



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

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

**Dydd Mawrth, 23 Chwefror 2010
Tuesday, 23 February 2010**

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

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

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Angela Burns	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Ann Jones	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Lynne Neagle) Labour (substituting for Lynne Neagle)
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
Val Lloyd	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Sandy Mewies) Labour (substituting for Sandy Mewies)

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Naomi Alleyne	Cyfarwyddwr Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director of Equality and Social Justice, Welsh Local Government Association
Melanie Blake	Rheolwr Datblygu Craidd, Draig Ffyncci Core Development Manager, Funky Dragon
Anne Hamilton	Pennaeth Datblygu Pobl a Rhaglenni, Cyngor Chwaraeon Cymru Head of People and Programmes Development, Sports Council of Wales
Dr Huw Jones	Prif Weithredwr, Cyngor Chwaraeon Cymru Chief Executive, Sports Council of Wales
Dr Chris Llewelyn	Cyfarwyddwr Dysgu Gydol Oes, Hamdden a Gwybodaeth, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director of Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Information, Welsh Local Government Association
Victoria Madden	Draig Ffyncci Merthyr Funky Dragon Merthyr
Jessica Simmons	Draig Ffyncci Conwy Funky Dragon Conwy

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

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

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 10.05 a.m.
The meeting began at 10.05 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Helen Mary Jones:** Bore da, **Helen Mary Jones:** Good morning,

gyfeillion. Yr ydym dipyn bach yn hwyr yn dechrau oherwydd ein bod wedi cael problemau gyda chael digon o Aelodau'n bresennol. Croesawaf bawb i'r cyfarfod hwn o Bwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc y Cynulliad. Atgoffaf bawb fod croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg a Saesneg. Mae offer cyfieithu ar gael ac mae hefyd yn bosibl i'w ddefnyddio er mwyn sicrhau eich bod yn clywed yn well. Yr wyf yn atgoffa pawb sy'n cymryd rhan yn y cyfarfod, ac unrhyw un sydd yn yr oriel gyhoeddus, i ddiffodd unrhyw ffonau symudol a 'mwyar duon' ac yn blaen oherwydd gallant amharu ar yr offer cyfieithu a'r offer darlledu. Nid ydym yn disgwyl ymarfer tân, felly os clywn y larwm tân, bydd hynny'n golygu bod problem a gofynnaf i bawb ddilyn y tywyswyr allan. Byddant yn dangos inni drwy ba ddrws y mae'n ddiogel i adael.

[2] A oes gan Aelodau unrhyw ddatganiadau o fuddiant? Gwelaf nad oes. Yr ydym wedi derbyn ymddiheuriadau gan Joyce Watson ac estynnwn groeso cynnes i Ann Jones sydd yma yn ei lle. Mae Ann bron a bod yma cymaint â nad yw hi yma, ond yr ydym wastad yn falch i'w gweld ac yn hynod o ddiolchgar iddi. Yr wyf hefyd yn croesawu Val Lloyd, sydd yn dirprwyo ar y funud olaf dros Sandy Mewies. Yr ydym yn wirioneddol ddiolchgar i ti, Val, am ddod ar rybudd mor fyr—mae'n help mawr i ni. Croeso hefyd i Angela. Gwyddom eich bod wedi cael bore anodd ac yr ydym yn ddiolchgar iawn eich bod wedi llwyddo i ymuno â ni.

10.07 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Fannau Diogel i Gymdeithasu Inquiry into Safe Places to Hang Out

[3] **Helen Mary Jones:** Symudwn ymlaen at yr ail set o dystion o dan yr ail eitem ar yr agenda, sef cynrychiolwyr Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru. Croeso cynnes i Chris Llewelyn a Naomi Alleyne. Yr ydym i gyd yn gyfarwydd iawn â'r ddau ohonoch. Diolch yn fawr am y dystiolaeth yr ydych wedi darparu. Gan ein bod wedi derbyn y dystiolaeth honno ar bapur, symudwn yn syth at gwestiynau. Croeso cynnes i'r ddau ohonoch. Dechreuaf i.

colleagues. We are running slightly late because we have had problems in securing a quorum of Members. I welcome everyone to this meeting of the Assembly's Children and Young People Committee. I remind everyone that you are welcome to use Welsh or English. Interpretation equipment is available and it can also be used to amplify the sound. I remind everyone, those who are taking part in the meeting and anyone in the public gallery, to switch off any mobile phones, BlackBerrys and so on, because they can interfere with the interpretation equipment and the broadcasting equipment. We are not expecting a fire drill, so if we hear the fire alarm sound, it means that there is a problem and I ask that everyone follows the ushers outside. They will show us where it is safe to exit.

Do Members have any declarations of interest to make? I see that there are none. We have received apologies from Joyce Watson and extend a warm welcome to Ann Jones, who has come in her stead. Ann is almost here as often as she is not, but we are always pleased to see her and are very grateful to her. I also welcome Val Lloyd, who is a last-minute substitute for Sandy Mewies. We really are very grateful to you, Val, for coming at such short notice—it is a great help to us. I also welcome Angela. We know that you have had a difficult morning, and we are very grateful that you have succeeded in joining us.

Helen Mary Jones: We will move on to the second set of witnesses under the second item on the agenda, namely the representatives of the Welsh Local Government Association. A warm welcome to Chris Llewelyn and Naomi Alleyne. We are all very familiar with both of you. Thank you very much for the evidence that you have submitted. As we have already received written evidence, we will move straight to questions. A warm welcome to both of you. I will start.

[4] What challenges has local government faced in delivering on the requirements of the

Welsh Government's play policy and the play policy's implementation plan?

[5] Nid wyf yn gwybod pwy sydd eisiau I do not know who wants to start—Chris or dechrau—Chris neu Naomi. Naomi.

[6] **Dr Llewelyn:** I start by thanking you, Chair, for the opportunity to give evidence on this issue. I also welcome the fact that the inquiry is taking place and the broad remit of your review. It is a big issue and there is a wide range of challenges. The fact that your review is so broad in scope is to be welcomed. Everyone involved will await the outcome of your work with some anticipation.

[7] I have looked through the written submissions that you have received and there is a consensus in that written evidence on some of the challenges faced in the review. There is a consensus on the need to root the work in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its core aims in particular. There is also a consensus on the importance of involving children and young people in all this, not only in your review, but in the work of providers, such as local authorities, from the start, so that we can take account of children and young people's views throughout the planning process and in respect of the provision.

[8] On the challenges that authorities have been dealing with, the play policy implementation and planning process has been in place for some time. Local authorities and the children and young people's partnerships have been engaging in this work with a high degree of enthusiasm. There are clearly challenges, and you would expect someone from the WLGA to highlight the funding issues, which we are all aware are likely to grow in the forthcoming years. Nevertheless, they should not detract or divert anyone's attention from the importance of the work and the significance of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. A lot of good work has been undertaken in recent years, but the pace of change will increase significantly with the Children and Families (Wales) Measure because of the new responsibilities on local authorities to undertake sufficiency audits and those in respect of provision.

10.10 a.m.

[9] In summary, significant progress has been made in recent years in relation to the Assembly Government's aspirations, but we also recognise that there are significant challenges ahead, and, as I say, the pace of change will have to increase significantly.

[10] **Helen Mary Jones:** Naomi, did you want to add anything to that?

[11] **Ms Alleyne:** No.

[12] **Ann Jones:** Well done, you had said four sentences before you mentioned funding. Steve Thomas will have you writing lines when you go back, as that should be in the first sentence. [*Laughter.*] Could you explain the role of children and young people's partnerships in delivering the local authority's play provision? Is there evidence that they operate effectively across the board?

[13] **Dr Llewelyn:** The children and young people's partnerships have the responsibility for the planning process, and are the lead vehicle for planning services for children and young people within the territorial confines of an authority. The local authority has a lead role to play in those partnerships, but they involve all the stakeholders as well. The partnership support unit, which is based in the WLGA, has undertaken a review of the plans for the first three years of their existence, and has looked at provision in relation to play and core aim 4. The reality is that the picture differs from partnership to partnership, because circumstances vary and they have a responsibility to respond to the circumstances that they face. They have

all responded in different ways to this planning requirement. In many instances, they have sub-groups that deal specifically with core aim 4, but in other instances it is approached as a cross-cutting theme. Authorities, with all the other stakeholders within the partnership, address these issues through the children and young people's plans.

[14] The PSU has undertaken a review, and that information is a public document. It might be useful for this committee's deliberations. If you have not seen that work, we can pass it on to you.

[15] **Ann Jones:** Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure requires local authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children, as far as is reasonably practicable—which is probably the get-out clause—in the light of a play sufficiency assessment, which will be undertaken in accordance with regulations set down by Welsh Ministers. Do you envisage that the Children and Families (Wales) Measure will result in local authorities having to provide an increased level of play provision?

[16] **Dr Llewelyn:** At this stage we would be pre-judging the outcome of an ongoing discussion if we said that we expect that that will be the case. A range of issues are wrapped up in the question of how we assess sufficiency and how the audit work is then undertaken. There is enthusiasm in local government to address these issues. Until that discussion has taken place, it is difficult to assess the impact. Again, I think that the position will vary from authority to authority, but we as an association and authorities are looking forward to being part of that discussion and to taking it forward.

[17] **Ms Alleyne:** One issue when we gave evidence on the Measure related to the financial implications. We are waiting for the draft regulations to come forward from the Welsh Assembly Government which will give much more detail on what 'sufficiency' means in relation to providing sufficient play facilities in local authority areas. While we welcome the proposed Measure, the devil will be in the detail and we will want further discussions on that when the regulations are drafted.

[18] **Ann Jones:** We have mentioned funding, which will be an issue. On the additional £250,000 for play facilities, which local authorities were expected to match fund to provide £0.5 million, is there evidence that the authorities actually matched that much funding? What are we going to do about access to play facilities for children, particularly those in areas where there is no public open space?

[19] **Ms Alleyne:** We had the additional funding last year for play for disabled children—

[20] **Ann Jones:** It was £250,000 to be match funded, was it not? That should be £0.5 million pounds. Is there evidence that it has been spent properly?

[21] **Dr Llewelyn:** I have not seen evidence one way or the other, but it is something that we can pursue. I do not know what the position is.

[22] **Ann Jones:** Okay. There are some authority areas that have a huge lack of public open space. How will those authorities successfully look at the play arrangements for children where there is a distinct lack of public open space?

[23] **Dr Llewelyn:** This will have to come out of the discussion on how we define 'sufficiency' and, having defined it, how sufficiency is measured. We are conscious of the fact that what might be deemed to be sufficient or accessible in one authority will be different in another; it depends on whether it is a rural or urban area. There is a range of problematic issues wrapped up in your question. As I mentioned earlier, there is an emerging consensus around these issues, not just within local government, but within other organisations that have

given you evidence. What exactly we mean by some of these terms will have to emerge from that further discussion and I suspect that the work of this committee will feed into that as well.

[24] **Angela Burns:** I would like to touch on the national youth service strategy. When we took evidence from Barnardo's Cymru, one of the comments that the witnesses made was that they felt that there was a significant gap between the strategy and the ability of youth workers to implement it on the ground. They would like to have it reviewed to make it more useable for the youth workers. Would you concur with that viewpoint?

[25] **Dr Llewelyn:** It is an area that is developing. We have a close relationship with the principal youth officers' group, and it has been closely involved with the Assembly Government and other stakeholders in taking the strategy forward. I am sure that there is room for improvement and further development, but I am not sure whether I would go as far as Barnardo's Cymru, who made the statement. It might be useful to meet with Barnardo's Cymru to have a better understanding of its concerns and how they might be addressed.

[26] **Angela Burns:** Reading the strategy, my impression was that it is like many of these high-level strategic documents in that it includes an awful lot of management speak—it uses the word 'synergy' an awful lot. However, people on the ground are interested in tactically delivering a solution and there is always this enormous gap between the highfaluting strategy that is pushed out by an organisation and the guys who are in the village hall or the sports hall trying to do something. That is where the issue is. How can we make it far more real for these people, who are only interested in achieving an objective?

10.20 a.m.

[27] **Dr Llewelyn:** The principal youth officers' group is an operationally-focused group rather than necessarily being involved in the national strategic discussion; it focuses on outcomes and operations, and works closely with the Assembly Government, the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services and other stakeholders. The principal youth officers' group would be a good barometer of what is happening on the ground. Again, we could ask the group to make a specific comment on the issues that you have raised if it would be useful.

[28] **Angela Burns:** Can I deduce from what you have said that you do not believe that there is a gap between policy and practice in the delivery of youth services?

[29] **Dr Llewelyn:** No; what I meant to say is that I want to see in more detail to what extent this gap is perceived to exist. We could then have a wider discussion to ascertain the validity of this perception.

[30] **Ms Alleyne:** As Chris mentioned earlier, all of the children and young people's partnerships have sub-groups that look at issues relating to play across the board. It may be a case of having a discussion with those sub-groups on how policy is put into practice, because you may need to look at whether the policy is suitable for local circumstances and how it can be embedded, or how you can deliver the aim in a way that is practical at a local level. One of the issues is that one size does not fit all, particularly with play provision.

[31] **Angela Burns:** I hear what you say, but I now refer to the Sports Council for Wales—you have had one barrel, and this is the other. The council also feels—it does not put it quite as bluntly as I have—that there are issues to consider regarding the programming for youth services. They recommend that a wide range of activity programmes requires planning, and that transport to these activities should be provided; it is the dovetailing of all of the tactical elements that is needed to deliver a strategy. This organisation also echoes, in a different way, the concerns expressed by Barnardo's that there is a gap between policy and

practice. I am not picking up any signs from you that concerns about the delivery of services have crossed your desk.

[32] **Dr Llewelyn:** The difficulty with all of these issues is that the perceived appropriateness of provision will vary from authority to authority. It will also depend on the circumstances, in that what might be deemed an accessible area for play in a rural area might be deemed otherwise in an intensely urbanised area. The issue of transport, the structured nature of the provision and the perceptions of, and demand for, the provision will vary from one place to another. So, I think that some of those generalised comments need more interrogation.

[33] **Angela Burns:** I appreciate that you are representing all of the local authorities, but my concern is that co-ordinated joint planning is not going on. I will go on briefly to monetary spend. Does the WLGA have any comparable data that might provide an estimate of the budget spend per authority on youth and play provision? I will then use your answer to refer back to my other questions.

[34] **Dr Llewelyn:** I will answer both parts of your questions. On the planning issue, I am not sure what kind of engagement the sports council has with children and young people's partnerships, because there is a planning vehicle in place. I do not know to what extent it engages with all 22 partnerships, so there may be a need for a discussion on that. We do not hold information relating to spending; that issue has emerged in the discussions on budgeting for children's services and the ongoing reviews of comparative spending in education. It is difficult to make comparisons of spending between authorities in different areas, because they are structured in different ways and their financial recording and reporting mechanisms are all different.

[35] **Angela Burns:** I have to make an observation here, Chair. This is not new. I have heard this from many organisations over the last few years. I find it absolutely crazy. I totally understand and agree with the remit of local democracy and that councils are empowered to spend the money that they get in the ways that they deem appropriate for their areas. Cities will spend it differently to rural areas and wealthy areas will have different views from areas of great deprivation and so on. However, when you are looking at things such as this, there seems to be no way of being able to measure whether children in north Wales, west Wales or east Wales are getting the same kind of opportunities to go out and have fun and to stretch themselves emotionally, mentally and physically. That information is needed for such things as the youth service strategy. I find it odd that an organisation such as yours, which exists to represent all of these councils, does not keep some of these data so that we can see that some people are doing well, others are doing badly, and some are doing a good job while not spending very much money and therefore how they are doing that. Without that information as a country, we cannot possibly learn from good practice or mitigate bad practice and maximise the good practice. Again and again, we hear from organisations that they do not hold the information centrally and it drives me nuts.

[36] **Helen Mary Jones:** I think the question would be whose job that is and, without wishing to put words into our witnesses' mouths, they might say that that is possibly a job for the Assembly Government rather than for them, but I will give them both the opportunity to respond to that point. I share Angela's frustration.

[37] **Angela Burns:** I did not mean to go into a tirade.

[38] **Dr Llewelyn:** It is an issue that crops up in other service areas, and it has cropped up recently in the Finance Committee's investigation into post-16 funding. On the quality of provision, there are a range of different mechanisms and vehicles available for measuring the performance of a local authority and other public sector services in different areas. The Wales

Audit Office, Estyn and the other inspectorate have an inspection regime. There is a performance measurement framework in place and an outcomes measures framework. We are in discussions with the Assembly Government at present on developing and taking forward outcome agreements. There are existing improvement agreements in place between local authorities and the Assembly Government, so there is a significant regulatory framework in place to measure the scope and quality of local authority service provision in a range of areas. Indeed, it is a bigger, more burdensome framework than exists in many other countries. For example, in Scotland, the regulatory framework is not quite as cumbersome.

[39] The other point to make is that looking at how much is spent in different parts of Wales on service provision does not tell you the whole picture for a variety of reasons. Circumstances differ, and so the cost of provision in some authorities will be significantly higher than for a comparable provision in other areas. The most obvious example is in education. In an urban area, the cost of provision per learner will be different from the cost of that in a rural area. So, even if that spending information was available, unless you also had the wealth of the other data, it could be misleading and lead to false conclusions being drawn. I understand the point, but I think that just having the kind of financial information to which you refer would not necessarily resolve some of the issues with the scope and quality of provision.

[40] **Helen Mary Jones:** I do not think that anyone is suggesting that that is the whole story, but I am sure that you will understand our frustrations as a committee that, when young people ask us these questions, we can only say that not only do we not know the answers, but, apparently, no-one does.

[41] **Angela Burns:** Also, if you knew that they were spending some money, you could take some consolation from that. Chair, I ask that the committee write to all local authorities to ask them exactly this question: will they please give us an estimate of the budget for youth and play provision within their authority?

10.30 a.m.

[42] **Helen Mary Jones:** We can do that. There is no reason at all not to do that.

[43] **Angela Burns:** Can we ensure that they answer us?

[44] **Helen Mary Jones:** We cannot ensure that they answer our letters, but we could compel the chief executives to come before us to account for themselves if they do not.

[45] **Angela Burns:** Thank you very much indeed.

[46] **Helen Mary Jones:** We can make them do that, one by one, if we have to. I am sure that we can anticipate their co-operation. In fairness to colleagues from the WLGA, there are sometimes questions that it is difficult for an umbrella body to answer, because different authorities will approach things in such different ways.

[47] I would like to point out to Members and to our witnesses that we have another seven questions to ask and seven minutes in which to do that. We will not be able to ask seven questions in seven minutes, but there are some quite important areas that we need to cover. So, I ask Members to be as succinct as possible in answering questions and, within reason, I ask witnesses to be as succinct as possible in responding. Perhaps, Chris and Naomi, if we get to the end of the time allocated and we have not covered everything, we could put some of the questions to you in writing.

[48] **Dr Llewelyn:** We are more than happy for you to do that.

[49] **Helen Mary Jones:** This is likely to be quite a long inquiry, so, once we have taken some more evidence from others, we may wish to invite you back to respond to some of the points that have been raised. I know that we will have no trouble in getting you here; you are always willing to come and help us with our inquiries.

[50] Val, I think that you have a set of questions on planning processes.

[51] **Val Lloyd:** Yes, they are on planning policy. That should quieten things down a bit. *[Laughter.]*

[52] How much of an impact do you think national planning policy and local authority planning processes have on the opportunities for children and young people to play and hang out safely?

[53] **Dr Llewelyn:** I will try to be succinct. I looked at some of the other pieces of written evidence and the evidence from the children's commissioner noted that the planning process is having a significant impact. I do not know what evidence the children's commissioner has looked at that supports that view. In the written evidence, there were just a couple of sentences on that. When the association has looked at this issue in the past, we have concluded that the planning process is relatively sympathetic towards the provision of safe areas for play and hanging out. The technical guidance, and technical advice note 16 in particular, provides significant safeguards.

[54] When we did some work on the Member proposed Measure on playing fields, we looked at the loss or otherwise of playing fields in recent years. I think that the Sports Council for Wales has undertaken a similar exercise. The reality is that there has been a net increase in recent years and the quality of the provision has also improved. So, while the planning process, through different kinds of construction work, may have resulted in the loss of some playing fields, there has been a net increase in provision.

[55] **Val Lloyd:** I have a supplementary question. What about section 106 agreements? They do not refer only to playing fields, but go much wider. They can and do relate to children's play facilities.

[56] **Ms Alleyne:** The difficulty with section 106 agreements is that, particularly given the recession over the last 18 months to two years, very few have been put in place. So, while they exist and are a requirement, they would not have helped over the last few months or so, because the recession means that section 106 agreements are not being taken forward. When we move forward as the housing market picks up, it is important that they are taken into account.

[57] To go back to TAN 16, there are local development plans and an open space assessment as part of that. It is about linking up the planning process with the need and then engaging and involving children and young people so that their voices are heard in the development of local development plans.

[58] **Val Lloyd:** Are you saying that section 106 agreements are being written into the planning process, but are not being followed up by local authorities or are not being written into the planning applications?

[59] **Ms Alleyne:** I think that they are being considered, but the difficulty has been that not many section 106 agreements have come to fruition during the recession because of the impact on the housing market.

[60] **Ann Jones:** I would like to follow that up, because you have just mentioned the recession, which only relates to the last 18 months. However, play provision and facilities are often the last thing to be thought of in any planning development and hundreds of developments across Wales have not delivered on section 106 agreements, so blaming the recession for a lack of section 106 agreements is not right. The system has been in operation for some time, and I can take you to many developments where section 106 agreements have promised facilities that have never been delivered. It is not just the recession that is causing a problem.

[61] **Ms Alleyne:** Could we look at that and write to the committee in more detail on it?

[62] **Helen Mary Jones:** That would be very helpful. Back to you, Val.

[63] **Val Lloyd:** I will get back to what I was saying—

[64] **Helen Mary Jones:** Sorry, Val; we are a very undisciplined committee. We let people go off-piste.

[65] **Val Lloyd:** This is very much a digression, but it is something that the committee may want to put in the pot. Sometimes, when section 106 agreements have been made and the council has tried to implement them—I am talking from personal knowledge here—residents have objected to having a play facility next to them. That has happened on more than one occasion. So, it is not always the fault of the developer and of the local authority.

[66] In its evidence, the Sports Council for Wales referenced National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence public health guidance, issued two years ago, which stated that planning applications for new developments should:

[67] ‘Ensure children can participate in physically active play.’

[68] Do you have any evidence to show that this guidance is being adhered to by local authorities and is there sufficient read-across between planning and public health guidance? That could relate to section 106 agreements, of course.

[69] **Dr Llewelyn:** My understanding is that there is not a problem there, but, as I am not a planner or from a planning background, I am not as well informed on this issue as I might be. I would be happy to take it away and come back to you on it.

[70] **Val Lloyd:** Thank you. Turning to your evidence, in paragraph 30, you state that local authorities welcome the involvement of young people in the planning process, but that that can sometimes be difficult. What is local government doing to overcome those difficulties?

[71] **Ms Alleyne:** There are a whole host of issues around how you engage with children and young people, many of which the committee will have considered previously. The planning process can be very long, drawn out and dry, if you like, so it is about how we ensure that it is put in an easy-to-understand and easy-to-explain way for children and young people. I think that it is probably a newer area of planning as compared with other areas. I think that there is a need to learn from what works, but, obviously, bringing children and young people into committees, so that they can ask questions or challenge some of the issues, is quite key. The example that we highlighted in our evidence demonstrates that when you engage with children and young people through that process, you can achieve an outcome that meets their needs, and that the planning is able to deliver what children and young people want. So, there is a need to share that best practice and have different and innovative ways of doing this, not just to put out a consultation document or notice and expect people to feed

back. There is a need for planning departments to engage positively with children and young people in a way that will make sense to them on what will be delivered.

[72] **Val Lloyd:** I am not being patronising, but I doubt very much whether children and young people would respond to a consultation, unless it went to an organisation such as Funky Dragon. In general, if there is a planning application, it is unlikely, unless you are specifically asked to do so, that you would get children or a children's organisation to respond. How do we overcome that barrier?

[73] **Ms Alleyne:** Planning departments need to be proactive. As you said, many people would not want to respond to such consultations, but when a planning application has implications for children and young people, there should be proactive engagement through organisations such as schools councils, other youth fora, and the youth service. There are many different ways of bringing that to the attention of children and young people. Given that you have published it, you expect children and young people to respond to you. So, there is a need to be proactive in that way but to use the fora that are already in existence.

10.40 a.m.

[74] **Angela Burns:** I have been to almost every school on my patch, and not once has any young person said to me that they have been involved in planning issues. However, there is one exception: one particular school tried to stop its play park being moved to the other side of a busy road, but it was told that its pupils' voices did not count because they are young kids and do not know what life is about. That was the view of elected councillors.

[75] **Helen Mary Jones:** There are always these issues about balancing the views of different groups. Does either of you want to respond to the issue of planning processes trying to balance often conflicting needs or wishes?

[76] **Dr Llewelyn:** Inevitably, that is the case. Within the public sector, any process that involves allocating resources inevitably deals with conflicting pressures and demands. I would not want to comment on the individual case that you mentioned because I am not familiar with it, but your example proves that children and young people can be engaged on an issue if it is seen as being relevant to them or if they have concerns. The challenge for us all is to find a way of making some of the issues that we are discussing relevant so that children and young people will engage. I think that there is that commitment from the children and young people's partnerships and onwards. We cannot turn away from an issue because it is dry and boring. We have a responsibility and a challenge to make an issue interesting and to explain why it is relevant.

[77] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you very much. I thank Val again for being with us. I know that she has to move on to chair another committee. I thank Chris and Naomi for the evidence that they have given us so far. We have quite a few other questions that we would have liked to ask, but I was slightly ambitious about what we might get through in the time slot, knowing how engaged on these issues the WLGA and our committee members are. I will review the questions that we have. We will write to you on those questions that are factual matters, but if there are issues on which we need some more dialogue, I will reserve the right to ask you to come back again in the next few months. I know that that puts time pressure on you but, as Chris said at the beginning, this is a wide-ranging inquiry and the role of local government in it is the key. I would not want the committee to miss out on exploring some of the issues with you. We will write to you about the questions that are purely factual. It may be that they all turn out to be factual, as I have not yet had the chance to look through them. If there are other issues on which we need more dialogue, we will get back to you and, hopefully, meet you again in the not too distant future, bearing in mind that there is a lot of pressure on your time.

[78] **Dr Llewelyn:** There were two or three issues that we said that we would follow up, as well.

[79] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is lovely. We will make a note of those and, between us, we will make sure that they are followed up.

[80] Diolch yn fawr iawn ichi. Thank you very much.

[81] Symudwn yn awr at dystiolaeth Cyngor Chwaraeon Cymru. Estynnaf groeso i Huw Jones ac Anne Hamilton. Diolch yn fawr i'r ddau ohonoch am gymryd yr amser i ymuno â ni heddiw, ac am y papur tystiolaeth a gawsom eisoes. Yr ydym yn hynod ddiolchgar amdano. Mae'n ddefnyddiol tu hwnt. We now move to the evidence of the Sports Council for Wales. I extend a warm welcome to Huw Jones and Anne Hamilton. I thank you both for taking the time to join us today, and for the evidence paper that we have already received. We are extremely grateful for it, as it is exceptionally useful.

[82] With your agreement, we will move straight to questions and answers. As I have said, thank you for the written evidence that we have already received.

[83] In your written evidence, you state that the Sports Council for Wales surveys children and young people's participation in sport on a biennial basis. You have also very usefully included some extracts from that research. Can you tell us more about why you do that survey, which is a good thing to do, and highlight for the record any key relevant issues or trends that you think might help to inform this inquiry?

[84] **Dr Jones:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. Mae'n bleser mawr bod gyda chi y bore yma, felly diolch am y gwahoddiad. **Dr Jones:** Thank you, Chair. It is a great pleasure to be here this morning, so thank you for the invitation.

[85] I will kick off. We have been undertaking these surveys since about the middle of the 1990s. We do them for two reasons. The first is to see what the trend is and what we are achieving, and the second is to measure value for money. An awful lot of public money gets spent in this area, and we need to ensure that it is spent effectively.

[86] We have seen the number of primary and secondary school children participating in sport probably double over the past 12 years. For much of that, even though we cannot directly say that a particular child took part because of a particular activity, we can say that there is a strong correlation between the programmes that we have put in place and the outcomes that we see in the data.

[87] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. That is very useful.

[88] **Ann Jones:** Your written evidence refers to levels of inclusion of young people with disabilities or special educational needs. Can you tell us how you have achieved that and whether there are lessons from the work that you have done that might inform other organisations so that they could carry it on?

[89] **Ms Hamilton:** If you look at some of our Dragon Sport work and the level of children with disabilities who are included in that, you clearly see that inclusion is a fundamental element of the design of the training and the materials supporting the programme. The pictures used in the materials feature children of all colours, children in wheelchairs, and children with walking aids. Part of the training focuses on how we can adapt activities for children of differing levels, going from how a child in a wheelchair can be

included in the activity right through to how a child who has a significant talent can be stretched in the same game. So, it really takes the people who run those activities through some basic principles that they can use to adapt the activity for inclusion.

[90] It is also very clear in the messages throughout the materials that we use that there is an expectation that that will happen. I have to say that most people, particularly in primary schools, want to do that if they possibly can.

[91] **Ann Jones:** So, that is the lesson, is it? It is about the training for the people who run the courses.

[92] **Ms Hamilton:** It is about how to do it.

[93] **Ann Jones:** How to engage everybody—that is the vital part.

[94] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. That is helpful.

[95] **Angela Burns:** Good morning. We have heard evidence that an awful lot of children and young people will face what we call ‘environmental poverty’ in the spaces where they can go to play. That is, they are badly maintained, are full of syringes and other rubbish, and are not great places to be. Have you come across those kinds of views expressed much by children in your work?

[96] **Ms Hamilton:** It is not given as one of the major barriers to their taking part. They talk about certain practical barriers, such as lack of transport, access and activities that they want to do, but your example does not come up often. I am not saying that it does not exist as an issue, as I am aware that it does, but it is not a major reason given for not taking part.

[97] **Dr Jones:** We also have to be careful when looking at this issue that we do not homogenise things. We may say that children want to do informal things, but some children want to do structured activities, whether competitive or recreational, some want to do unstructured activities, and some just want to do something. It is a case of providing for that wide range. If we are to increase the opportunities for physical activity by children, young people, and adults, we must not homogenise these things by saying that this is what women want, this is what girls want, or this is what children want. We really have to look at various groups and cater to their needs.

[98] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is an incredibly important point.

10.50 a.m.

[99] **Angela Burns:** I was surprised by your comments on the barriers to extra-curricular and club sports participation. I hope that I have read this right, but I was particularly surprised to hear about children who come from households of low income or deprivation. The evidence that we have heard in all sorts of different inquiries, but not necessarily to do with play, is that there are huge barriers to children and young people being able to take part, ranging from not having the money to buy the uniforms or gym kits, to the unavailability of transport, either because they cannot afford it or because they live in a rural area and there is no public transport available, so they have to rely on their parents’ cars, and there may not be the money to do that. Those issues came up time and again in all sorts of inquiries. There are enormous barriers to participation in all sorts of things, including sport. However, you say in your evidence that that does not register at all, and that there are no clear differences in the barriers according to region or rural area, and no transport barriers. In your paper, you used whether pupils are eligible for free school meals to split the barriers. My concern is that the cost of taking part in sport may be putting some children off. Your evidence runs contrary to

everything that we have heard consistently over the past two years, and I would like your view on that.

[100] **Dr Jones:** We need to differentiate between outcomes and some of the barriers with some of those things. What we have shown is that the outcomes for young people throughout Wales are probably not that different, but the barriers will be different in specific instances. That is an important distinction. So, not every child will suffer because of transport issues, or because of money and finance issues, but children in different places, at different points in time, and in different instances will suffer them. When those outcomes are measured, the overall figures do not show that difference in participation. We have to be careful not to say outright that transport is the barrier, and so every local authority has to address transport issues. It will be an issue in some authority areas but not necessarily in others. The key to a lot of this is to look at local circumstances and not to make generalisations.

[101] **Angela Burns:** I totally understand that point and I understand about amortisation and statistics. However, my concern is that children from low-income households, of which there are around 32 per cent in Wales at present, may find it more difficult to access play and/or sports because of barriers such as not having enough money to buy a gym kit, or not being able to afford to join the football club, rowing club or whatever the club is. Although I accept your argument about amortisation, the downside of doing that is that you can bury or lose a vulnerable group of people. Do you have any evidence to show that this particular group of children is being catered for and is able to access sports?

[102] **Dr Jones:** It depends on what activities you are speaking about. ‘Sport’ covers about 60 different activities. When talking about extra-curricular activities, the vast majority of schools will be sympathetic and acknowledge the challenges that all children face. Through their extra-curricular activities, schools will ensure that they do not price children out of that market, and that many of those children can go along. There may be some examples in which that is not the case but, generally speaking, the vast majority of schools are sympathetic and acknowledge the situation. The vast majority of clubs have pricing policies for children that are very cheap, even some golf clubs. People have perceptions of golf clubs being very middle class and all the rest of it, but they have membership costs of around £50 for a child, which is less than £1 a week. Many golf clubs will also loan equipment, and so on. The challenge is how those clubs and groups engage with young people so that they are aware of what is going on. There are some very good examples. Machynys golf club in south Llanelli, which is a very deprived area, has done some excellent work recently by seeking to get young people into clubs and groups. There will be specific examples of barriers, but an awful lot of people are doing some very good work to overcome those barriers.

[103] **Ann Jones:** You said that schools will not necessarily price children out, but they may price them out transport-wise, because if you are on a school bus that leaves at 3.45 p.m., that is it, you must leave the school at 3.45 p.m.. If you are from a low-income family or a family that cannot arrange to pick you up from school after an after-school activity, that is a huge barrier to participation and it affects children from lower-income families that may not have a car or whose parents are out working and unable to drop everything to pick the children up.

[104] You said that golf clubs costs £50 a week—

[105] **Helen Mary Jones:** A year.

[106] **Ann Jones:** Sorry. I was going to say £1 a week. It might be only £1 a week, but I doubt whether any clubs would allow you to pay £1 a week for your membership. In addition, there is what that £50 would mean to a very low-income family, so, as much as they would want their children to participate, parents would have to look at their priorities. So, there are

barriers for children from low-income families and, as Angela said, we are in danger of saying 'Participation rates are high, so those aren't the issues', but they are the real issues. Children will not put themselves forward if they think that their family situation will be different to anyone else's. That is the issue.

[107] **Dr Jones:** I am not seeking to diminish that. We all know that there are areas of Wales where those are particular challenges. In those areas, we need to look at specific policies and issues. However, that is not the case across the whole of Wales, and that is the point that I was trying to make.

[108] **Ann Jones:** How do you engage with the development of the Government's policy through strategies such as the 'Play Policy Implementation Plan', the current review into the national youth service and the recent developments under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010? Are there sufficient opportunities for you all to get together and work cross-sector at a national level or do you just do it locally?

[109] **Dr Jones:** To take the question on play first, I sat on the working group that established the 'Play Policy Implementation Plan' and chaired the final meeting when it was signed off. I should also declare that I attend meetings of the board of Play Wales as an observer. So, we have close links with Play Wales on many of these issues. The challenge is to be clear about our area of expertise, who we engage with and who they engage with, so that we do not duplicate our efforts, but ensure that they are complementary.

[110] **Ms Hamilton:** We have good examples of that happening in particular areas with schemes such as 5x60. For example, in Treorchy, the 5x60 officers get together with the leisure centre managers and the Communities First people to talk about what the young people say they are interested in doing, and put together a programme that fits with the work of all the agencies.

[111] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a good example of co-operation at a local level. From your perspective, is that usual or unusual? One thing that we are picking up is that, at the national level, there is a lot of co-operation and everyone knows what everyone else is doing, but there is a big implementation gap when it comes to delivering those national policies at a local level, and co-ordination appears to be an issue. Do you, as a council, have a take on whether the Treorchy example, which seems to be entirely sensible and what you would expect everyone to be doing, is happening everywhere, as it should be, or are there some places where that is a problem? I am trying not to put words into your mouth—trying to do so is a major fault of mine, as everyone knows.

[112] **Dr Jones:** It is a fair question, Chair. One of the challenges for any organisation, whether it is the Welsh Assembly Government, a local authority or whatever, is cross-departmental and cross-sector working. They are challenges for everyone. It is easy to produce a report talking about how there is insufficient collaboration or communication on some of these issues. Most of the bodies that I have mentioned are now trying to recognise that. We have local authority partnership agreements, which we call LAPA schemes. We basically say to local authorities, 'This is what we want to achieve by way of outputs and outcomes, and opportunities for children and young people; tell us how that can be achieved', rather than saying, 'This is the money for this, that and the other'.

[113] 11.00 a.m.

[114] We are focusing on outputs and outcomes, which encourages much more cross-departmental and cross-sector working. That is what we are trying to encourage them to do, rather than focusing on particular expenditure.

[115] **Helen Mary Jones:** Ann, I think that I half-asked your question 25, but I did not ask it fully.

[116] **Ann Jones:** We were talking about ways of joining up planning and delivery at local authority level, and you recommend that a wide range of activity programmes be jointly planned by youth services, the voluntary sector and leisure services, with access and transport provided. That is the way forward, surely. What do you see as the barriers to doing that? Is it that local authorities do not want to engage because they want to do it their way?

[117] **Dr Jones:** I do not think that it is a lack of commitment. Everyone, whether in a local authority or anywhere else, has priorities and challenges in this day and age. Everyone recognises that there is an awful lot to do, and it is one of those things that is always on people's agenda, that we need to do these things better at the end of the day. It is just a case of finding the time to do it and seeking out those partnerships. It is not about a lack of commitment—there is a huge commitment to doing this. We are doing a lot of advocacy work with local authorities now, trying to raise the profile of sport and physical recreation. We want to say to local authorities, 'Listen, this is a big issue in ensuring the health of the population of Wales; you have a responsibility to do that and to do joint working with LHBs, and we have got a responsibility. How can we get at this agenda?'. When I have spoken to boards and chief executives across Wales, without exception, I have found huge commitment to this issue. Everyone wants to address it—it is a case of finding the time and being able to pull people together to do it. That is the challenge.

[118] **Angela Burns:** My next question follows on from Ann's. You make some strong recommendations on planning policy and guidance and you talk about the NICE guidelines. Is there much of a read-across between the policies on public health and planning?

[119] **Dr Jones:** Yes, there is a significant read-across. A lot of LHBs have huge challenges as regards the health of the population of Wales, and they have to prioritise. Some see physical activity as having a much higher priority than others, and it is a matter for them to decide and to justify that. However, an enormous amount of work needs to be done in bringing local authorities and LHBs together with health planning and local authority town and country planning to ensure that some of these things are put in place.

[120] **Angela Burns:** You started by saying that, yes, you thought that there was an extensive read-across. Do you have evidence to support that, or is it just a view that you have garnered from talking to local health boards and local authorities?

[121] **Dr Jones:** We spend a great deal of time, as I mentioned, on advocacy work. You can gauge a great deal about the priority given to some of these initiatives by talking to people. At the end of the day, we cannot badger people and insist that they do it; they have to decide their own priorities.

[122] **Angela Burns:** On the role of schools, you made a positive statement about how they can play a huge role in providing a safe and welcoming environment for children and young people—I will not read your words back to you. I wonder if you could tell us more about your view on the potential that schools have to provide a good place to play, as well as your views on how to overcome the barriers that people erect when they say that schools are out of bounds after school hours, or after involvement in structured sports.

[123] **Ms Hamilton:** I can illustrate that by talking about Porth. Porth County Community School has taken a very proactive stance in after-school provision. It works hard to ensure that it has a strong extra-curricular programme that runs until quite late in the evening. One of the things that I heard from Porth school is that, when it started, lots of people felt that if they opened up the school, there would be lots of vandalism and problems like that, but, in fact, the

opposite has proven to be true, because there are people around. There will be children taking part in the activities and there will be children sitting on the benches outside. The headteacher said that it is quite easy for him to ask, 'What happened there? Who was it?'. Those children who are sitting around, chatting, are able to say, 'It was so and so, sir'. So, if there is a problem, they can quickly pin it down because there are people around to see what is happening. That sense of others being around makes people feel more confident that they are safe. I would say that it happens because the headteacher is determined that it will. So, where there are barriers, they find ways around them. They have determined that they are a community school, and that is how they operate.

[124] **Angela Burns:** That is a very encouraging scenario. Just to round up, have you met schools or local authorities that have said 'no' to you? What are the barriers that they erect most often? The ones that we have heard about concern security—we have dispensed with that one—and things like insurance, concern about adults going into a young people's community, supervision and so on.

[125] **Ms Hamilton:** Some of the issues are to do with the design of the facility and how easy it is to access a sports hall, for example, without going through the rest of the building. Where it has been designed well, that is easier to overcome. When people have to go all the way through the school, it can cause problems. Another issue that is brought up is the opening of the facilities. However, when you talk to people who have dealt with this, you find that there are ways around that. It is not impossible to overcome.

[126] **Dr Jones:** There are structural and behavioural challenges. The structural challenges, as Anne has mentioned, are to do with the way in which the school has been constructed and so on. Very few schools in Wales have been constructed to be community focused schools, so there are significant design issues and so on. However, we must be honest about this. There are lots of behavioural and attitudinal issues when it comes to headteachers and leadership. The example that Anne gave of Porth is fantastic. It demonstrates significant leadership on the part of the headteacher there. However, where people do not want to do it, they can very easily find 101 reasons not to.

[127] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is all too common.

[128] **Ann Jones:** I have a couple of questions on some of the barriers that young people might face, one of which is bullying. You have written about Dragon Sport, which is something that we mentioned earlier, and the fair play charter that you have. How do you tackle bullying if it happens?

[129] **Ms Hamilton:** I think that a great deal of that is dealt with by the coaches or the teachers who are running the sessions. With a lot of the sports examples, there is someone who is in charge of those sessions. In the training that we provide, we support them so that they set up a culture in the club that bullying is unacceptable. They have to follow that through, and provided that they do, it is clear that bullying is not acceptable behaviour. Incidents of bullying still happen, but, in those structured environments, there are far fewer. It is much harder to control in an unstructured, unsupervised environment.

[130] **Ann Jones:** The negative stereotype of children and young people, which is the view held by some adults, could be seen to inhibit their ability to play or just hang out on the streets, playing safely. I was pleased to see that you refer to people playing, using jumpers for goalposts. That is very important. That is how I learned all my skills about moving goalposts. I made goalposts so wide that I could kick the ball through it. It is a pity that some of the professionals cannot do that. How do we get over this negative stereotyping of children who just want to hang out, sit on a wall or kick a ball about?

11.10 a.m.

[131] **Dr Jones:** That is a difficult one, because the problem is multifaceted. Those attitudes have always existed in society—even when I was young—and they will probably always be there when it comes to people’s perception of young people. When people talk about ‘youth’, they use the word in a derogatory fashion. What we have seen over the years is a considerable societal change in the promotion of those types of informal activities. When I grew up, you could guarantee that if you went to the local playing field on a Saturday morning you would come across lots of young people who went to school with you. Nowadays, there are far fewer such activities on playing fields and in informal areas and, in some places, there are almost none. As a society, and as parents, we have almost discouraged that type of thing: kids climbing trees and so on. We all know the reasons behind some of that. One of the things that we need to look at as a society, not just as various groups in the public sector, is how to promote that, because it is becoming very restrictive on the behaviour of young people.

[132] **Ann Jones:** You spoke earlier about society and people’s attitudes; we talked previously with the WLGA about planning policies, section 106 agreements for play areas and the fact that people perhaps do not want the play area when they have moved in. Do you think that we should be looking to put in play areas under section 106 agreements in the development beforehand, so that people know that there will be a play area? When people go looking around the estate, they will then think, ‘We have young kids, so we will buy a house near the play area’, while the older people who think, ‘I do not want kids nearby’ will buy a house further away. That could be the way to resolve some of these issues. If you know that you want a family house, you will go for that, but you need to put the play facilities in beforehand so that people know where they will be. It is no good having it on a map that states, ‘This is where, eventually, there will be a play area’, because people think, ‘Oh well, when it comes along, we will stop it’. If you put the play facilities in first, people would buy houses accordingly. Would that help, do you think? Do you think that it is a practical thing that we could do?

[133] **Mr Jones:** Absolutely.

[134] **Ann Jones:** Okay, thank you.

[135] **Angela Burns:** Earlier, you mentioned climbing trees. In its evidence, Play Wales raised concerns over the conflicting messages in relation to health and safety. Do you have any views on the significance of health and safety issues and their impact on children playing organised sports or just hanging out?

[136] **Mr Jones:** I think that health and safety and child protection issues have both had quite negative impacts, particularly on the voluntary sector. There is a great fear now, particularly in the voluntary sector, about being sued or being named in relation to child protection issues and so on. Everyone wants to ensure the protection of children, but we could be inadvertently creating a situation in which less and less provision is made for them because of people’s fear of health and safety or child protection issues.

[137] **Helen Mary Jones:** My final question was going to be on child protection issues. I will put my cards on the table and say that I have heard a lot of concerns about the impact of child protection legislation on voluntary organisations every time new child protection regulations are brought in. I have not seen much hard evidence of volunteers disappearing, but that is not to say that that does not happen. In your paper, one of the things that you recommend is that the impact of any new child protection safeguarding legislation on volunteers helping to run activities should be considered before the legislation is introduced. You have touched on this, Huw, but can you tell us a bit more about what impact you have seen on volunteers so far? I think that we all know from our own experiences as parents,

participants and constituency Members that there are organisations that are totally dependent on volunteers and that some of those organisations are the best at getting out there and reaching some of the young people who are perhaps more reluctant to get involved. I am not in any way putting down the role of volunteers; I think that it is absolutely crucial. Can you tell us a bit more about what impact you as a council have seen, or what you are concerned about and, therefore, why you have included that in your list of recommendations?

[138] **Ms Hamilton:** One of the things that we come across when we talk to some sports clubs is nervousness about their own knowledge, and about whether they know what they should be doing and whether they are putting themselves in a vulnerable position because they are taking on a responsibility. It is not these people's first job, they have not had six days of training on it, and it is something that they worry about. That can make people reluctant to put themselves forward. It is very rare for people to say 'no' when you ask them to go through a Criminal Records Bureau check—that is not the issue—but it is a matter of them finding the time to do the paperwork, to make it all happen, and feeling confident that they are doing all of the things that they are supposed to be doing and are not putting themselves in a vulnerable position.

[139] **Mr Jones:** We have to be careful that some of these things, whether they are CRB checks or the new vetting and barring scheme, are not seen as a panacea: once you have done them, everything will be fine. One thing that we impress on sports clubs and the governing bodies of sports is that it is the way in which sessions are run and managed that is crucial, in relation to protecting children and protecting coaches against malicious accusations, which we are certainly aware of. A while ago, the Home Office produced a very good document called 'Safe from Harm', which was a risk-based document. It said that the risk to children, and child protection issues, depends on the situation, such as, for example, whether you are working with teams, in one-to-one sessions, or with children with disabilities, and it detailed the sorts of things that you need to think about. That is an approach that we are adopting with clubs, with coaches able to keep an eye on each other because of the fact that there is more than one adult around, that creates an ambience for children to feel safer, and the coaches feel safer, too.

[140] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is helpful. Regarding the practical impact of things such as CRB checks on clubs, are you hearing from them that the cost is a problem? I am genuinely concerned about that, because it is an expensive procedure.

[141] **Ms Hamilton:** I am conscious of that being raised as a major issue.

[142] **Mr Jones:** The process that one has to go through is probably the issue, in that somebody has to be trained up and somebody has to take responsibility. The club as a whole, or its chairman, treasurer or vice-chairman—whoever—is now going to be legally accountable for some of these issues. Suddenly you have a group of people who, with the best of intentions, want to provide something for the community, but they are now legally accountable for it and could be fined or taken to court.

[143] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a pressure that some of them are going to find difficult.

[144] **Mr Jones:** That is right.

[145] **Angela Burns:** I want to come in on that and also on health and safety issues, which are part of child protection. Teachers have raised concerns with me about taking pupils out of school on extra-curricular activities. They feel that there is an enormous weight on them and that, if anything did go wrong, they would be hung out to dry. You have only to think about the case of the children who died on a canoeing expedition. Every time you get on a minibus, you worry about how safe the driver is and so on. It is absolutely right that everybody should

face up to their responsibilities, but have you had any conversations with the adults involved about those kinds of issues and their fear of litigation when something outside of their control goes wrong?

[146] **Ms Hamilton:** The external visits co-ordinator training that is now available for schools offers support on that issue. Every school is supposed to have somebody trained as an EVC, and there is now more of a system to support people through that process; that helps to reassure people who are looking at those sorts of visits.

[147] **Mr Jones:** Following the Lyme Bay incident that Angela referred to, and skiing tragedies on the continent involving children on excursions, a significant amount of guidance has been developed with the education sector on how to handle those types of excursions, identifying who has responsibility at a particular point in time, that is, who is in loco parentis. I might be the teacher who takes the children along, but when they are then engaged in an activity, it is a case of, 'Okay, I am now handing over the responsibility to you and you are now in loco parentis'. There are formalised processes and quite good guidance in existence now. It has had to be developed.

11.20 a.m.

[148] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you both very much; it was a very useful session. That is the end of our meeting today. We will send you a transcript for you to check for accuracy and you will have a copy of the report once it is done. Thank you both very much.

[149] Atgoffaf yr Aelodau y bydd ein cyfarfod nesaf ar 9 Mawrth. Bydd yn gyfarfod pwysig. Cofiwch ein bod wedi gofyn i is-gadeiryddion y byrddau iechyd lleol, sydd â chyfrifoldeb arbennig ar gyfer iechyd meddwl plant a phobl ifanc, ymuno â ni. Byddwn hefyd yn cymryd tystiolaeth gan Gyngor Sgowtiaid Cymru a Fairbridge Cymru ar yr ymchwiliad bresennol. Diolch yn fawr.

I remind Members that our next meeting is on 9 March. It will be an important meeting. You will remember that we have asked the vice-chairs of local health boards, who have special responsibility for child and adolescent mental health services, to join us. We will also be taking evidence from the Welsh Scout Council and Fairbridge Cymru on the current inquiry. Thank you very much.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 11.21 a.m.
The meeting ended at 11.21 a.m.*