



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

**Y Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu
The Enterprise and Learning Committee**

**Dydd Iau, 10 Mehefin 2010
Thursday, 10 June 2010**

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

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

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Jeff Cuthbert	Llafur Labour
Andrew Davies	Llafur Labour
Paul Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Nerys Evans	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Brian Gibbons	Llafur Labour
Gareth Jones	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Chair of the Committee)
David Melding	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Jenny Randerson	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Sylvia Davies	Pennaeth Materion Cyhoeddus, Colegau Cymru Head of Public Affairs, Colleges Wales
Dr Geoff Elliott	Cyfarwyddwr Marchnata, Sgiliau a Datblygu, Coleg Sir Benfro Director of Marketing, Skills and Development, Pembrokeshire College
Sarah Finnegan-Dehn	Prif Weithredwr, Gyrfa Cymru Gogledd Orllewin Chief Executive, Careers Wales North West
Mark Jones	Pennaeth, Coleg Pen-y-bont Head, Bridgend College
Julie May	Uwch-bennaeth Rhaglenni, Ymddiriedolaeth Tywysog Cymru Senior Head of Programmes, Prince's Trust Cymru
Joyce M'Caw	Prif Weithredwr, Gyrfa Cymru Gogledd Ddwyrain Chief Executive, Careers Wales North East
Antony Metcalfe	Rheolwr, Fairbridge de Cymru Manager, Fairbridge south Wales
Richard Newton	Cyfarwyddwr Cymru, Rathbone Cymru Director Wales, Rathbone Cymru
Ian Ross	Rheolwr Polisi a Datblygu, Rathbone Cymru Policy and Development Manager, Rathbone Cymru

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

Dan Collier	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Rachel O'Toole	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service
Siân Phipps	Clerc Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 12.57 p.m.
The meeting began at 12.57 p.m.*

Cyflwyniad ac Ymddiheuriadau Introduction and Apologies

[1] **Gareth Jones:** Prynhawn da ichi i gyd, a chroeso cynnes i'r cyfarfod hwn o'r Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu. Gwnaf un neu ddau o'r cyhoeddiadau arferol ar y cychwyn. Mae'r cyfarfod yn ddwyieithog, fel y gwyddoch. Mae clustffonau ar gael, a gallwch glywed y gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd o'r Gymraeg i'r Saesneg ar sianel 1, a chwyddleisio'r sain ar sianel 0. Bydd Cofnod ar gael o'r cyfan a ddywedir yn gyhoeddus. Atgoffaf bawb i ddiffodd eu ffonau symudol ac unrhyw ddyfais electronig arall. Nid oes angen inni gyffwrdd â'r meicroffonau yn ystod ein trafodaethau. Gan nad ydym yn disgwyl ymarfer tân, os clywn ryw fath o larwm yn canu, rhaid inni symud o'r ystafell ac efallai yr adeilad o dan gyfarwyddyd y tywyswyr.

Gareth Jones: Good afternoon to you all, and a warm welcome to this meeting of the Enterprise and Learning Committee. I will make one or two of the usual announcements at the beginning. The meeting is held bilingually, as you know. Headsets are available, and you can hear the simultaneous translation from Welsh into English on channel 1, and the amplified audio on channel 0. A Record will be available of all that is said publicly. I remind everyone to switch off mobile phones or any other electronic devices. We do not need to touch the microphones during our discussions. As we are not expecting a fire alarm, if we hear any alarm sounding, we will have to leave the room and perhaps the building under the directions of the ushers.

[2] Daeth ymddiheuriad i law gan Christine Chapman, ond nid oes dirprwyon. Yr wyf yn gwahodd Aelodau i ddatgan unrhyw fuddiant ynghylch y materion y byddwn yn eu trafod yn ystod y cyfarfod. Gwelaf nad oes dim.

An apology has been received from Christine Chapman, but there are no substitutes. I invite Members to declare any interest relevant to the issues under discussion during the meeting. I see that there are none.

12.59 p.m.

Pobl Ifanc nad ydynt mewn Addysg, Cyflogaeth na Hyfforddiant Young People not in Education, Employment or Training

[3] **Gareth Jones:** Fel gair byr o gefndir, dyma ein cyfarfod cyntaf ar ôl toriad yr hanner tymor. Yr ydym yn dechrau ymchwiliad newydd heddiw i sut mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn helpu pobl ifanc 16 i 24 oed nad ydynt mewn addysg, cyflogaeth na hyfforddiant. Byddwn yn archwilio effeithiolrwydd y strategaethau presennol i weld a ydynt yn cyflawni'r canlyniadau priodol fel bod pobl ifanc yn dysgu, mewn swyddi, neu'n caffael y sgiliau angenrheidiol i'w galluogi i greu gyrfa.

Gareth Jones: As a brief bit of background, this is our first meeting after the half-term recess. We are beginning a new inquiry today into how the Welsh Government assists young people aged between 16 and 24 who are not in education, employment or training. We will be scrutinising the effectiveness of the existing strategies to see whether they realise the appropriate outcomes so that young people are learning, are in jobs, or are gaining the necessary skills to enable them to forge a career.

[4] Yr ydym wedi trefnu tair sesiwn dystiolaeth, gan gynnwys ymweliad i Abertawe yr wythnos nesaf. Byddwn yn siarad â phobl ifanc yno i gael gwybod mwy

We have arranged three evidence sessions, including a visit to Swansea next week. We will be talking to young people there to find out more about their opinions and

am eu barn a'u profiadau.

experiences.

1.00 p.m.

[5] Ochr yn ochr â hynny, atgoffaf Aelodau a thystion ein bod wedi cael gair gan Christine Chapman, Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Deisebau. Yr ydym yn ystyried y ddeiseb ganlynol.

Further to that, I remind Members and witnesses that we have had word from Christine Chapman, Chair of the Petitions Committee. We are considering the following petition.

[6] 'Rydym yn galw ar Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru i annog Llywodraeth Cymru i ddarparu mwy o leoliadau dysgu seiliedig ar waith sy'n fwy addas ar gyfer anghenion y bobl ifanc hynny sy'n fwy agored i niwed, ac sy'n eu symud ymlaen o ddifrif gan sicrhau eu bod yn ennill cymhwyster NVQ2 o leiaf. Yn benodol, byddem yn hoffi gweld rhagor o ddarpariaeth ar gyfer pobl ifanc ddiartref sydd am gael hyfforddiant ac nad ydynt yng ngofal awdurdod lleol.'

'We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to provide more work based learning provision that better meets the needs of more vulnerable young people, that really moves them on and ensures they achieve at least NVQ2 level qualifications. We would particularly like to see more provision for homeless young people seeking training who are not in the care of a local authority.'

[7] Ein ymateb i hynny yw y byddwn fel pwyllgor yn ceisio mynd i'r afael â'r pwyntiau a'r pynciau hynny yn ystod yr ymchwiliad. Ni fyddwn yn sefydlu ymchwiliad arbennig i ystyried y ddeiseb honno, gan y gobeithiwn y bydd yn mynd ochr yn ochr â'r hyn yr ydym yn ymwneud ag ef yn yr ymchwiliad yr ydym ar fin ei gychwyn y prynhawn yma.

Our response to that is that we as a committee will try to address those points and topics during our inquiry. We will not be setting up a special inquiry to consider that petition, as we hope that it will sit alongside what we are dealing with in the inquiry that we are about to commence this afternoon.

[8] Gyda'r ychydig rhagymadrodd hwnnw, trof i groesawu'r tystion y prynhawn yma. O Gyrfa Cymru, mae gennym Sarah Finnegan-Dehn, prif weithredwraig gogledd-orllewin Cymru, a Joyce M'Caw, prif weithredwraig gogledd-ddwyrain Cymru. Croeso cynnes i chi.

With that short preamble, I turn to welcome our witnesses this afternoon. From Careers Wales, we have Sarah Finnegan-Dehn, chief executive for north-west Wales, and Joyce M'Caw, chief executive for north-east Wales. A warm welcome to you.

[9] I'r rhai sydd yma o ColegauCymru, estynnaf groeso cynnes ar ran yr Aelodau i Geoff Elliott, cyfarwyddwr marchnata, sgiliau a datblygiad yng Ngholeg Sir Benfro, Mark Jones, pennaeth Coleg Pen-y-bont, a Sylvia Davies, pennaeth materion cyhoeddus ColegauCymru. Croeso i chi hefyd.

To those from CollegesWales, I extend a warm welcome on behalf of Members to Geoff Elliott, director of marketing, skills and development at Pembrokeshire College, Mark Jones, principal of Bridgend College, and Sylvia Davies, head of public affairs for CollegesWales. Welcome to you, too.

[10] Ar ran yr Aelodau, diolch i chi am y dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig werthfawr. Cawsom gyfle i'w darllen, ac mae rhai o'r cwestiynau wedi'u seilio arni.

On behalf of Members, I thank you for your valuable written evidence. We have had an opportunity to read it, and some of the questions are based on it.

[11] Ni wn sut yr ydym i weithio'r

I am not sure how to work things this

cyfarfod y prynhawn yma. Chi gaiff y dewis. Mae croeso ichi wneud cyflwyniad byr ar ran y cyrff yr ydych yn eu cynrychioli o ryw dri neu bedwar munud, gan symud ymlaen wedyn at y cwestiynau. Felly, disgwyliaf ichi, Gyrfa Cymru, ddechrau, ac wedyn symudwn at y cynrychiolwyr eraill.

afternoon. I will leave it up to you. You are welcome to make a brief presentation on behalf of the organisations that you represent, for about three or four minutes, after which we shall move on to questions. So, I look to you, Careers Wales, to start us off, and then we will move to the other delegates.

[12] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** Diolch yn fawr am y gwahoddiad i ddod yma. Mae Gyrfa Cymru yn awyddus i gyfrannu at yr agenda hon.

Ms Finnegan-Dehn: Thank you for the invitation to appear here. Careers Wales is keen to contribute to this agenda.

[13] Before moving on to the key messages, I want to point out that it is important to remember that we need to think about prevention. We have not addressed that issue in our paper, but prevention for young people from the age of 11 onwards is a big way of tackling the NEET agenda—not in employment, education or training. We have talked about the fact that it is a family issue. Young people and their families need support, and they need to have their needs identified.

[14] I want to underline what Careers Wales does. The Welsh Assembly Government purchases main services for young people who are NEET from Careers Wales. Our education gateway programme provides support for young people while they are still in education or in alternatives to education. We have a register of unemployed young people—some 11,000 young people were registered last year—and we offer them support in finding employment, training or education.

[15] The Careers Wales youth gateway programme is a series of programmes with follow-up mentoring to help those young people who may have additional needs and who may face more barriers.

[16] So, what are we talking about? We are talking about the fact that 12 per cent of 16 to 18-year-olds are NEET. I will just ask you to pay attention to the figures for young people who are leaving school after year 11, which we ask about in our destinations survey. Last year, in Wales, a few more than 37,000 young people left education in year 11. Of those, 2,130 were NEET and, of those, 1,258 were registered with Careers Wales, 633 did not register with Careers Wales, but we are in contact with them, and 239 were unable to enter employment, education or training. If you look at that snapshot at the age of 16, if we were able to do better at that stage and help those young people into sustainable outcomes, we would find that the problems at 17 and 18 were easier to overcome. All the research shows that sustainability is the issue, and the client journey is the difficulty.

[17] Briefly, there are three main messages in the paper from Careers Wales, underlining the idea that we need a national strategy across the Assembly and agencies. It needs to be a collaboration, and that would help to foster a better understanding of roles and policy across different departments, minimising duplication. For that to work, we need to have a lead agency, and that is another of the various ‘Skills That Work For Wales’ strategies, but it has not been sorted out yet. A lead agency would co-ordinate partnerships, identify responsibilities at a local level, and manage the client journey—by which I mean what happens from one step to the next, and where the pitfalls are. It would monitor the progress of those that are NEET and monitor targets locally in the region. What are we achieving? Are we achieving the performance indicators that we have been set? It would also look at the big picture locally to see whether the needs of the area are being met, and where we need something different.

[18] The second point is that we need a relevant offer in terms of provision. I am talking about learning, work-based learning, schools and support. We need to look at what the learner needs and ensure that we understand his or her level of engagement. We need flexibility, we need to engage employers, and we need to look at the way that provision is commissioned and funded, because it is complicated, and there are lots of organisations commissioning provision for this group.

[19] Finally, we know what works. There is enough research out there to tell us what works for this group. There is lots of good practice in Wales. We need outreach and engagement with this group if we are not in touch. We need to identify their individual needs. It is not just a group: there are individuals within it. We need a better partnership arrangement, locally and nationally, with advocacy and brokerage for these young people, and the crucial transition support when they move from one stage to the next. Research has shown that incentives and rewards for these young people are important. So is effective staffing, with the right skills and qualifications, and a clear view of the outcomes that people want to achieve.

[20] **Gareth Jones:** Trof yn awr at **Gareth Jones:** We now turn to Colleges ColegauCymru. Wales.

[21] **Mr Jones:** Thank you for the invitation. I would not disagree with what Careers Wales has said in any shape or form. What we are keen to do on behalf of the colleges—and I think that we do it well—is respond innovatively and flexibly to the different needs. Maybe there is an issue about that being inconsistent across Wales, but students have their individual problems, and I think that the best practice that was referred to is absolutely right—that is what colleges try to do.

[22] The two key messages that we are keen to put forward are exactly as Sarah said. One is prevention; we are talking a lot about the 17 to 18 age group, but perhaps some of these youngsters should not even get into this position, because we should be dealing with this at an earlier stage, particularly in terms of choice of curriculum, and basic skills, to ensure that we can stop this problem rather than trying to mop it up at age 17 or 18. The other issue is around continued collaboration. It is funny that, although there is a lot of collaboration going on, the figures do not seem to move—they have stuck at 10 per cent, and we have been talking about this for far too long. Maybe we need to be more targeted about getting in there and trying to reduce the numbers.

[23] **Gareth Jones:** Trof yn awr at yr **Gareth Jones:** I now turn to Members for Aelodau ar gyfer y cwestiynau. questions.

[24] **David Melding:** I do not mind which set of witnesses answers this. I noticed that Carers Wales—I mean Careers Wales; I used to work for Carers Wales, so sorry for that slip—makes the bold statement that more leadership is needed from the Welsh Assembly Government, and that could be a core finding of this inquiry, depending on the evidence. You outlined the need for an effective strategy that is connected properly and avoids duplication, acting on what you think is existing good practice and evidence. From the briefing that we have received from our research team, it seems that the last time that a target was set for NEETs was in 2006, and that was for 16 to 18 year olds. That was to get the NEET level down to 7 per cent by 2010.

1.10 p.m.

[25] As you have indicated, it is at least 12 per cent at the moment. I suspect that it is higher for the 19 to 24 age group, but if you have any data, I would be happy to hear that. The economic situation has changed significantly in that period as well, but, however we look at

these figures, they do not demonstrate much progress or optimism for tackling this issue. Is it necessary to set some realistic achievable and measurable targets, so the Government can be held accountable for them, and are you surprised that this has not been done? We have a different Government to the one in 2006; there has been a different composition in the membership of the Government since 2007. It was interesting that you honed in on the group aged 16 or 17, feeling that that is where the most severe dislocation occurs, which causes future problems. The evidence seems to suggest that the group that is really left adrift and that there is not much interaction with in terms of policy developments and targets in the 19 to 24 age group; we have had this consistently in the written evidence. Do we need a slightly different approach for that group? Is it being overlooked at the moment? That is my first point. My second point is that we all know what works and that we need to be flexible; CollegesWales has emphasised that. We can get overwhelmed by euphemisms in this debate if we are not careful. Could you spell out to us simple-minded politicians what that means? Is it concentrating on the soft skills, and the basic skills of numeracy and literacy, and forgetting much of the rest of the curriculum? By the time children reach 12, 13 or 14, if they are really vulnerable to becoming NEET, do we need a radically different programme for them in terms of their education provision? I want to know what flexibility in the curriculum really means. Let us get to the guts of it.

[26] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** On the direction from the Welsh Assembly Government, we have 'Skills That Work for Wales' with the strategy articulated, but some of the actions in it have not been put into place. It needs to be organised on a national level and delivered locally. At the moment, a lot of organisations are working hard to achieve what they are achieving, but it is not being pulled together. Therefore, what is the target for north-west Wales? It will be different to the target for Cardiff and the Vale. We need to be able to drill down and make it clear what we want to achieve locally. There are many organisations working in the field; it is about relationships and good relationships make things happen. Also, if the relationships are not good, then things do not happen. Therefore, what are the responsibilities of all the different agencies in the field? What do we want them all to achieve? I am talking about direction; we need to set out clearly what people are expected to do. I do not know what other organisations are expected to do; I know what Careers Wales is expected to do. That is my response to the first question; yes, the target was 7 per cent, and we have not reached it. There is enough will there, and you could argue that there is a lot of resource in this area, but it needs to be pulled together.

[27] On the second point, when I mentioned 16-year-olds, the point I was trying to make was that, at age 16, we have a manageable problem. If we can manage the client journey and ensure that progression happens for those young people throughout the 16 to 18 period, then we have a better chance of them being engaged by the time that they are 18, 19, and 20. The journey that they go on now means that they are dipping in and out of provision. I said that there are 11,000 people on our unemployed register, but there were 16,000 episodes of registration, which means that people came back onto our register on more than one occasion. When that happens motivation levels might have been raised hugely by provision that they had in a college or by work-based learning, and it dips again when they are unemployed. The 19 to 24-year-olds also need support at transition at 18, and Jobcentre Plus and Careers Wales agree that we need to look at that transition more carefully. They have a lot of concentrated support from Careers Wales until they are 18, and then they go to Jobcentre Plus where there is less concentrated support, which is what has happened with young people at that age. They have to access the flexible New Deal programmes.

[28] On the final point, on what really works, colleagues in CollegesWales will have a view on this, but we are talking about broad employability skills. Employers will say that it is about basic skills but they want people to answer the phone, who have the confidence to work in their organisations and who have the skills to be able to learn the job. As regards the pre-16 curriculum, it is a question of whether these young people are engaging in learning. The

flexibility argument is about whether the learning styles are right for these young people or whether they are being asked to learn in a way that is too uniform across the board. Therefore, things such as extended work experience, where they get the chance to spend time with an employer, and programmes where further education offers pre-16 courses, often appeal and are successful with this group of young people.

[29] **Ms M'Caw:** I would like to add a little to that and go back to the Vision Into Action targets. I am open to correction, but my memory tells me that there was no detailed implementation plan from that link to young people who may not enter education, employment and training. As for the strategy to reduce the proportion of people in NEETs two years ago, there was no detailed implementation plan to clarify the responsibilities of each partner and organisation that works with people, who are responsible for supporting them into education and training programmes. We are looking for greater clarification and clearer direction, not only as regards strategic direction, but also to make it quite clear who is responsible for what, bearing in mind that we have to work in partnership. No single organisation can sort this out for young people.

[30] **Gareth Jones:** I will just press you a bit on the point that David raised. You mention client journeys at 16, and that the options that are available affecting the nature of that journey have been embedded far earlier, and the learning styles. To what extent are you getting feedback? Like everything in education, we are dealing with individuals, so there is no blanket answer. What kind of feedback are you getting in relation to ensuring that they do engage? Where are we failing if they do not engage? Is it identifiable, or is that just the way things are?

[31] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** This group has a lot of barriers. The various documents talk about the history of worklessness and of not attending education. Those young people have the most severe barriers and it is a lot to contend with in a school environment. We need individualised support. A classroom is not necessarily the right environment for a young person whose needs are considerable if they are not motivated, so you need alternatives to mainstream education.

[32] **Gareth Jones:** I accept the point about the individual approach but do you find that the style varies from one school to another? Is there best practice that can be applied? Are we learning from these experiences?

[33] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** I cannot think of particular examples of best practice. The difficulty sometimes occurs when young people do not attend school. At the end of year 11, that probably happens with a larger number of young people.

[34] **Ms M'Caw:** As regards young people engaging in learning in school from 14 to 19, as well as talking about the curriculum, we need to talk about learner support. The support that we give to these individuals pre-16, which is not necessarily curriculum-related, is hugely important.

1.20 p.m.

[35] **Gareth Jones:** Transferring now to ColegauCymru, what are your views?

[36] **Mr Jones:** To pick up on the last point, there is a very disjointed position. A school pupil may have additional learning requirements, and they may be doing one subject in a school, coming to a college for a few hours or a day, and may then be going to a voluntary organisation as well. That is very disparate, and I wonder sometimes whether the student is given the very best deal that can possibly be given to them.

[37] To answer David's question on leadership, it is difficult to criticise. We have a lot to do, and there are so many different agendas to which we are trying to respond. We need to move forward on this and targets need to be set. Each borough will have its own strategy on NEETs, but perhaps those should be joined together. We need to move on with this, because it has been on the agenda for too long.

[38] On 19-24 education, we commend the fact that additional funding has been found for next year to go towards additional skills for adults over 19, which will enable us to have greater provision in those areas. The focus is very much on 16-18 education, and people are talking about collaboration in that respect. On 16-25 education, the funding very much relates to 16-18 education. We welcome the change in approach in that respect that will take place from next year.

[39] On flexibility—what a difficult question to answer. In my college, we have five groups of students who are potential NEETs. Everything is very different. I can think of one group of students, who have their own building 6 miles away from the main campus, which is funded jointly by the college and the local authority. The students go there for three days a week, and there is provision there for vocational education and courses on basic skills and employability skills. On the fourth day of the week, they go to a range of local voluntary organisations, and, on the fifth day, they go back to the schools. They do not start until 10 a.m. and they finish at 3 p.m.. We are almost creating a wraparound service for them to make sure that they are supported. Therefore, everything is very different. That works for those groups of 16-year-old students, but it may not work with a different group. It is about personalising things and making sure that you make a real difference to those students. It is difficult to explain flexibility, but it is about being there and responding to their needs.

[40] **Dr Elliott:** The FE sector responds whenever it is required to. If we are given targets, we work very hard to reach them. If there are regionalised targets for NEETs, 16 to 19-year-olds or whatever, I know that we will work our damndest to respond to them. On the models of work, our work with NEETs indicates that long-term intervention is required, particularly with that group of 19 to 24-year-olds. Discrete packets of training or support are not good enough, because they are intransigent. Therefore, there needs to be strong, consistent and long-term intervention and support.

[41] You asked whether we need a different curriculum at the age of 14. Our experience of SkillBuild has been that it is fantastic; it is working really well and the young people really respond to it. I know that there is vocational training as part of provision for 14 to 19-year-olds, but perhaps bringing that forward in time might be a good idea.

[42] **David Melding:** It seems that the diagnosis is more confident than the prescription. Most of the data relate to a time when the economy was in a state of robust health compared with how it is at the moment, when we still had a persistently high level of NEETs. In fairness, it should be said that this does not afflict only the UK economy; there are similar problems all over Europe. If I talk to the business sector, it says that it cannot understand how people leave school without basic skills. If we sent a business person into a school environment they might say, 'I want to see every 13 or 14-year-old who does not have the appropriate level of numeracy and literacy skills'. Some do not even have the skills that they should have at 11 years of age when they are 14, let alone the skills that they should have at 14. Would these people, who would bring business skills, not say that you must focus on those basic skills first, intensively—you sort it out and then move on in terms of other educational goals? Does that happen at the moment? Is that what we have in place and it is just that we need more of it or need to make it more targeted? Is it available in some places but not in others? Do we need to make it more universal? Or have I just come up with a very simplistic answer to a very complicated problem? I cannot understand how these people can have such low skills and drift through school without anyone ever saying that intensive

intervention is required until the problem is solved.

[43] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** That dialogue with the education sector would be useful. The school effectiveness framework has been put in place to look at how effective education for 14 to 16-year-olds is. I presume that we are talking about secondary education rather than about what happens afterwards. Some of these young people are not in school, and that is an important thing to remember.

[44] **David Melding:** I accept that truancy is a real issue, but this is a group of people who usually have a poor level of skill in common. That is not always the case, but it is with the considerable majority.

[45] **Dr Elliott:** Often, we will find that they come to us at the age of 16 wanting to do carpentry having missed a great deal of schooling. They want to do carpentry, but we spend an awful lot of time developing those basic skills alongside some sort of vocational training. They would not enjoy it if you tried to address those basic skills earlier on. They want to be carpenters. They probably wanted to be carpenters at the age of 14. We want to teach both at the same time. When they come to us at the age of 16, we tend to address basic skills and vocational skills simultaneously.

[46] **Gareth Jones:** We are talking about a very important stage. We have Careers Wales and ColegauCymru here this afternoon. In some respects, it is a different field, but it might help to know, David, that the group carrying out WAG's operational review will produce a report looking at the causes and triggers of social and economic exclusion from childhood to adulthood and at what preventive action could have been taken. That might inform the nature of the questions this afternoon. It is a very intricate area and a very important one.

[47] **Andrew Davies:** I apologise for being late, Chair. To follow up David's two points, apropos of this question of needs, many primary school headteachers will say that they know within the first year of school which children are at risk. If that is the case, as David said, I am staggered that many of those children are still failed by the system, which is the case rather than it being that they fail. Secondly, on the issue of careers advice, I know that there has been a great deal of work done in this area. In the City and County of Swansea, the partnership there with the Kafka Brigade looking at NEETs has identified that a great deal of the problem there—despite what you said, Dr Elliott—is young people not getting the careers advice that they want. They end up being pushed by careers advice either into outlets that they do not want or onto training courses and so on, which are not what they want; what they actually want is a job. That is one of the key lessons that has been learnt by the Swansea partnership on tackling this area of NEETs. To be fair to the partnership there, it has been very successful in changing it from one of the worst performing areas to one of the best.

[48] **Gareth Jones:** Do you want to comment on that, Sarah?

[49] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** It is important to establish whether you are talking about careers advice or about people making decisions that are based on the needs of the institution. There is quite a lot of evidence to show that, where schools need to fill courses, young people sometimes end up with provision that does not fit the bill with regard to what they want. If you are talking about poor careers advice from Careers Wales, I would be very interested to have some evidence on that. We want to get people to have outcomes that motivate them and that they are interested in. That is the problem in terms of sustainability. If young people are not interested in the provision they will not stay. There would then be this dipping in and out. So, I am not quite sure what you were referring to when you were saying that.

1.30 p.m.

[50] **Andrew Davies:** I was referring to both—getting poor advice and also that the opportunities provided are more in the interest of the producer or provider than the young person. That was clearly one of the key lessons learned by the Swansea partnership. Jo-Ann Walsh, by the way, works for the City and County of Swansea and leads on the whole NEET agenda in Swansea. That is one of the key lessons learned in Swansea.

[51] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** Careers Wales will see these young people, but we are talking about the support for young people from the age of 11. There are many inputs—from school staff and learning coaches—and we all need to work together to ensure that the advice fits the bill. It must also fit the economy, because what young people sometimes want is not necessarily possible in the changing economy of Wales. It is a sophisticated position to try to help young people get what will work for them and for the economy.

[52] **Gareth Jones:** We must be sympathetic to your point; it is challenging to provide careers advice at the best of times. The point has been made, and we need to move on to Jeff Cuthbert.

[53] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Thank you for the papers, which I found helpful. I think that it was you, Sarah, who mentioned the word ‘prevention’; I absolutely agree on that.

[54] We have implemented the foundation phase for our youngest children and also the 14-19 learning pathways. I am very supportive of those initiatives, one reason being that they will give young people a different learning experience that would make it less likely that they leave the education system with no qualifications, or next to no qualifications, and would then be more likely to get a reasonable job. You may want to comment on that. However, that is for the future; it is many years hence before we will see whether that is true or not. I am confident that it will be true, but we cannot wait for that day.

[55] Joyce, you mentioned that no one organisation can sort that out. However, one thought arising from that is whether it is perhaps time for us to have just one overarching body that dealt with all issues of careers advice—that is just a suggestion—so that there is joined-up thinking with regard to the learning experience and careers advice. You are quite right about not misleading young people—we do not want to dragoon them into particular occupational areas—but, on the other hand, we want them to have an informed knowledge of what the employment is like, so that they do not make unrealistic choices that they will regret. So, is it time to think of a unified structure, where all of that is brought together?

[56] Forgive me if I have missed this in your papers, but I cannot see any specific relevance to additional learning needs, or special educational needs as we used to call it. I would suggest that many of the additional problems that those whom we class with the awful term ‘NEET’ have quite profound additional learning needs. We have many recently developed strategies here in the Assembly and in WAG about identification and diagnosis, and will then, hopefully, bring in programmes to assist in the overcoming of the problem. That does not seem to be reflected here. Am I right or have I missed it somewhere? Do you take that factor into account with regard to addressing the eventual employment needs or further training needs of young people? Is that properly joined up in the system?

[57] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** On prevention, the new 14-19 learning pathways is a positive step, and will hopefully work and provide outcomes. However, one of the key points that is currently important to make is for us to have a national approach to identifying these young people. There will be different ways of identifying these young people, and you are right that primary school headteachers will say that they can identify who will become NEET based on the transition from primary to secondary school. So, Careers Wales works with schools to identify who the young people are, but we need to be clear and ask who they are and what will happen. Then we can offer them support. Joyce made the point about personal support,

but many other issues can affect how they take in education. That ongoing support, particularly at transition points when they are aged 16 and they choose their options, is important.

[58] On a unified structure for careers, a review of careers services in Wales has been undertaken in recent months, and the recommendations have gone to the Minister. We expect that report to be published. We hope that the recommendations will encapsulate the idea that there is a careers family and everyone has to make their own contribution. One idea that Careers Wales put in its papers to the review was that there should be a careers guidance forum in Wales, of which all the relevant agencies would be a part, so that everyone could work together and best practice could be shared. It is also important to record who did what, the roles and responsibilities. Again, that is as relevant to people in education as it is to economically inactive adults. Who is doing what? Let us make the best use of resources. So, a careers information advice and guidance forum for Wales would be a positive step.

[59] On special educational needs, a large proportion of the NEET group have special educational needs. The same points that we have already raised apply. On provision being joined up, there is a lack of provision across the board at entry level, namely pre-NVQ level 2. That is one thing that the new work-based learning strategy to be introduced next year will help to address. It can be very difficult to find work-based learning provision for young people who have learning difficulties and disabilities, so that is one thing that we need to address. There are courses available in the FE sector, but we need to get employers involved more. We need to find that provision because, as you say, we know that that group faces barriers. Provision is a key answer. There is quite a lot of support and it is sometimes duplicated, but there is not necessarily provision.

[60] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Thank you for that. CollegesWales may want to comment on this, but the pathways are a key collaboration between schools, FE colleges and other providers, including work-based learning providers and, crucially—and you just referred to them—employers. So, in relation to joined-up working, how well are you, or others associated with you, dealing with employers? This follows on from David's point. It is true that employers will complain about young people's lack of employment-readiness, and I have experienced it myself. So, what is the level of engagement between those involved with the learners while they are still learners and the employers—either individually or through their associations—who are looking for the employees of the future? How, jointly, are we trying to overcome the barriers, such as those facing learners who have additional learning needs?

[61] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** Careers Wales runs education business partnership activities to get employers involved in education. When it comes to taking young people on, there are all sorts of marketing campaigns to get employers involved in work-based learning, such as work tasters and work experience with colleges. However, one thing that works is the personal approach: you cannot expect employers to take on a young person who has quite a lot of problems and faces quite a lot of barriers unless you talk to them personally. We would say that we have a young person who has made a lot of progress and whom we would like to be able to put in a placement, and the idea is to incentivise employers to take on young people in that category. Let us face it. Taking on a young person who is unemployed and perhaps lacks basic skills, as has been referred to, would not be your first choice, so we have to incentivise that, I believe.

1.40 p.m.

[62] **Jeff Cuthbert:** However, that is reactive, is it not? It is saying, 'We have a young person who has no qualifications and all these barriers, and can you, as an employer, help?' as opposed to taking the proactive approach of involving employers much earlier on. That is what we are trying to drive at with the pathways. We want to ensure that employers are

involved at an early stage in helping to work with that learner, the learning coach and others so that there is a joined-up approach to this.

[63] **Ms M’Caw:** That teases out the work that we do with the education business partnerships and work-focused experience via the 14-19 networks. Careers Wales facilitates employers going to schools. There was talk earlier of employers meeting young people on a one-to-one basis, and we do have employers who mentor those young people who may well end up being not in education, employment or training. We find employers who will go into schools and do that on a regular basis. We also have employers who will go into schools to talk to young people about employability skills, which are the skills that they require them to have. That tends to happen along the lines of industry days and so on, but we do that regularly. We have a number of employers who do that, and we would be happy to send you the data over the next couple of days, so that you can see the number of activities across Wales to which employers are already contributing via the curriculum and the networks, face to face with young people in education.

[64] **Mr Jones:** Some students get really good support. The students whom we identify as being on programmes for two or three days a week will get basic skills embedded in their learning, they will learn employability skills, and will have work placement opportunities, all of which takes those youngsters a good distance. I am more worried about the other students. For example, we will get a phone call asking us to put on a four-hour carpentry course this year, and, as Jeff said, we are reactive in colleges, so we will do that. On day one, the students will arrive, we will not have seen them before, they will love the course, and they will come along well. We will start embedding basic skills, but four hours is not long enough. The children will return to their home institution and we will have them for another four hours the next week. In some cases, we are missing a trick, as maybe a student should be placed somewhere else where they can get that support. For those we identify as having the potential to be NEET, they get a good wraparound service, but I am concerned that not all students do. The learning pathways work, but they could do more.

[65] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** When young people undertake extended work experience, as we were talking about before, instead of doing the full curriculum from age 14 to 16, they go out and have the experience of working with an employer for two or three days a week. That can be effective at motivating them and making the employer understand that this young person could be very good for the organisation. That is not a strategy that is adopted across Wales; it is generally funded by local authorities. That is an example of the slightly scattergun approach that we have at the moment whereby, in some local authorities, young people can go and spend three days a week with employers and it is funded by the local authority—and, in the north-west, Careers Wales runs it—but, in other parts of Wales, it is not available.

[66] **Gareth Jones:** That is a valid point that it is important that we understand. You mentioned that you do this on a fairly regular basis, Joyce, but that it is not replicated throughout Wales. Are we overreliant on Careers Wales to provide the link with employers and so on, as Jeff referred to, especially when there are complicated issues to do with special needs and so on? Do you have the capacity to do that?

[67] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** Education business links are part of our core contract, but, as is the case with a lot of organisations, we have additional funding—and this is very current within the NEET field. Pots of money are coming in from all directions to fund initiatives for working with NEETs. So, they could come from the Department for Work and Pensions, the networks, or the young people’s partnerships. Education business partnerships are a core service, but extended work experience and placements for young people are funded externally.

[68] **Gareth Jones:** We need to look further into that, but I cannot take up more time on

that, or my Members will complain. Four Members want to ask questions, but time is steadily running out.

[69] **Paul Davies:** I have a couple of question for Careers Wales, and a couple for CollegesWales. First, to Careers Wales, I am given to understand that, at present, the Careers Wales offices in my constituency are closing. Is there a sufficient number of centres across Wales to provide much-needed advice to those who are NEET? Are there sufficient resources in place to provide the necessary support?

[70] You also claim in your paper that a better use of resources is needed to address those young people at highest risk of becoming NEET. Could you elaborate on that? How could resources be better used?

[71] I now have a question for CollegesWales. I note from your evidence that you feel that ways of learning that promote independence, confidence and decision making need to be put in place. What specific ways of learning do you want to see in place, and how do you propose that the Welsh Assembly Government should progress this more effectively, to ensure that those programmes are implemented successfully? You also referred to older NEETs, stating that policies need to be drawn up to tackle the problems of older people. What sort of policies need to be in place to address those?

[72] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** On resource for Careers Wales, I think that we all feel that we do not have enough resources to do what we want to do. We are very aware that, at the present time, we need to make better use of those resources. So, with careers centres closing, I think that the whole public sector needs to be more savvy about using premises anyway and, hopefully, those services will be delivered in a different way. Getting into the communities where there are young people who are NEET is possibly an alternative to having a careers centre that people visit. So, we are trying to rationalise. Our budget is under pressure, so, in some areas, Careers Wales is trying to rationalise its premises. If we could share premises with other organisations, that would stop the revolving door. All those concepts are true. There are different ways of providing a service, and our website is one, but we must be careful that we do not prevent young people from seeing people and having face-to-face contact. A lot of the ideas about using resources better are not accessible to young people who are NEET.

[73] **Ms M'Caw:** I also think that we need to draw a distinction between closing an office and not providing the same level of service. I am not sure of the area to which you refer, but I am sure that the level of service and the entitlement of those young people remain the same although that might be delivered somewhere else, on different premises. Our post-16 youth gateway support is often not delivered on our premises, but on partners' premises, for some good reasons.

[74] **Paul Davies:** So, what you are saying is that you use those resources differently.

[75] **Ms M'Caw:** Yes, but we would not diminish the service.

[76] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** However, we would still be struggling, as everyone is with resources. On your second question about the use of resources, I think that I said earlier that there is a lot of resource around, particularly through convergence funding, and it is not necessarily being used in the best way. We have to look at how much money there is, and at whether there is duplication. Often, the additional projects—and I will use European structural funds as an example—have not been developed to take into account what is already available from statutory organisations. There is not enough linkage between what is now on offer via some European projects and what is available via statutory services. It is not just one organisation wanting to do it all; it is making sure that, where we do have additional funding,

it is used in a way that complements what is available already.

[77] **Jenny Randerson:** May I ask a supplementary question on that specific point, as we heard about that duplication in another context, did we not, Chair? How would you ensure that that duplication was avoided, so that the complete service that is needed was provided and whatever additional service the ESF can provide is done without duplication? Are you saying that it should all be done by one organisation?

[78] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** No. One recommendation in the Careers Wales paper is about having national and regional strategic groups that would look at what was happening and have some sort of ability to commission or suggest where the gaps were. It has to be done to some extent now, because there is such a patchwork. It has to be done on a regional level. That would help with communication and prevent duplication.

1.50 p.m.

[79] Having said that, however, when the programmes are put together in the first place, the idea in theory is to take account of what is available and work in partnerships, but I am not convinced that it works effectively. What is needed is a lot of dialogue on the ground, and an ability to do something about duplication where it is found because, at the moment, once it is in place, it is in place.

[80] **Dr Elliott:** Those extra, embedded skills are usually embedded in things like employability skills, alongside vocational training. We are focused on embedding numeracy and literacy skills within those. So, if you are compiling a CV, you develop numeracy and literacy skills within that.

[81] On policies to deal with older NEETs, I go back to my original point, that it is about longer-term intervention, and the fact that older NEETs often do not want to be rubbing shoulders with 16-year-olds. It is often a case of needing to look at outreach work, going out to where those NEETs are rather than bringing them in to a college centre.

[82] **Mr Jones:** Our purpose in writing that was that, when we talk about NEETs generally, most people would think of 16 to 18-year-olds, and it is not just people in that age bracket who are affected. The problem is far wider, so we are keen to keep that on the agenda as much as we can, as well as the flexible, individual approach that Geoff has talked about.

[83] **Brian Gibbons:** This is highly confusing and complex—certainly to me, anyway. To be clear, who gives the national lead on all this? Just reading through the papers—I am not an expert—I see something about the joint delivery board, the employment and skills board, the joint operational group, the youth employment task group, and I think that Sarah even mentioned adding in a careers guidance forum. There is DCELLS in the Welsh Assembly Government, and there is the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus, which are in the same crowd. Who is responsible? Who is holding the ring at the national level? I shall come to the local level in a supplementary question. Who holds the ring and provides a coherent service?

[84] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** That is one of the issues, that there is no one organisation at a national level.

[85] **Brian Gibbons:** We are talking about Wales. When you say ‘national’, do you mean ‘Wales’?

[86] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** Yes. That is one of the points that we have made. In Careers Wales, we think that local authorities should do it for pre-16s, it should be Careers Wales for

those who are between 16 and 18 years of age, and it should be Jobcentre Plus for people who are 18 and over.

[87] Nationally, there are so many departments in the Assembly Government and so many organisations that will have a finger in the NEETs pie—that is not meant disrespectfully—that you do not have a clear, coherent view of who is running the show. The strategy makes a lot of sense. There is a lot of sense in the documents provided. However, actions have not been taken to pull it all together.

[88] **Brian Gibbons:** So, there is no single desk at which the buck stops at a national level in Wales.

[89] **Ms M’Caw:** If there is, it is very unclear which desk it is.

[90] **Brian Gibbons:** That is the point.

[91] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** There are people working in the Welsh Assembly Government who have a lead on NEETs, but their issue is that it is very difficult to be aware of all the other departments and of everybody else who is operating within the Assembly Government. I know that that is what they are trying to do at the moment.

[92] **Brian Gibbons:** However, people run an army, a hospital, a country, and so on, and the buck stops somewhere in those cases.

[93] **Ms M’Caw:** If it were very clear at the national level, it would be relatively simple to sort out lead organisations at the local level.

[94] **Brian Gibbons:** So, who is it nationally? Who is responsible? I think that the answer that you are giving is that nobody is. Many people are partly responsible, but no-one is bringing the bits together in a single, coherent way.

[95] **Mr Jones:** There are different partners in regions—

[96] **Brian Gibbons:** We are just talking nationally first; we shall get to the local shortly.

[97] **Mr Jones:** We are responding to a national strategy, but there is no accountability.

[98] **Brian Gibbons:** Okay.

[99] Moving on to the local situation, going on the written evidence, I think that it was Careers Wales that said that there are 22 local lead delivery agencies—it did not say who they are, but presumably it is the local authorities. People have also said that a number of other commissioners are on the stage, such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus and many others.

[100] At a local level, do you think that there is a need for a single coherent service that brings all of this together, or is it better to have these various organisations working around the subject, as you are doing at the moment? So, the first question is: should there be a single coherent service? Secondly, who do you think is best placed to lead that service, if anyone, at the moment? Thirdly, are local authorities the best placed organisations to do that, or would it be the six branches of Careers Wales? There are also the regional offices of DCELLS; I do not know how many of them there are, but they are out there as well. There is also the DWP’s Jobcentre Plus, which is set up in a different way. Should there be a single lead authority, and if so, what sort of geographical area should it cover and which organisations should it have control over?

[101] **Mr Jones:** Locally, it is done not by the local authorities, but between the children and young people's partnerships and the 14-19 networks. That puts careers services, colleges, schools and Jobcentre Plus around the table. Locally, those are the people who are responding to the strategies. Having someone who plays an overarching role is vital. You might have a strategy, but the DWP might come in with a different view on it and, all of a sudden, we are responding to the way in which the funding is going in that regard. So, a national body having an overview and bringing all the funders together would be really useful.

[102] **Brian Gibbons:** Should there be a single commissioner? Should all of this be commissioned at a national level in Wales, or should there be more local managers/commissioners of this service?

[103] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** Commissioning needs to be sorted out at a national level because so many people are involved in providing work-based learning provision, providing further education, and support provision. So, someone needs to have responsibility, but money will come from different directions. At a local level, we think that local authorities should be responsible for pre-16 prevention issues. With regard to the 16-to-18 age group, Careers Wales has a database and regular contact with that client group, so we are in a good position. The documents from the Welsh Assembly Government said that Careers Wales should take the lead at one stage, and that we should have a stronger role. Two years have gone by since those documents were published, so we would like to see that being agreed and the stronger role defined. At 18-plus, Jobcentre Plus has to be the lead organisation. If you had those three organisations working together and discussing the continuum, that would be a step in the right direction. The 14-19 networks and the children and young people's partnerships are crucial, but they are voluntary partnerships. In some parts of Wales, they are not necessarily taking a lead. It is a very mixed picture when you look at who is taking the lead locally.

[104] **Brian Gibbons:** On the basis of that, for every local authority, roughly six organisations have to co-ordinate their efforts to deliver this agenda.

[105] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** There will be three organisations for each stage.

[106] **Brian Gibbons:** You mentioned the 14-19 partnerships and the children and young people's partnerships as well.

[107] **Ms M'Caw:** What you would have is a national strategy and direction that would come down to a local level. That would play itself out in 22 local authority areas, but you would have the same framework. From the national strategy, you would know that the lead organisation for preventative work pre-16 across Wales—not the only organisation, but the lead one—pulling it all together, would be the local education authority. As those youngsters reach the age of 16, Careers Wales would be the lead organisation to pull that together from the national strategy level, coming down to the local level. Jobcentre Plus would pull together the 18-plus group.

2.00 p.m.

[108] You would expect those three organisations to have a strategic group within a local authority, and possibly include representatives from the 14-19 networks and the children and young people's partnerships as well. That is your strategic group. Then, if you have the lead, you are the lead organisation. You do not do it all, but you bring the partners together. We all have different specialisms, roles and responsibilities, to work together for these young people.

[109] **Gareth Jones:** Before we move on, we have gone beyond our time. I will give you

an opportunity to comment, but I want to explain something. Careers Wales has presented evidence on that specific point. The report to be published at the end of this month will have looked at scope and review, how effective the current policies, structures, programmes and accountability are, and will have investigated how effective stakeholders are at interpreting and delivering policies and strategies locally. I take it that it was Mike Moss, Careers Wales, who responded to that. It is an important aspect, on which we will look forward to receiving further information, whatever those recommendations will be. Brian, that was to tie in with what you have said.

[110] **Brian Gibbons:** My question follows on from that.

[111] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** The Minister announced that Careers Wales would be reorganised into a unitary structure; we have not heard the final decision on that, so that would also mean that there would be one unitary organisation.

[112] **Brian Gibbons:** I think that Mark said, and Sarah said at the beginning, that we know what works, but despite knowing what works, and a lot of effort, we are still at 10 per cent or worse. Therefore, either we genuinely know what works, and we are not implementing it, or we do not know what works and we are doing our best without a proper evidence base. We need to be clear on that, but if we know what works, then this is an implementation and delivery problem. Would you accept that?

[113] **Mr Jones:** With respect, what we are doing is mopping up. The problem is happening early on, so we are getting more NEETs coming through all the time. We are looking after them, we are directing them, we are getting them into employment, but they are coming all the time. There are more and more of them.

[114] **Brian Gibbons:** When Sarah said ‘we know what works’, at what level are you talking about?

[115] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** We know the strategies that work, but there is no obligation on organisations to implement them. There is no obligation to direct a certain amount of resource to addressing the issues of young people who are NEET, so that will vary between local authorities, from Careers Wales—

[116] **Brian Gibbons:** Why should that be, because you have already said that there is a structure in place? So, whoever is responsible for those three structures is obviously not doing their job properly.

[117] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** I do not think that there is a structure in place. The structure would be an aspirational structure. If you have separate networks, young people’s partnerships and 14-19 networks, with a control over their budget, there is no obligation on them to spend a specific amount of money addressing NEETs.

[118] **Brian Gibbons:** I have one final point, if I may, Chair, because you have already been generous. We talked about targets and we know from the other oral and written evidence that it is difficult to set targets because some of the requirements of this particular group of people are difficult to measure. There are ‘soft’ targets that must be achieved, and then there are the harder outcomes, such as being in a job or getting an accredited qualification. Do you think, as experts in the field, that it is possible to develop a framework by which performance can be delivered in this area, so that, through a rigorous performance management regime, by whoever are the lead organisations, this improvement can be driven forward?

[119] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn:** Yes.

[120] **Dr Elliott:** I agree, but it has to start in school at 13 or 14 years of age, not when they get to 16.

[121] **Brian Gibbons:** I would even suggest—we will not get involved—that the game is up for many children not when they are 13, but when they are 13 months or even 13 days if they have not got off to a good start.

[122] **Gareth Jones:** I will take advantage of that succinct answer and turn to two other Members who I know will be succinct; I will start with Nerys and then Jenny.

[123] **Nerys Evans:** Mae'n glir o'r dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig a'r dystiolaeth a gafwyd y prynhawn yma bod diffyg arweiniad yn y maes hwn. Hoffwn ofyn i chi am un cymhlethdod arall yn y broses, a ddaeth yn glir o'r dystiolaeth. Mae Gyrfa Cymru yn dweud yn y dystiolaeth bod datblygu polisi effeithiol a phriodol rhwng Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau Llywodraeth Llundain a Chanolfan Byd Gwaith yn heriol gan fod datblygiadau yn y cyd-destun polisi a gwasanaethau yn digwydd yn Lloegr na ellir eu trosglwyddo'n hawdd i Gymru. A allwch ymhelaethu ar hynny? A oes gennych enghreifftiau ymarferol o'r problemau sy'n codi oherwydd y gwahaniaethau rhwng y polisiau ar lefel ymarferol?

Nerys Evans: It is clear from the written evidence and this afternoon's evidence that there is a lack of direction in this area. I would like to ask you about one other complication that has emerged in the evidence. Careers Wales says in its evidence that the development of an effective and appropriate policy between the London Government's Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus is challenging given that developments in the policy and services context that happen in England cannot easily be transferred to Wales. Could you expand on that point? Do you have practical examples of the problems that arise because of the differences that exist between the policies on a practical level?

[124] Mae ColegauCymru yn sôn am bryderon ynglŷn â'r Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau a'r diffyg llwyddiant o ran ennill cytundebau. A ydych yn credu bod problem oherwydd gwahaniaethau yn y polisiau? Beth yw eich barn chi ar y mater hwn?

CollegesWales talks about concerns regarding the Department for Work and Pensions and the lack of success in winning contracts. Do you think that there is a problem due to differences in policies? What is your opinion on that matter?

[125] **Ms M'Caw:** It is complicated. The work that Jobcentre Plus may wish to do with the Welsh Assembly Government, Careers Wales and other partners, is not straightforward, because its direction comes from the DWP. The recent example, which we touched on in our paper, was that the DWP decided that it wanted job centres to do some work with 16 to 17-year-olds. That decision would have been based on the Connexions service in England, which, as you know, is very different to Careers Wales and what the Welsh Assembly Government wants in Wales. There was a draft commissioning note from the DWP that said that Jobcentre Plus should do a, b and c with Careers Wales in Wales. However, that meant that the DWP was talking about doing work that Careers Wales is already remitted to do by the Assembly. It could take the principle of Jobcentre Plus working more closely with Careers Wales on 16 to 17-year-olds, and say that it will build on what is already happening in Wales, and look for the added value, rather than repeat what it asked for in England. The DWP started off using the English commissioning note, which was then supposedly amended for Wales—but I think that that was done by somebody in England—so we do not, as yet, have a commissioning note that is fit for Wales, as regards what already exists and what the added value might be. Jobcentre Plus Wales and Careers Wales are committed to working together in that area, but there are a few things that need to be sorted out.

[126] **Mr Jones:** DWP contracts are going to big private training providers. The colleges, as they stand, are too small to get in. There is a discussion as to whether colleges should work

together to bid for DWP contracts, but they are coming in with an English feel to them, and we are unable to get close enough to do it. It is interesting. If you are going to give students more vocational experience, Welsh private training providers or Welsh colleges are probably best placed to do the work. It needs a Welsh feel, particularly given that we have a bigger basic skills problem than they do in England. It would be a big step forward if Wales were able to steer it and give it a Welsh feel.

[127] **Nerys Evans:** A ydych yn credu bod diffyg dealltwriaeth o fewn Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig ynglŷn â chyd-destun Cymreig y maes hwn? Yn amlwg, yr wyf am i'r adran honno gael ei datganoli i Gymru, ond yn y tymor byr, pa gamau fyddai angen eu cymryd i wella'r ddealltwriaeth o'r hyn sy'n digwydd yng Nghymru ar bolisiâu yn y maes hwn?

Nerys Evans: Do you believe that there is a lack of understanding in the UK Government's Department for Work and Pensions regarding the Welsh context on this issue? I obviously want to see that department being devolved to Wales, but in the short term, what steps would be needed to improve the understanding of what is happening in Wales on policies in this area?

[128] **Ms Davies:** Yn ein tystiolaeth, ar dudalen 4, paragraffau 17 i 18, yr ydym yn egluro nad ydym wedi bod mewn cysylltiad â'r DWP. Yr ydych wedi clywed Mark yn egluro bod y contractau hyn yn mynd i gyrff mawr sy'n gweithio ar draws y ffin. Nid oes gennym unrhyw beth penodol yng Nghymru ac nid oes ffordd o weithio yn benodol ar gyfer y bobl ifanc hyn. Yr ydych wedi clywed enghraifft gan Mark y prynhawn yma sy'n egluro'r hyn yr ydym yn ei wneud os yw'r bobl hyn yn dod atom neu os ydym yn gweithio gyda'r cynghorau lleol o ran addysg ar gyfer disgyblion sy'n 14 mlwydd oed, ac yn y sefyllfa honno gallwn gynnig y ddarpariaeth honno.

Ms Davies: In our evidence, on page 4, paragraphs 17 to 18, we explain that we have not had any contact with the DWP. You have heard Mark explaining that these contracts go to large organisations that work across the border. We do not have anything specific in Wales and there is no way of working specifically for these young people. You have heard an example from Mark this afternoon that explains what we do if these people approach us or if we work with the local councils in relation to education for pupils aged 14, and in that situation we are able to make that provision.

2.10 p.m.

[129] Fodd bynnag, fel y mae pawb wedi dweud, mae nifer o ddarparwyr ar gael a nifer o contractau eraill yn cael eu cynnig, ac mae hynny'n ddarniog. Mae'r DWP yn un darparwr, ac mae'n un mawr; mae contractau mawr yn cael eu gosod ganddi. Mae paragraff 17 yn ein tystiolaeth yn egluro am y bwrdd darparu cyflogaeth ar y cyd, sy'n cynnwys Llywodraeth y Cynulliad a'r DWP. Daethom o hyd i hwnnw drwy baratoi'r dystiolaeth hon. Nid oes gennym fewnbwn i'r grŵp hwnnw, ac nid ydym yn cael allbwn ohono. Felly, fel yr ydym wedi sôn heddiw, ar yr ochr strategol, mae angen gwell cydlyniant.

However, as everyone has said, a number of other providers are available, and a number of other contracts are offered, which means that things are fragmented. The DWP is one provider, and it is a major one; major contracts are awarded by it. Paragraph 17 of our evidence talks about the joint employment delivery board, which comprises the Assembly Government and the DWP. We became aware of that while preparing this evidence. We do not have an input into that group, and we do not receive any output from it. Therefore, as we have mentioned today, there needs to be better co-ordination on the strategic side.

[130] Yn ddiweddar—ac ym mharagraff 18 yr ydym yn sôn am hyn yn digwydd ym mis Chwefror 2010—cafwyd rhywfaint o symud

Recently—and in paragraph 18 we mention this happening in February 2010—there has been some movement between Wales and the

rhwng Cymru a'r DWP. Mae hynny i'w groesawu, ond yn amlwg nid yw wedi mynd yn ddigon pell. Mae'n rhaid inni sicrhau bod y partneriaid eraill sy'n darparu'r gwasanaeth, megis y colegau a Gyrfa Cymru, yn darparu gwasanaethau gyrfaol hefyd, eu bod yn gwybod am yr hyn sy'n digwydd, a'n bod ni'n cael mewnbwn. Nid ydym yn gwybod sut y dylid mynd ati i gael contractau gan y DWP fel ag y mae ar hyn o bryd. Mae hynny i gyd yn cael ei wneud y tu allan i Gymru gyda chyrrff sy'n llawer rhy fawr.

DWP. That is to be welcomed, but clearly it has not gone far enough. We have to ensure that the other partners that provide this service, such as the colleges and Careers Wales, provide careers services as well, that they know about what is happening, and that we have some input. We do not know how to go about getting DWP contracts as things stand. All of that takes place outside Wales and involve bodies that are far too large.

[131] **Jenny Randerson:** I have two specific questions. The first relates to your introductory comments, Sylvia—Sarah, I am sorry. I was trying to do the maths as you gave us the figures for the percentage of year-11 pupils who become NEET. Do not worry about the maths, but could you tell me how many of those you never have any contact with, or how many you never have sustained contact with? It is difficult to survey people whom you do not know about, but do you have any idea as to the reason why they are not linking in with you in a particular way? A small but possibly significant number of them are employed in the black, or unofficial, economy. Clearly, there are many others who are not employed in any way. It will be interesting to find out what those figures really mean in respect of those who are the hardest to approach in any way.

[132] My second question is to Mark. On two occasions this afternoon you have referred to the way in which individual young people have their working week divided up, which you described at one point as 'disjointed'. That is the inevitable result of the new approach to 14-to-19 education. It is not the inevitable result of having more vocational education, but the way in which the whole thing has been designed—and I have sat on one committee and then another to examine the legislation and all the rest of it—means that it is absolutely inevitable, the legislative situation being as it is, that young people who will pick and choose from a range of courses will have a more disjointed timetable for the week. Your implied criticism was that those who are most vulnerable find that most difficult to cope with, which is depressing. Much of the motive for what has happened has related to trying to make the curriculum more attractive to those young people who would prefer vocational education and for whom vocational education is by far the most appropriate approach. So, I am interested in your experiences of that. I am sorry for getting your name wrong, Sarah.

[133] **Ms Finnegan-Dehn :** Do not worry. Across Wales, 633 were not registered with Careers Wales. That means that they have not come into an office and engaged with us following our asking them to engage. It does not mean to say that we do not know who they are; we do, because we carry a survey and we have a database. We know all of the NEET group to a large extent at that stage. It means that, when we contact them to say that we would like them to come in to have a chat with us and ask them whether they know what is on offer, they do not come in. There is a gap there in terms of statutory funding. There is not an organisation that is funded across Wales to work with that group of people who are not in touch. That, again, is additional funding from different sources. There is a great deal of good practice around. Careers Wales Cardiff and the Vale works with the youth service on a joint project that has learning coaches who go out to find those people and bring them in. There are other examples of transition support workers who work with them while they are in school—or not in school if they are not in education—and bring them through so that they engage. The figure of 633 is not a huge figure at that stage, but Careers Wales is not resourced to provide ongoing support and knock on people's doors. We have to access additional funding from a variety of sources to do that.

[134] **Mr Jones:** It depends on the individual students. One example is the skills centre based in Pyle, which is disjointed but it works. Students there are at one institution for three days and, although it is delivered by someone else, we pretty much control what happens on the fourth day and we work with the schools on what happens on the fifth day. The other example that I gave was of a student coming to us for three or four hours a week. That is not ideal, and it does not work best for the student. So, I think that we are in a position at the moment where, in partnership with the schools, colleges are devising a whole range of provision in partnership, spread across different institutions. We are looking at the ones that work. Many of them work really well, but some of them do not work well, so we need to look at how we improve those. For example, if we are talking about vocational provision, we should look at whether it should be moved to being delivered in schools so that students stay in one place. There are many really good models. I do not want to decry anything, because there are many good models that work. However, there are still some models that require further work. That will always be the case, and it is always about putting the student first. In many cases, we get it spot on. In some cases, we could make it a bit better.

[135] **Ms Davies:** I just wish to add to that. We are talking about what happens in partnership. Tackling NEETs is an expensive enterprise. Sarah has just touched on that. We are not funded automatically to look after NEETs. If you are looking at your strategy, there is another area where we accommodate them through a variety of funding sources. They are not part of core funding. What we identified when the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 was going through—we presented this to Legislation Committee No. 2 at the time—was that we recognised that, for the most vulnerable students, it might well be a bit difficult to cope with this new world of disjointed provision spread around different venues and different institutions. We thought that it was very good that the students would get the curriculum provision that they wanted. The negative point is that, when they start to go off to different places on buses, that is exactly where you can start to lose them. They can lose motivation or you can lose them physically—they get off the bus. So, there is a gap there, and the way to address that is through partnership pastoral support. So, we have identified that as a need in the situation created by the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009. It means that you might need pastoral support at both ends, in the college and in the school. So, when we are looking at joining up the curriculum, it does not necessarily mean that you are building in efficiency. It might mean that the most vulnerable people need additional support to cope with that.

2.20 p.m.

[136] **Gareth Jones:** We have gone beyond our time limit this afternoon, which is a reflection on the poor chairmanship. Having said that, the other reason for that is that this session has been an interesting start to this review. We are grateful to you for the frank and open discussion that we have had this afternoon. It has been of great help to us and gives us an insight into the nature of what we are up against. Your contribution today and the evidence that you submitted, both written and oral, will help us in bringing forward a report containing, hopefully, recommendations that will be accepted and can be built upon for the future. We are all agreed that the non-achievement of this target is worrying.

[137] Diolch i chi ar ran yr Aelodau. Thank you on behalf of the Members. Best Dymuniadau gorau i chi yn y gwaith pwysig wishes to you in this important work that you yr ydych yn ei wneud. are undertaking.

[138] **Andrew Davies:** Chair, I mentioned earlier the work that has been done in Swansea with regard to tackling NEETs and, given some of the issues that have been raised, it may be useful to invite to the committee Jo-Ann Walsh who works for the City and County of Swansea.

[139] **Gareth Jones:** We will be visiting Swansea next week, so we will take that on board.

[140] **Andrew Davies:** Good. One of the issues raised today by one of the colleagues from Careers Wales was on data, and what was found in Swansea was that the data were not that accurate or reliable and did not allow them to track young people. Brian's question is relevant to what has been achieved in Swansea: if we know what works, then why is it not generalised? That is something that we can build on.

[141] **Gareth Jones:** Thank you for that, Andrew.

[142] Symudwn ymlaen yn awr at ail ran y sesiwn hon. Yr ydym braidd yn hwyr, ac ymddiheuraf am hynny. Yr wyf yn falch o groesawu'r tystion sydd gerbron. Yn gyntaf, ar ran Rathbone Cymru, croeso cynnes i Richard Newton, sy'n gyfarwyddwr, a hefyd Ian Ross, sy'n rheolwr polisi a datblygu. Yn yr un modd estynnaf groeso cynnes i Antony Metcalfe, sy'n rheolwr Fairbridge de Cymru, a hefyd Julie May, sy'n uwch-bennaeth rhaglenni Ymddiriedolaeth Tywysog Cymru. We now move on to the second part of this session. We are a little late, for which I apologise. I am pleased to welcome the witnesses that we have before us. First, on behalf of Rathbone Cymru, a warm welcome to Richard Newton, who is the director, and also Ian Ross, who is the policy and development manager. In the same manner I extend a warm welcome to Antony Metcalfe, who is the manager of Fairbridge south Wales, and also Julie May, who is the senior head of programmes Prince's Trust Cymru.

[143] Gan ei bod braidd yn hwyr arnom, ac yr wyf wedi ymddiheuro am hynny, dymunaf symud yn syth at y cwestiynau, ond nid wyf eisiau i chi gael eich amddifadu o gyfle i ddweud unrhyw beth y teimlwch sy'n bwysig. Sicrhawn y cewch gyfle i wneud hynny. Trof at David Melding am y cwestiwn cyntaf. Given that we are running a late, for which I have apologised, I wish to move straight to questions, but I do not want you to be denied an opportunity to say anything that you feel is important. We will ensure that you will have an opportunity to do that. I turn to David Melding for the first question.

[144] **David Melding:** At least two of the witnesses before us now have referred to the importance of soft skills, which NEETs typically lack. We talk quite a lot about basic skills as well as soft skills, which are often the same thing, but we extend that to numeracy and literacy in particular. My first question is with regard to the identification of young people, perhaps at the age of 16, as being likely to fall out of full-time education. The previous witnesses from the statutory sector emphasised that work needs to start much earlier in the system. To summarise, I was impressed by their diagnosis and prescription, but I still cannot get my head around the fact that people leave school at 16, perhaps as persistent truants, and lack the soft skills to look someone in the face and carry out a basic conversation, cannot add up or read the instructions on the back of a washing powder packet or whatever. What on earth has gone wrong? Is that the basic failing that we have, or would you argue that NEETs present a much more complicated, wider social problem, which have so many interactive causes that you cannot just focus on this issue of skills? However, I would put it to you that one of the problems that we have is that we do not disapply the traditional curriculum at the ages of 13 or 14 to around 10 per cent of our population who will clearly not engage or acquire their basic skillset via that curriculum.

[145] It seems to me that there is a lot of talk about the NEETs sector in relation to the 16 to 19 age group, but not very much about the 19 to 24 age group. We would hope that one day we do not have a problem with that group, because we will get things right earlier in the system, but it seems to me that there is still quite a lot of potential for things to go wrong, even if we have a much better educational system that is more focused on those who are struggling to acquire basic skills. So, do you think that an effective strategy has to look at the

particular interventions that may be needed when there are still young people aged 19 and over who are still completely dislocated from any type of productive activity?

[146] **Gareth Jones:** While you ponder who will respond to those questions first, I will just say that it was remiss of me not to have thanked you all for the written evidence that you have submitted. Obviously, we have had an opportunity to read that and it is appreciated greatly.

[147] **Mr Newton:** On your first question about the ability of school leavers, we need to distinguish between the basic skills, namely literacy and numeracy, and the soft skills, which relate to self-esteem, personal ambition and aspirations. That is how we define those. We all commented, while listening to the evidence in the first session, about the fact that collectively, as organisations, we deal with a lot of young people who have not been to school after the ages of 12 or 13. It is not even a question of them not having been appropriately served by any education outside of the mainstream—they have simply not engaged with school for whatever reason. Not engaging with school is quite often caused by another issue, for example, these young people could have an incredibly chaotic home life or they could be young carers or care leavers. It can also be about bad experiences and the lack of support to rectify such experiences so that people build up a sense of stigma and perceived barriers to engaging with the education system. If people have particular acute needs that are not addressed in the education system, it may mean that they always are at the lower end of the class and feel that they are failing, which means that they start to detach from education.

[148] We often deal with people who have not been to school. At Rathbone College, 80 per cent of the young people with whom we deal, when we diagnose them on arrival, are below entry level or below the basic skills level. So, they are at a far lower level than you would expect them to be for that age range. That is for a huge array of reasons. We have to look at building on things that were said in the previous session. We all agree that prevention is key and that that prevention needs to start at an earlier age. NEET status is not something that suddenly happens at age 16; so this is about the fact that we can work with these young people and about a much wider approach than just working with an individual, because it is about the whole environment in which they are in and working with that environment to make it conducive to that person developing—that is key.

[149] On the mainstream education system and its failings in terms of how you engage with or address people who do not attend school, I do not feel in a position to comment on that, but it is worth registering that a huge number of the young people with whom we deal have not attended or engaged with mainstream education. We were in a residential setting last week with Rathbone and 30 young people who were from the youth offending system and none of them had been to school beyond the ages of 12 or 13. We are currently developing work on an education programme for young boys and girls involved in street sex work in Cardiff, all of whom are under the age of 16 and none of whom are engaging with education.

2.30 p.m.

[150] On the comment on the 18 and 19-plus age cohort, that is of particular interest to us at Rathbone Cymru. Hopefully, in the longer term, that number will diminish, but it will never totally disappear because people have different trigger points at different points in their lives, which is really important. Before joining Rathbone Cymru, I worked for the Prince's Trust and I will cite an example from my time there that I always refer to: there was a young gentleman who engaged in one of our programmes who was aged 21. He was a graduate, he came from what you would perceive to be a stable home, but he lost both his parents because of an accident and that was the trigger point in his life. He lost that stability and it made him become NEET. Such things can happen at any point in someone's life. Programmes for the 19-plus age group obviously need to be different to address their particular needs and to be perceived by the user as appropriate to their environment, age group and learning cohort. One

of the things that we wanted to put forward is that there is a lot of focus on the younger NEET cohort, but it is more important to deal with the some of the older NEET cohort. It could be that some of the initiatives that are already in place that may be working or not working, such as the Future Jobs fund, may only temporarily stop people from becoming NEET and that we will see the numbers in that older cohort rise.

[151] **Ms May:** One of the things that we particularly see at the Prince's Trust, to return to your point about social issues and the social context, is that we have young people who are third and fourth generation unemployed, school refusers and from offending backgrounds. I do not think that mainstream settings work for those young people. They do not feel at home in school and have no desire to go there. They have no family support saying that that is a good thing to do; they have the exact opposite of that: they have people treating them badly if they want to go to school. No matter how much some of our young people might want to get a job, their peer and family support leads them down the opposite path. Helping them to break that cycle, whether that is at 14 to 16, 16 to 19 or 19-plus, is really important. One of the things that we have all commented on in our papers is that, whether you call them an engagement worker or an outreach worker, there should be someone who follows them on that journey and helps to guide them through the large amount of provision that is out there to find what is right for them at whichever point they are in their life, whether they are 14 or whether, as Richard said, they are 21 and something has caused a problem. It should be right for them at that point, and it is not just about training but the support package that goes with that. If they have drug or alcohol issues, mental health issues, financial support issues or issues around homelessness, there should be a joined-up package, whether they are 14, 19 or 23.

[152] **Mr Metcalfe:** I agree strongly with Richard and Julie's points. Fairbridge Cymru is a much smaller provider than both those two large organisations. We are based in Cardiff and we work, over a year, with about 200 young people between the ages of 13 and 25 who are long-term unengaged and sometimes disillusioned with society. Generally, a high percentage is NEET, they have a lot of homelessness issues, and a lot of the under 16s are long-term truants or excluded from school. As Richard said, they will never even have dreamed of going to school at 13-plus. To use what is a horrible phrase, there is a 'failure of aspiration' in some of the societies that we work with. There is no drive to go out to work or push to be in a work-based household. So, there are a number of entrenched issues that need to be dealt with and those issues, as I said my paper, cross over all the Welsh Assembly Government departments: child poverty, health, education, roads and transport. I feel passionately that this issue needs to be looked at along with more wider-ranging issues and that we should not just focus on the effects of education. Education is very important, but this is about the whole environment in which these young people are growing up. It is about their parents' aspirations. Some of those parents are playing the benefits system or are in the benefits system and see no way out of it. So, it is a much greater issue than simply saying that education does not work for everyone.

[153] From my own experience and background, I also feel that schools are becoming target-driven environments. Therefore, it is not surprising that the teachers will focus on the top 20 students in the class, as they are ones that they need to focus on to get the top GCSE passes to be in a high position in the tables. Therefore, the five to 10 students who are not in that category are left to one side and so the disengagement process starts very early on. As I said earlier, we work with young people aged 13 and over. I am now being approached by primary school headteachers who want us to work with much younger young people. As we heard earlier, the issues are starting much earlier. We are seeing a greater involvement with drugs at a much earlier age. We are also seeing, with the parts that the internet, television and advertisements play in the society in which we live, a higher level of sexualisation of young girls at much earlier ages. All these things need to be looked at to provide, hopefully, a long-term NEET solution, but it will not be easy.

[154] **David Melding:** Thank you for those powerful answers. Presumably, we have to put some weight on the wider social factors, and the structural factors around educational provision. Obviously, you are telling us that this is a complicated situation, and there is no easy answer. I think that you have provided evidence to back that up. However, it still seems to me that we would be in a slightly better situation if the provision in secondary school, and certainly by the age of 14, was something that these students can respond to. Presumably there are quite a lot of people who end up NEET who have got quite good attendance records, although you are rightly emphasising your particular client group, which is often totally disengaged. Could you help us here? We do not want to go chasing after our own enthusiasms by saying that we know what the real problem is—the curriculum is far too rigid, and the academic element is diluted because of the way students' ability is perceived, rather than looking at this more radically and allowing more extensive vocational education to drive the curriculum for many more students than at present.

[155] **Mr Newton:** There is certainly a need for a wider curriculum. We look at how young people want to engage with the school and different learning styles, including the traditional classroom environment, which is now not the exclusive means of learning. It does not suit some learners. Research has shown that people learn in different ways, and the instruction of vocational skills, and that kind of thing, is also important, and can be stimulating to some. It is also about having the flexibility within a broad education system—not just the mainstream schools—to have almost a safety-net approach, so that people do not feel that they are being left behind and stigmatised. People should have the chance to re-enter, catch-up and re-address some of those background needs. Education is broader; it is not just about the subjects you study at school, but about your life, and preparing for adulthood, and recognising your individual needs in doing that.

[156] If a young person goes into a school or another educational provider, perhaps in the voluntary sector, such as ourselves, and says that they have huge issues in doing something because there are people at home questioning why they are going to school, and parents and grandparents are saying that they do not need an education, as they did not, those parents and grandparents are educating those young people in their own sense and style. People talk about young people who are NEET not having any skills; that is not true. They have an awful lot of skills, but they do not have what we see as mainstream skills. They are often very entrepreneurial, are taught by the parents what to say to the doctor, and they are skilled in making their benefit claims. They know all of those things. We see young people who say that they cannot add up, but if you talk to them in terms of getting a job that pays x in wages, they can tell you immediately what that would do to their benefit claims and housing allowance. They do have those skills. It is about focusing them onto mainstream, productive activities rather than into areas such as the black economy and disengagement.

[157] **Gareth Jones:** Julie is next. There is no need to touch the microphones, by the way; I am sorry, I should have mentioned that.

[158] **Ms May:** One of the programmes that we run is called xl, and is what we call an alternative curriculum programme. It runs in schools from age 14 to 16, and outside the mainstream setting, in pupil referral units, youth offending team settings, and so on. That teaches young people—if 'teaches' is the right word—by taking them out of the classroom setting, perhaps to a youth centre, or a school setting that is not a classroom, where they do modules on citizenship, community projects, perhaps work on a garden in a nursery school or at an old people's home, and they look at enterprise.

2.40 p.m.

[159] As Richard said, that teaches them about enterprise in a positive way. They do some of the basic skills, such as numeracy and literacy, and out of that work falls what we

internally call a secret qualification, because as well as giving them those soft skills, that work also gives them something tangible that they can take away. For many of those young people, that is the only qualification that they will get. The qualification is at entry level, which is level 1, and they can go to level 2 if they have been inspired.

[160] So, there is provision out there. I think that you heard from Bridgend College in your earlier session about the wraparound service, and this is an example of how that may all fit together. However, funding does not necessarily facilitate that happening to the best effect, partly because of the focus on outcomes at GCSE level and so on, and partly because it is a competitive funding environment. Schools have budgets and heads must make decisions about how they spend those budgets. Therefore, instead of focusing on the 10 young people who would really benefit from a programme like xl, heads may have to choose an alternative programme that, for the same price, can cater for 30 young people. They are the kind of decisions that schools have to make, which does not necessarily mean the best provision for those young people.

[161] **Mr Metcalfe:** Many of the points that I was going to raise have already been made. We are all individuals and we all learn differently. There are two powerful sets of words that we all say to each other, hopefully, in our workplace and to our children, which are 'thank you' and 'well done'. However, some of the young people who we engage with, as Julie has just said, have never received any certificate or qualification, and, sometimes, have never even been told, 'That's a good piece of work, well done'.

[162] We use many different media, such as arts and craft, filmmaking and computers. Kids can even cut their own CDs. They can make, for example, a five-minute rap record and take it home to their parents. They may have sat in our studio from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., making their record and cutting the CD, and we have then had to prise them out of their seats and send them home. If we then turned to their headteacher or the head of key stage 4 and said that little Johnny had sat at his desk working for six hours, they would have replied, 'No way'. So, it is about finding what those young people are good at and for them to have something to hang their hat on.

[163] As soon as you introduce any outcomes for an organisation, you then make it a target-driven environment. There are two types of people in a target-driven environment: winners and losers. The problem is that the more times you become a loser, the harder it is to break across that winning line. People have many different skills, and it is about appreciating those skills and making people realise that not all skills are based on a piece of paper and a certificate; it is about what you can achieve and therefore the worth that you can bring to society as tax-paying member of society.

[164] **Nerys Evans:** Diolch yn fawr am eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig ac am eich tystiolaeth lafar hyd yma; mae'r dystiolaeth yn hynod ddiddorol. **Nerys Evans:** Thank you for your written evidence and for your oral evidence so far today; the evidence is very interesting.

[165] Yr wyf am ddilyn yr un trywydd ag a gymerais gyda'r tystion blaenorol ynglŷn â'r berthynas rhwng y Llywodraeth ddatganoledig ac adrannau Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Gyfunol yn Llundain. Soniodd y cyfan ohonoch yn eich tystiolaeth am yr Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau ac, o bosibl, am y problemau o ran cydweithio ac o ran y berthynas â pholisïau Cymru. A allwch chi amlinellu'r problemau sylfaenol yn hynny o I want to follow the same lines as I did with the previous witnesses about the relationship between the devolved Government and the departments within the UK Government in London. You all mentioned in your evidence the Department for Work and Pensions and, possibly, the problems with regard to working together and with regard to the relationship with the policies of Wales. Can you outline what you predict to be the

beth? Fel mae'n siŵr i chi glywed o'r dystiolaeth flaenorol, mae polisïau gwahanol yn Lloegr, ac efallai bod diffyg dealltwriaeth yn yr Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau o bolisïau a blaenoriaethau Llywodraeth Cymru. A allwch chi amlinellu eich safbwynt ar y pwyntiau hynny?

fundamental problems with regard to that? As I am sure you heard from the previous evidence, there are different policies in England, and perhaps there is a lack of understanding in the Department for Work and Pensions about the policies and priorities of the Welsh Government. Can you outline your viewpoint on that?

[166] **Ms May:** The Prince's Trust is fortunate that we have a national framework agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus that covers the whole of the United Kingdom. From that agreement, we are able to draw out the differences with England, so that we can look at our specific provision in Wales to see how, hopefully, it helps to fulfil Assembly Government policy, so that young people, up to the age of 30, in Wales who want to come on a Prince's Trust programme can do so with the full support and agreement of Jobcentre Plus and DWP, so it does not impact on their benefits. We are extremely fortunate in that, possibly due to our size, we have been able to negotiate that on a UK-wide basis and reflect that for Wales. I am absolutely sure that some of our smaller third-sector colleagues would not be in that position.

[167] However, a better, joined-up approach is needed, and I am sure that we would all echo that, because it is about supporting individuals on their pathway or journey. If I am honest with you, the fact that they are in Wales probably makes no difference; they deserve exactly the same in Wales as they deserve in England, and in England as in Scotland. It needs to be better co-ordinated and joined up, but I am not sure that we have seen the impact of any policy differences.

[168] **Mr Newton:** I would echo most of what Julia said. I will try to give some real examples. We do not have an agreement with the DWP at the national level for some of our programmes. Dealing with Jobcentre Plus at a local level can be incredibly frustrating when you have programmes that are over two weeks, and then between two and five weeks, to support young people to get into employment, but young people of 18 and over cannot go on them, however, as that could affect their benefits, because they would not be seen as being available for work. Part of what we do in any of our programmes, however, is to take people to interviews and so on if interviews come up.

[169] We have sometimes seen a lack of co-ordination. Rathbone is involved in the delivery of the Flexible New Deal, which is an incredibly big DWP initiative. Off the top of my head, I cannot give you the detail on the discrepancies, but I could provide it later if you want it. Entry to Employment—called e2e—is in effect the English equivalent of SkillBuild, but it has a much greater synergy and co-working with the Flexible New Deal than SkillBuild. A lot of tension is caused by the fact that people cannot progress between the FND and SkillBuild, while they can between e2e and the Flexible New Deal in England. I am not the expert, so I do not know much more than that.

[170] **Nerys Evans:** It would be good if you could provide some more information on that.

[171] **Mr Newton:** That is the main point that I would raise. Obviously, I have already referenced certain DWP initiatives that have come through, such as the Future Jobs fund. We sometimes see those as a short-term fix, in some ways, and that example is going to disappear off the radar. You have things such as SkillBuild for those who are over 18, and you offer a training allowance and everything else, but people are asking why they should go on that and get training and qualifications when they can get a job through the Future Job funds and have more money in their pocket on a daily basis. However, that is due to finish in six months' time. Hopefully, SkillBuild will offer training and development opportunities to provide

progression and learning, but if you try to tell that to young people while they stand there, thinking about the value of it in their pocket, then you can see why the head towards the higher financial value.

[172] **Mr Metcalfe:** We have worked with a number of young people who have told us that six months' employment under the Future Jobs fund looks great, but it would take them between four and six months to sort out all their benefits. They tell us, 'If I go on this course, it gives me six months' paid employment, but what happens afterwards? I will probably be back on the unemployment register and I will pretty much have to start again'. So, actually, it is not a long-term solution; it is a short-term fix to get young people off the register for six months and make statistics look better.

[173] We are a very small provider; I only have about 13 or 14 front-line staff. We have a small local agreement with Jobcentre Plus. We find that, at the managerial level, it works very well, because managers stay in position; they are static, and tend to have been in post for a long time, so they know their roles and positions. At a lower level, with the members of staff that my outreach workers deal with when a young person gets referred to us, because there is quite a high level of staff turnover, the detail is lost, and you have to keep reiterating throughout the whole process why you are trying to do what you are trying to do. For a small organisation, that can take a lot of man hours.

[174] **Mr Ross:** I would just add to what Antony said about the Future Jobs fund that there is a big problem when there is no exit strategy. When we were in Rhyl last month, we were chatting to a young person who was coming to the end of his six-month Future Jobs fund placement, and it was clear that he was going to go straight back on benefits. It is sad to see such enthusiasm and a willingness to work among people who, the end of their course, are going back to square one.

2.50 p.m.

[175] **Mr Metcalfe:** In response to what Ian said, in my eyes, that is reinforcing failure in some regards. Many of the young people whom we deal with have seen failure reinforced for their entire lives. They have been referred to go on to a skills build course when they are not ready for it. They may not even have the basic skills to go to a workplace, engage with employers and with other people, so on day two, they drop out or are chucked out. We need to get that spectrum of engagement right to know every single young person's place on a one to 100 factor. Rather than shoehorning the young person into point B or point C, we should be placing the individual at the centre of the process and ensuring that he or she has the right entry point and progression route through the process. There should also be a regression route when the young people drop out so that they are picked up, reinforced and benefited. As it is all outcome-driven and short-term funding-driven at the moment, they are all shoehorned into one outcome, which does not work for them.

[176] **Gareth Jones:** Did you have a follow up point on that, Andrew?

[177] **Andrew Davies:** Yes, I would like some clarification from Fairbridge. You say in the written evidence that:

[178] 'Overall we feel that Future Jobs Fund is a good example of a sound initiative that could have contributed to sustainable employment'.

[179] Yet, you now almost seem to imply that it was a cynical short-term initiative to get young people 'off the register'; I think that was the phrase that you used.

[180] **Mr Metcalfe:** If it had been thought through correctly and had had proper exit and

entry strategies, it could have been a great project. However, I personally feel that it was a little bit short term.

[181] **Andrew Davies:** Maybe there is a difference between now and your opinion at the time that you drafted the document, which was before you knew that the present UK Government was going to scrap it. Rathbone and the Prince's Trust have commended the Future Jobs fund, but that will now be scrapped by the present UK Government.

[182] On a broader issue, statutory providers have given evidence, and the third or voluntary sector are now giving evidence. If I were to be cynical, I would say that there is a lot of special pleading going on; it is a bit like St Augustine on sin—against it, but not just yet. Everyone is talking about collaboration, but what have you done locally or at an all-Wales level to encourage collaboration? Everyone seems to be saying, 'We want more collaboration, but please let someone else do it for us'.

[183] **Mr Newton:** We collaborate on a number of levels. We collaborate with 14 to 19 learning networks, children and young people's partnerships and relevant statutory bodies. We also collaborate between ourselves here. Some people would say, 'You've got three organisations here from the third sector that all do the same thing', but between us we recognise some of the differences between what we do and how we help people, and some of our processes. We have a number of bids and partnership opportunities where we have models of working together with other local third sector partners and mainstream partners. Collaboration is key.

[184] **Andrew Davies:** Everyone is in favour of collaboration, but can you give specific local or all-Wales examples where you have collaborated? In the evidence, one of the projects is about arts council funding reaching regional heights where there were not enough young people. I hear over and over again that there is plenty of provision and no shortage of resources, but what is happening at a local level where you have collaborated to a good outcome?

[185] **Mr Newton:** All three organisations here have collaborated collectively on the Prevent project that is moving forward in the Heads of the Valleys area. There is the work that I referenced with young people involved in the sex trade in partnership with an organisation called Safer Wales. We are a key partner in the National Training Federation Wales partnership. There is the residential course that I talked about, which was held last week, that Rathbone ran. Unfortunately, because of the way it was run, we did not work with Fairbridge on that, with Ant being based in Cardiff—we could not take young people from Cardiff—but we worked with the Prince's Trust on referrals to that. We cross-refer between our programmes; some people come to us and we say, 'Because of the level at which you are and the type of learning that you require, you are more suited to the Prince's Trust teen programme'. We submitted a large but, unfortunately, unsuccessful bid for young people involved in the youth justice programme, which involved the Prince's Trust and Rathbone working together. These organisations genuinely working in partnership is a new way of working, and has been built up over the past 18 months or so. Where it is on the ground, it is relatively new because, like all ways of working, the money and resources are needed to make that happen. We have found that we have started to sit down and map out in business plans and on paper where we can work together, and we are then putting in bids for the funding. That is becoming more and more of a reality as we move forward, rather than remaining a hypothetical statement that we put forward as a wish.

[186] **Ms May:** Something needs to be put in place to enable that to happen more. Richard has just outlined some of what we have done and what we are all doing more of. From the perspective of the Prince's Trust, we need to have a clear idea as to the demand in relation to NEETs in a particular area. We need the existing provision to be mapped and the gaps to be

clearly identified, and then all the providers, whether they are in the private, public or third sector, can say which one of them is best placed to fill that gap. We have slightly different target groups, and programmes are slightly different and work in slightly different ways. They are very good when it comes to progression from one to another and into mainstream provision, but that is not co-ordinated. Similarly, the way in which funding is announced and made available becomes quite competitive, so that it is not co-ordinated. Engagement gateway funding, for example, does not take into account the need and the existing provision; it scores based on what you put on paper, which is competitive. A funding bid is announced, and the three of us may chat about it, but we are all doing something slightly different. We do not quite know what the gap is that we are filling. Therefore, we will all compete—we may all be successful, but that is not right for the young people, because it is not necessarily helping the right young people at the right point of their journey. So, we can do that, we need to do it more and we need to do it better; there is recognition of that. However, a framework or structure needs to be put in place to facilitate that.

[187] **Mr Newton:** To summarise some of those points, most importantly, at a young person's level, we collaborate very well. The young people are the reason why we are here and why we do this job. They pass between the organisations, based on their needs and issues, in both ways: progressively and, when things go wrong, regressively. There needs to be one overarching body that understands how all these organisations are slightly different, how the training providers are different and that can really co-ordinate the way in which the funding is allocated to the different areas across Wales, which have different needs and issues. I will not have the capacity to apply for a level 3 tender, which Rathbone and the Prince's Trust might have, because my organisation is small. I will stay at level 1 and apply for £25,000, and that is it. Until the funding is centralised and there is one pot, and until people understand how to allocate that funding to different areas, we will all be slightly funding-driven.

[188] **Gareth Jones:** Time is against us, but you are making significant points. We accept and are hearing what you say. Brian, would you like to ask a question further to that point?

[189] **Brian Gibbons:** Yes. On an all-Wales basis or just in south Wales—I think that most of you are in south Wales—how many commissioners do you deal with? How much time and effort do you put into trying to respond to the commissioning challenge? How can the commissioners evaluate your delivery so that they, however many there are, can provide an informed service to young people?

[190] **Ms May:** I can give a specific example. In Pembrokeshire, over the last three or four months, there have been nine different commissioning opportunities, or nine commissioners, and there have been multiple strands of opportunities in relation to those commissioners. Pembrokeshire is not a county that has a large number of NEETs. We have three full-time members of staff writing bids.

[191] **Brian Gibbons:** I do not want to make too much of a political point, but this is very much a market-driven model. It is incredible that in Pembrokeshire, as was said in the evidence, you could not find clients for the programme. There were nine tendering exercises, which is a terrible waste of money. I do not know whether you agree, but that structure surely cannot be justified.

3.00 p.m.

[192] **Gareth Jones:** Is there general agreement on that point? I am conscious of the time, but if there is agreement on that, it is a significant point that we can pursue.

[193] **Mr Newton:** Absolutely, especially when it is magnified over 22 local authorities.

[194] **Gareth Jones:** Right. That is what we want to hear.

[195] **Mr Metcalfe:** May I finally say that tendering discriminates against smaller organisations? They do not have the capacity for 15 bid writers, so specialist small organisations get pushed out.

[196] **Gareth Jones:** We are grateful for that, but we need to move on.

[197] **Jenny Randerson:** For clarity, I have looked at the evidence from all the witnesses who are here today and all three of them criticise the Future Jobs fund, so the suggestion that the evidence has been changed since it was written is not true. They are all critical. They do not dismiss it out of hand, but they all critical, and it is important for the credibility of the witnesses that attention is drawn to that.

[198] **David Melding:** Andrew thought that he was in Plenary. [*Laughter.*]

[199] **Jenny Randerson:** To go on to another specific point, many people have said this afternoon that you can tell that people will be NEET in future when they go to school at the age of five; in fact, Brian had them at the moment that they were born. I am well aware of that. I had a conversation, some months ago, with a headteacher in a school in one of the poorer parts of my constituency about free school breakfasts. His point was that most of the children who come for free school breakfasts come from working households and that ‘the future NEETs’, which was his phrase, do not manage to get to school until mid-morning, because that is when mum or dad brings them in. Therefore, at the ages of six or seven, they are already behind and are not getting a decent start in life, are they not? However, my point is that there is also a cohort that gets along very well for the first few years in school but that goes off the rails when hormones start kicking in in the early teens. In your experience so far, is the new 14 to 19 vocational curriculum beginning to make a difference for those young people? Is it beginning to make a difference to any young people who are in danger of dropping out entirely? Do you see that impact at all or do you fear that it has not had that impact?

[200] Julie spoke about how many different initiatives there are, we talked about how many overlapping initiatives there are and you talked about co-ordination and co-operation, but unless you are funded to co-ordinate and co-operate, it is not down to the organisations to do it. How should that co-ordination and co-operation be organised? From what you are saying, the problem is not a lack of funding or initiatives, but that what is out there is not working.

[201] **Mr Newton:** To answer your first point on vocational learning in schools and at 14-plus, we are not seeing any change in our client group. If anything, the client group that we are now dealing with is getting harder to help. It is getting more detached from the mainstream and coming to us with more chaotic lifestyles and more barriers. That is where we are on that. With regard to working together, we would welcome the opportunity to work together more and recognise that the funding environment does not always enable that to happen. We have all put in our papers and agree that there should be one body that has accountability for NEET young people and for monitoring and managing strategies. We also feel, at Rathbone, that NEET is a cross-cutting issue—it does not fall under education or skills alone, it also has an impact on health and an array of other policy areas. It is about getting the co-ordination that reflects that. That is important. Strategically, you can look at how that moves, and how we use those resources. You can keep track of things. It would help if people were not chasing funding all the time, and I am not just talking about the voluntary sector here, because other training providers and colleges do that as well, loading on qualifications and putting young people on courses that perhaps they are not best suited to. You get a revolving-door syndrome, with young people coming to you who have been to a college or another provider. If you have appropriate data sharing and common assessment frameworks

then you can look at the young person and decide to where he or she should be signposted.

[202] We are just about to hear the outcome of a large bid to the lottery fund for some work in Llanelli. It has been an incredibly long process; we have probably been in the bidding process for 18 months, which has its problems. We are due to hear the outcome tomorrow. We have had to stand up to scrutiny by showing that we do not duplicate provision, that there are enough young people, that we will work in partnership with other organisations, and so on. There are a lot of lessons from that that could be transferred. It has taken a long time, but we have had to provide evidence of our proposed working compacts with other organisations, show who we have consulted with, and so on. There are lessons there that we can take forward.

[203] **Mr Metcalfe:** There is certainly an issue as regards funding. It can be slightly short-term, working towards a certain outcome or a certain area. After two years there is a feeling that that problem has been sorted, and the funding shifts elsewhere, so it is only a short-term solution. Until funding is provided to work with people who are NEET, no matter what area or background they come from, you will not sort this situation out. Also, as I said earlier, we can only do so much here, with the young people that we are working with in our organisations. They go home to chaotic lifestyles, and to living in poverty on housing estates where a lot of people are in workless households. Until this whole issue is addressed correctly with a holistic solution, it will not get any better. It is horrible to think that young people at the age of four or five are already being labelled NEET and being written off for the rest of their lives. They are not NEET; they have huge potential, and it is about addressing that potential and ensuring that it is channelled in the right direction. That might not mean being at school until the age of 18 sitting behind a desk; it could mean doing different things, and applying their skills in different ways.

[204] **Gareth Jones:** We have about three minutes left. Jeff has the next question—dare I say ‘finally’?

[205] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Three minutes; okay. I thank all three presenters for their papers. I will be quick. Following on from the point that Jenny made—not the bit about teenage hormones, but the bit about vocational elements, particularly the 14-19 pathways—I am not too surprised to hear Rathbone saying that you are getting young people through who are even harder to engage with. I would expect that, but I would also expect—it is early days yet—that the pathways will provide more learning opportunities for young people, in terms of a good mix of education, and the ones that are not able to engage with the new system, which will be refined in time, will be really tough. That is where I see you coming in.

[206] This question is to all of you, and is about tracking progression. Do you do that? Do you know what happens to the young people? How do you assess that, and what is the assessment in terms of success either in employment or further training or education? Finally, in our first session, when we heard from Careers Wales and further education representatives, Brian asked about the commissioning side of this. There is a lack of central direction. You are involved with delivery, and there are three organisations represented here at the moment, and you are not dealing with identical young people, but there is a good deal of similarity. What is the advantage for young people not in education, employment or training in having a multitude of organisations to select from? Playing the devil’s advocate, would it be more sensible to have just one or two organisations engaging with the commissioners, and having enough resources to deliver overall? Clearly, you collaborate to a degree; I could not help but notice that, in the case of the Prince’s Trust and Fairbridge, you must have collaborated on the written submissions because a lot of what you say is word for word, particularly the bit about the Future Jobs Fund—not that there is anything wrong with collaboration, but I was a little surprised when I read the same words in both papers. So, there we are.

3.10 p.m.

[207] **Gareth Jones:** Just before you respond, Dr Brian Gibbons has a final point.

[208] **Brian Gibbons:** To repeat the question I asked, linked to what Jeff has just said, is it possible to develop a meaningful performance framework for these young people who are not in education, employment or training? If you think that it is possible, do we need to have a stronger performance management structure in place to drive it forward?

[209] **Ms May:** I will deal with the comment on the paper first. As part of our collaboration, we shared the Prince's Trust paper with Fairbridge, which endorsed what we said in our paper and therefore reflected that in its paper—just to reassure you on that. With regard to measuring outcomes, we measure soft outcomes for every young person on any of our programmes at the beginning and at the end of the programme, whether that is two weeks or 12 weeks. So, we look at confidence, self-esteem, numeracy and literacy on a distance-travelled basis. The young people do a self-assessment at the beginning and at the end. We track what happens to them next. They are all offered up to six months progression, either from a staff member or a volunteer mentor. We track what happens to them at three, six and 12 months through texting, telephone surveys and written follow-up surveys, and we gather all of that together. Last year, 81 per cent of all the young people whom the trust engaged with achieved a positive outcome. The Prince's Trust's definition of a positive outcome is someone moving on to education, training, employment or volunteering. We added volunteering as an outcome last year because of the economic climate, and volunteering in sport sectors and so on is often a really good way of getting experience that can lead to employment.

[210] I am not necessarily sure that we need only one or two organisations to engage with NEETs. I think that there needs to be more collaboration and co-ordination, because you have representatives of three organisations of many at this committee, and we work with them in slightly different ways or with slightly different target groups. It is about being clear about which is the best provider to do what and where. So, I am not sure that having one or two organisations is the right answer, but there is much more that needs to be done on deciding what needs to be done and where.

[211] **Mr Newton:** To pick up on the progression point first, we are very similar in Rathbone to the Prince's Trust in monitoring progression, so I will not go into that. We are running at about 78 per cent positive outcomes, not including the volunteering outcome, because we do not manage that as a positive outcome. With regard to the structure and whether there are too many organisations, there is a great deal of research and many papers that talk about the need for individual choice. The different nature of our programmes offers that.

[212] I am keen to endorse the importance of the third or voluntary sector as a provider in the NEET agenda and being perceived by young people as being separate to the system or the mainstream. There are many instances where we are working in partnership with agencies such as the youth offending services and youth services with our detached outreach teams, but young people are prepared to confide in and trust us more because they do not see us as people who are going to go running back to snitch about their benefits and so on. In fact, we have data-sharing protocols with the mainstream services, so we can share data. However, through research, we know that young people have a desire to engage with, and are more likely to trust, people whom they do not see as being part of a statutory or public sector system. Equally, with regard to the number of voluntary sector partners, if we are encouraged and facilitated to work in partnership and to develop programmes together, that creates a healthy environment where there is innovation in the programmes that we use, where there are referrals, which levers more external funds in from the private sector, for example, in trust

funds and so on, to support that work so that it probably multiplies any funding that comes from the public sector.

[213] Finally, we have not necessarily touched on the fact that the bulk of these young people want to better themselves and do something. People are keen to put those who are NEET down, but when you talk to them, and I am thinking back to the conversations that I have had at all times of the night in residential settings, young people will say, 'I want to do this; I want to succeed. I have come here because I want to better myself, but I just do not know how to do that or I do not have the opportunities to do that.'

[214] **Mr Metcalfe:** We are different from these two organisations; we are very much first-step providers, so we work with those whom we feel are very hard to reach and are disengaged. So, in the time that they work with us, we cannot expect them to attain qualifications. We work on the very basic interpersonal skills that most of us take for granted, such as saying 'hello', establishing eye contact, team-building skills and problem-solving skills. We then pass them on to the other organisations and training providers who can take those skills and build them up. Attendance at Fairbridge is a process; it is not a matter of taking a course. They do not join on day 1 and leave on day 20. They stay with us for as long as is required. Sometimes, it takes three months, six months, nine months, 12 months or 15 months.

[215] As Richard said earlier, we have young people who engage with us for a long period because they feel safe in an environment where they are rewarded, given some respect and are shown some 'love', if I can use that word. However, it then comes to a point where we have to move them on and take them out of their comfort zone so that they can take the next step and start the whole process again.

[216] We also have tracking: we track young people at three, nine, 12, 15, 18 and 24 months so that we also know what is happening to them. We have very similar levels of positive outcomes, but our positive outcomes are more based on those soft skills than hard outcomes. I do not think that there is a requirement for one overall provider, but there is a requirement for one organisation that understands how each of those providers works and how they fit in to that employability spectrum or volunteer-engagement spectrum. To reiterate Richard's points, the young people whom we work with, as those of you who have attended our graduation events have seen, are amazing and have lots of skills; they just need those skills to be focused in the right direction.

[217] **Brian Gibbons:** Could you just answer my question on performance frameworks and capturing soft skills and harder outcomes and so forth? The statutory providers said, quite readily, that that is possible.

[218] **Mr Newton:** It is possible.

[219] **Ms May:** We probably all have such systems, but they are different systems.

[220] **Gareth Jones:** On that note, on behalf of the Members here, I thank you very much. We have gone way over our time limit, but that is because we are aware of the hard and challenging work that you undertake. We have listened, as David Melding said earlier, to some powerful statements in the course of our discussion this afternoon. We are very much aware of the challenges that you face and that our nation faces, in that sense. I was certainly concerned when I heard Richard talk about the lack of attendance at school and that you have to start at that point because after that, things become exceedingly difficult.

[221] However, it has been a very interesting and informative session, which will be very helpful to us. If you feel that you have not had an opportunity to indicate some other aspects

that you feel might be helpful to us in our inquiry, please feel free to communicate via the clerk and so on and we can take those on board. On behalf of all of us, diolch yn fawr and best wishes to you.

[222] Mae tri phapur i'w nodi cyn inni orffen y sesiwn. Yn gyntaf, y papur ar bobl ifanc nad ydynt mewn addysg cyflogaeth na hyfforddiant a gafodd ei liwio gan Sgiliau Adeiladu yng Nghymru. Cyflwynwyd yr ail bapur ar yr un pwnc gan ASCL Cymru. Rhaid inni hefyd nodi cofnodion y cyfarfod diwethaf.

There are three papers to note before we end the session. First, the paper on young people not in education, employment or training, submitted by Construction Skills Wales. The second paper on the same subject is from ASCL Cymru. We must also note the minutes of the previous meeting.

3.19 p.m.

Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion

[223] **Gareth Jones:** Cynigiaf fod

Gareth Jones: I move that

y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog Rhif 10.37(vi).

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 10.37(vi).

[224] Gwelaf fod y pwyllgor yn gytûn.

I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 3.19 p.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 3.19 p.m.*