but, £1 for £1 spent on supported employment, 42p comes back into the Treasury in one form or another, either in savings for local authorities or social services or in people paying tax, national insurance and so on.

[271] I conclude by saying that we are way behind in Wales and the UK in general. Here, 5 per cent of people with learning disabilities go into jobs. In the States, this has been operating for 30 years. Over 50 per cent of people with learning disabilities in the States and Canada and 61 per cent of people with learning disabilities in Australia, which has only started supported employment in the last 10 years, have access to maintained employment. So those are substantial figures to compare against. I really would see this as a way of investing in these young people's future.

[272] **Peter Black:** Before I bring Christine in, I would like to ask you why Wales is so far behind everyone else. What is your view on that?

[273] **Ms Wayman:** I think that it is because we have not had continuous or consistent funding as an investment. For instance, when they changed the welfare system in the United States, Canada and Australia they invested in supported employment. It is always a human right for people with learning disabilities and other disabilities to have a service of this kind. It is viewed as an enabling service rather than as a care service.

[274] **Peter Black:** So, you would suggest that the Government should continuously review the benefits payable to people with disabilities and, hand in hand with that, there should be investment in supported employment? If you come off that benefit, you would go into a job as opposed to just reviewing it and taking people off when they feel that they are not dependent on it.

[275] **Ms Wayman:** Yes. The Welsh group to which I belong has met with a number of Welsh Members of Parliament at Westminster to discuss this issue, to ask that it be included in the reform.

[276] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you for your contribution, which was very interesting. You gave us quite a startling figure regarding the statistic of 5 per cent. It is unacceptable, and we have a long way to go on this one. In your presentation, you said that 41 per cent of your people went into paid employment, which is good—you have done very well, but I am sure that you also want to improve. What types of barriers are there? What is the next stage of getting more people into jobs? When people are in employment, what do you do as far as career progression is concerned? I suppose that, in some ways, the first stage is to get them a low-level job, but it is about career progression after that.

[277] People with disabilities will, quite often, have health problems, which Jane also mentioned, which is part of the problem. What barriers are there to prevent employers being much more sympathetic and to plan these things into their working life? I do not think that employers are engaged with this as much as they should be. I am aware that there are very good employers out there who do good things, but I still think that we need to be talking much more to employers. It is not just good for people with disabilities—it is also good for the economy, which is the other side of it. We cannot afford to waste all this potential. So, our economy is poorer for it if we do not get this right.

[278] **Ms Wayman:** On your third question about work with employers, we have contacts with over 1,500 employers in the geographical area that we cover. That ranges from national companies to small, family-run businesses that employ perhaps four other people except for family members. It has worked for us because we have built up a rapport with the employer. So, we support the employer as much as the employee. We have had quite a good response from employers, and they go on to tell other employers who are in a personnel group with them, or whatever. We have developed our service to be almost an advisory service for employers; for example, many people had queries about the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 when it came in. We help with policy development and so on. It can always be

improved in terms of how much input and impact employers have, but when it works well they come back to us.

[279] I will give you an example of a national company. We now have 11 people working in our local Sainsbury's, which may not sound like a lot, but you spoke about career development opportunities; people who choose to have career development are given that opportunity. When we find a job for someone, that is not the end of it—it is the start. Finding a job is the easy part, but maintaining and developing that employment is the most important thing. I am not in the same job as when I started working, and we should not expect that of our client group. For instance, with the Sainsbury's situation, we have a chap who has been there for about seven years, and he has had four lots of promotion in that time. We regularly monitor his progress. If there is training for other staff, we will offer our support to go in and train him up alongside the rest of the workforce. As a result, he has moved to four different areas within that workforce, but he is not on his own, in that sense.

11.50 a.m.

[280] With regard to employer support, Sainsbury's employs two members of staff with a hearing impairment and we had to negotiate that and structure it in a particular way. A number of the staff went out and learnt sign language so that they could communicate. It was also a business idea, because it meant that the company developed its relationship with hearing-impaired customers—it now has those coming in as well. It was good business practice and we sell things in that way, saying, 'It is good for business'. It is not simply a case of being good to the community, we tell them, 'You have an untapped workforce, make the most of it'. Have I covered all the points?

[281] **Peter Black:** We asked the Federation of Small Businesses and the Confederation of British Industry to come to tell us what they thought that we needed to do to help them to employ people with special educational needs. Both organisations declined the invitation, saying that they had nothing to contribute to the debate. Do you find that it is difficult to engage employers in this agenda or is it fairly easy once you get to them on a one-to-one basis?

[282] **Ms Wayman:** We always meet employers on a one-to-one basis; there is no huge marketing ploy. We have done conferences with our local regeneration group, for instance, and attended jobs fairs and so on—we also work closely with Jobcentre Plus—but most of the impact that we have on employers is on a one-to-one basis. The initial meeting with them is always held on that basis. We explain about our service and that it is not about telling them, 'Employ this person', it is about asking, 'How can we support you?'

[283] **Peter Black:** Do you find that some employers are reluctant to engage in this agenda?

[284] **Ms Wayman:** They are more of a rarity than the ones who are prepared to try it, which I think is surprising, considering the general view that we have.

[285] **Christine Chapman:** I want to bring up the disappointing response that we received from the Federation of Small Businesses, bearing in mind that Wales is a country of small businesses. You are dealing with small businesses; that is your day-to-day job. Obviously, there are lots of things that you can do, as an organisation, but you are also limited as there is always a resource issue. I am sure that you are doing good work with employers, but I feel that we should try to make the system work better as far as employers are concerned. I would hope that employers' organisations would be engaged with this. As I have said, it is bad for the economy if we waste all this potential, and I hope that you make some progress on that.

[286] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Between you, Chair, and Chris, you have taken up half my points. My points are on the employment issue and the National Open College Network, which you work with. I met a representative of the Federation of Small Businesses last week, on the issue of its engagement with phase 3 of the transition to additional needs. To cut a long story short, its essential position is that it says, 'It is not a priority that has been raised by our members'. It is being reactive in that sense, which I can understand. Due to the very nature of the Federation of Small Businesses, it deals with small organisations—some of which are micro organisations—that have limited staffing resources and I can see that the offering of work placements and employment opportunities is not necessarily something that is at the forefront of their minds.

[287] Nevertheless, there was a recognition by the FSB that there ought to be a different attitude and it would be quite happy to work with us to try to encourage its members to deal with it, provided that it did not stretch their limited resources too much. There might be some scope for us as a committee to work with organisations such as yours to improve understanding. The point that you made that really brought it home, that only 5 per cent of people with disabilities have employment, is what an enormous waste of resources that is. I am sure that much of this comes down to employers' perception that, if they were to recruit someone with a disability, that would mean more work for them. We can overcome that by talking about the talent, understanding and knowledge of people with different abilities, as evidenced by the qualifications that they obtain, and pointing out that they are talking about a loyal pool of good workers. Looking at the evidence from other countries, that is the way that they ought to go.

[288] We are getting to the position, I am pleased to say, of having a strong economy and the more people who are available for employment, the better it ought to be. We really should push that. One of the reasons why we are doing transition now is because we want all people to be valued as useful workers and contributors to society. We need to do better; which is why we are doing this. Any ideas that you have about improving engagement with employers are to be welcomed. As the Chair rightly said, there are a lot of small employers in Wales but, of course, we should not ignore the bigger employers.

[289] Finally, in terms of the open college network accreditation that you have, is it in the key skills or are they designed or customised qualifications?

[290] **Ms Rivett:** They are customised qualifications for our client group at entry level and level 1 under the headings of preparing for work, work experience, so that they would get accredited qualifications after attending a work placement; and also health and safety, obviously, if you are going into a workplace.

[291] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Do you, within your organisation, seek to map the evidence gathered for your customised qualifications to national qualifications such as the key skills, problem solving, communications, working with others and so on?

[292] **Ms Rivett:** We have discussed that with the open college network and there is feasibility for that to happen, because some of the things that go on in a workplace setting actually do tie in to key skills. So, there is room for that to happen.

[293] **Jeff Cuthbert:** That may be a way forward, because as key skills become more recognised by employers as a national standard, I would say that people who have that qualification have a foot in the door. So, there may well be opportunities to map your customised qualifications. I do not know the details of your customised qualification—I am sure that they are very good—but if they can be mapped to a nationally recognised qualification, that eases the path for the holders of those qualifications.

[294] **Janet Ryder:** Evidence shows, particularly when young people are in a college or sometimes in a school situation, that they actually need an individual advocate of their own. To some extent, in employment, you are forming that. What would your thoughts be on extending that advocacy, so that that one-to-one advocacy runs, not just in your area but throughout Wales, right through even a secondary education setting and into employment? From what you have said, if I have judged it right, it seems that you work very much on an individual basis but then you are also working with the sector. What kind of recommendations do you think that we could be coming forward with that would ensure that that was happening generally across Wales?

[295] **Ms Wayman:** I think that it depends on the individual that you are working with, the age level, I suppose, and the maturity of that person, as to when advocacy is right for them. Going back to your question, Christine, about barriers, parents have great anxieties and concerns about how much they would allow an advocate's role within that. Parents feel that they know what is best for their child. So, we have to tread very carefully in relation to that. For us, we bridge the gap, or the advocate does that, between that young person and the employer. Within schools or colleges, I am not really sure how that would impact. I do not really know whether I am answering your question, but there has been a pilot project in our area with a local school of having advocates for young people from the age of 14 within special schools, saying what they actually want. They did person-centred planning and circles of support around that. It was quite successful but it also requires a huge input. The other thing that can counteract that is that, as the person has had such limited amount of experience in life, it is very difficult for them to express what they want or to gain the information from an advocate. I do not know whether I am making sense or not.

[296] **Janet Ryder:** What seemed to me to come through when we took evidence from college settings is that young people need someone with them or to help them see their way through the system, to know which department to go to, where they are going to go—that kind of advocacy. It seems that that is some of the work that you are doing in an employment situation. I wonder whether there would be any benefit in having the same person, the same individual advocate, continuing through education and into working life so that the client does not have to change and get used to other people.

12.00 p.m.

[297] You say that you do some of that—you talked about the case of a young man in school working in a Saturday job and then going on into employment. Is there any benefit in looking at a system whereby somebody has that independent person outside of their family to go to, to help and support them, and also to prepare the way with other people, such as employers in the area. Employers are sometimes reluctant, unfortunately, not for any reason other than the fact that they do not realise, if they are a small employer, that they could cope with this within their existing company. They need some support and encouragement and someone to say, 'Yes, you can do this—it is not that burdensome'. So, you need someone to be working on that and being an advocate for that person.

[298] Occasionally, there are cases of where young people do know what they want to do—they feel that they can achieve more, but sometimes they are held back by their parents' aspirations. In such cases, they need somebody to have a strong voice for them, who can help them to achieve what they want to achieve, and not necessarily what the parents want them to achieve.

[299] **Ms Wayman:** I totally agree with that; it is about being given the opportunity. There is nothing worse for us than the barrier of individuals being held back by their parents when we can see that they can do so much more. You speak of continuity for a person, which is particularly important. We worked with a young man with Asperger's syndrome from a local

comprehensive school using a specialised section there. For him, it was crucial that he had the same person with him. So, we worked with him as an advocator while he was in school and, strangely enough, we identified a job that he could do in the school. There was very little change in his life; at 19 years of age, he was simply going back to school after the end of term. So, he finished school but went back there to be employed. The same person continued as his job coach over that time, which was crucial because changing the person who supported him would have been bad for him.

[300] **Janet Ryder:** In some cases, I can see that social services departments could say that that role already exists, and that the person will have a dedicated caseworker. How could we change the system to make it much more dedicated and to ensure that the provision is there?

[301] **Ms Wyman:** Although I do not work in social services, the level of input that a caseworker or a case manager would have with someone can actually be quite limited in terms making decisions in their life. How confident a client feels with our case managers is another issue.

[302] One difficulty in keeping people long term is the turnover of staff but, from our point of view, by having that continuous one-to-one contact with someone, you can actually achieve more. You understand the person more and you know what their goals and aspirations are. They build up a level of trust with you, they are able to express themselves far better, they feel more confident with you, and they can get more done in their lives. We have had long-term staff, and when they have left, we have to ensure that we have an appropriate handover with them. This means that the young person also gets to know the new person who is taking over, rather than us simply telling that person that they have a new job trainer. It could be six months since they had any contact with our agency because they are independent in their job. The transition with staffing is important. One of the biggest hurdles in a workplace is the arrival of a new manager who has a totally different approach on how to do things. That can totally throw the individual that we have worked with, who has perhaps been there for several years. So, when we talk about transition, it is right across the board with a lot of things.

[303] **Janet Ryder:** Therefore, it needs to be managed, logistically, at quite a small level, so that an agency such as yours knows what is happening in each individual case, and can see how things change. So, on a Wales-wide basis, would that have to be managed in groups that are smaller than county-level groups?

[304] **Ms Wyman:** At the moment, there are 30 agencies operating to support employment throughout Wales. Some counties have, perhaps, three supporting employment agencies. We are one agency covering three counties, so it does differ, but I think that that is based on the fact that there is no statutory funding behind this provision to ensure consistency.

[305] **Irene James:** Some of my questions have already been answered, but do you think that all the relevant bodies are working together to support young people who are leaving school, and do you think that multi-agency working is progressing? Do we need to give this more attention and are there any areas where it is not working as well as it should be? Furthermore, do you have any examples of good practice that is working well for our students?

[306] **Ms Wayman:** Sometimes, multi-agency working is down to how personalities get on at a local level—I have to be quite honest about that. In the three counties in which we operate, there is one area where we have built up an employment and training consortium in learning disability services. That has worked quite well because, instead of competing against one another for funding, we have collaborated with the joint funds and have done projects jointly, so that we are not all clambering after the same thing and contradicting one another in

that sense.

[307] There are some contradictions regarding the DELLS funding as it is now in terms of how it affects colleges and how they work with us, because we could end up doing certain things that affect the funding that they receive from DELLS, so there is a slight discrepancy there, on which we are working. In other areas, for example, in Merthyr Tydfil, there has been a huge review of learning disability services, and everyone has recognised that transition needs to be the key feature. We have all been open and honest and said that things have not worked for such a long time, and that unless we work collaboratively, it will not work for the next 10 years. So, it has meant a lot of commitment from people. Even though we only get a tiny pot of money from them, we must have a huge level of input to get things working now, while recognising that local authorities do not have the spare cash that is needed to pay for this, that and the other. Everyone wants a bit of that money and it is not going to happen, so we have to look at alternative ways of obtaining joint funding so that we all work towards the same goals, rather than each of us competing with each other for money and then going off at diverse angles to do different things, which do not benefit the one client. That has happened in the past.

[308] **Irene James:** Have you found, by joint working, that you are accessing, dare I say, more funds?

[309] **Ms Wayman:** As yet, no, but we are working on it.

[310] **Owen John Thomas:** Obviously, every time that you find a job for someone, that is a great achievement, but there must be a temptation sometimes for these employers to perhaps take advantage of someone because they feel that that person is lucky to be there in the first place. How do you protect your clients from that, because you must come across that?

[311] **Ms Wayman:** That is when we get negative with employers. I can think of a few instances of that. We were working with one manufacturer with whom we had placed two individuals over a period of time, and we were using the work-step programme for subsidising wages, because their pace of work was slower than that of their colleagues in that workplace. He contacted us to say that he had another vacancy and if he could get someone on work step, he would take anyone off our books. We said, 'Well, we have this guy, but he is going to do 100 per cent of the job for you after we have provided the initial training; I am sorry, but there will not be work-step funding alongside that'. So, the person has to be valued in that workplace. We would never work with an employer who said that they would not pay the national minimum wage or said, 'Let someone come in for 15 hours and we will pay them for four, because we understand their benefits system'. So, it is not only about getting someone a job; we would rather turn down a job if it came to that.

[312] **Owen John Thomas:** There is only so much you can do, so how do you stretch yourselves in terms of checking up that this sort of thing is not happening and that the person is benefiting from the job, and vice versa?

12.10 p.m.

[313] **Ms Wayman:** We have to be very realistic and limit the service that we can offer. While that is very frustrating for our staff, when we get to a ceiling limit of being able to do something, we have to say, 'That is it'. That is awful. When our lottery project finished, parents were distraught that we could no longer provide a service to their sons or daughters. We were still able to support the people that we had got into employment; we could tap into other things because they were in employment. However, for those who were not, who still needed our service, we had to say, 'I am sorry, but there is no funding, and, therefore, we cannot pay staff. We do not have a member of staff to work with that young person'. With

regard to our local authority contracts—our service agreements—they may want us to work with 20 people, but if they are giving us a pot of money that would enable us to work with only 10, then we can work only with 10 people.

[314] **Owen John Thomas:** You have made the case.

[315] **Ms Wayman:** It is very frustrating.

[316] **Peter Black:** If no-one else has any questions, I would like to ask a final question. The people who come to you have obviously been through the school system, and some of them have been to college. Do you feel that the work that the school does with the clients who come to you is sufficient? Are they sufficiently prepared? Do they come to you having had some preparation for the world of work? Do you tend to have to start from scratch in terms of finding work for them, or is it a fairly mixed experience?

[317] **Ms Wayman:** Certain schools will treat their students in quite a mature way, and have certain expectations of them; other schools are more traditional and the clients will be more immature. However, I would say that we start from scratch with the huge majority of the young people that we work with.

[318] **Peter Black:** Is there anything that you suggest that we put in our recommendations for education authorities and the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills that would improve that situation?

[319] **Ms Wayman:** Although Careers Wales has particular responsibilities from the age of 14, it is the first to say to us that, without that one-to-one support, it is difficult to enable that person to progress. I recommend that supported employment be available from the age of 14 for these young people to go out on work experience and to gain valid experience. I am not knocking Careers Wales; its resources are limited and it tries its best with each young person. However, if young people have been supported inappropriately, they can have a negative experience of work and can consider themselves to be unemployable.

[320] **Peter Black:** Thank you very much for coming along and making your presentation. I also thank Jane. It will all go into the mix for our report, which will hopefully come out next year. Thank you.

[321] I would like to make the committee aware that we have some papers to note: the minutes of the previous meeting; the action points; a paper from Remploy, who gave evidence to us previously; and the e-consultation on SEN. If you want to get your clients to look at this, we have an online consultation forum, for which I am sure we can give you details. We are asking people about their experiences and there are structured questions. We are keen for people to participate and contribute to our review on an individual basis. There is also a paper from the University of Birmingham and the Disability Rights Commission on the experience of disabled students and their families.

[322] The next scheduled meeting of this committee on 5 October has effectively been cancelled because we are all going to Denmark to have a look at what they are doing there.

[323] **Janet Ryder:** I am glad that you qualified that.

[324] **Peter Black:** I was very quick to say that we are going on a fact-finding visit. I have seen the programme, which you should have all received, and you will be working hard, trust me. I remind Members that at 12.30 p.m., in around 15 minutes, we will be in conference room C of the other building, where there will be a seminar on budget scrutiny. I encourage you to try to come along to this—we will feed you—because the budget that we will discuss

this year will be markedly different to what we have done previously, because of the changes due to the Government of Wales Act. Ian Summers, who is on secondment from the Wales Audit Office, will explain exactly how it differs. So, please come along to that session. I thank everyone and I hope to see you in 15 minutes.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 12.14 p.m.
The meeting ended at 12.14 p.m.