



Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales

# Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#)

[The Children, Young People and Education  
Committee](#)

06/10/2016

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ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o’r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in  
the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation  
is included.

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

Mohammad Asghar <a href="#">Bywgraffiad</a>   <a href="#">Biography</a>	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Michelle Brown <a href="#">Bywgraffiad</a>   <a href="#">Biography</a>	UKIP Cymru UKIP Wales
Hefin David <a href="#">Bywgraffiad</a>   <a href="#">Biography</a>	Llafur Labour
John Griffiths <a href="#">Bywgraffiad</a>   <a href="#">Biography</a>	Llafur Labour
Llyr Gruffydd <a href="#">Bywgraffiad</a>   <a href="#">Biography</a>	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Darren Millar <a href="#">Bywgraffiad</a>   <a href="#">Biography</a>	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Julie Morgan <a href="#">Bywgraffiad</a>   <a href="#">Biography</a>	Llafur Labour
Lynne Neagle <a href="#">Bywgraffiad</a>   <a href="#">Biography</a>	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)

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

Hywel Dafydd	Rheolwr Materion Cyhoeddus a Pholisi, Comisiynydd Plant Cymru Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Children's Commissioner for Wales
Paul Glaze	Prif Weithredwr, Cyngor Cymreig y Gwasanaethau Ieuentid Chief Executive, Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Service
Jason Haeney	Prif Swyddog Ieuentid a Chymuned Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot Principal Youth and Community Officer, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Dr Sally Holland	Comisiynydd Plant Cymru Children's Commissioner for Wales
Barbara Howe	Rheolwr Gwasanaethau Ieuentid, Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Torfaen Youth Service Manager, Torfaen County Borough Council

Catrin James	Cydlynnydd Rhanbarthol, Cyngor Cymreig y Gwasanaethau Ieuenctid Gwirfoddol Regional Co-ordinator, Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Service
Sara Jermin	Pennaeth Perfformiad a Chyfathrebu, Comisiynydd Plant Cymru Head of Performance and Communications, Children's Commissioner for Wales
Dr Chris Llewelyn	Cyfarwyddwr, Dysgu Gydol Oes, Hamdden a'r Gymraeg, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director, Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Welsh Language, Welsh Local Government Association
Tim Opie	Swyddog Polisi Dysgu Gydol Oes (Ieuenctid), Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Lifelong Learning Policy Officer (Youth), Welsh Local Government Association
Keith Towler	Cadeirydd, Cyngor Cymreig y Gwasanaethau Ieuenctid Gwirfoddol Chair, Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Service

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

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Marc Wyn Jones	Clerc Clerk
Sian Thomas	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:31.  
The meeting began at 09:31.*

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

[1] **Lynne Neagle:** Good morning, everyone. Can I welcome everybody to this morning's meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Committee?

**Comisiynydd Plant Cymru: Adroddiad Blynyddol 2015–16**  
**The Children’s Commissioner for Wales: Annual Report 2015–16**

[2] **Lynne Neagle:** I’m very pleased to welcome back to our committee, Sally Holland, Children’s Commissioner for Wales; Hywel Dafydd, policy and public affairs manager; and Sara Jermin, head of performance and communications. Of course, we are here this morning to scrutinise the commissioner’s annual report, which was published yesterday. Would you like to make any opening remarks?

[3] **Dr Holland:** Just a few, thank you very much. Bore da, and thank you for the invitation to discuss my annual report and accounts with you. This report reflects my first year as Children’s Commissioner for Wales, because I started my post on 20 April last year, and it looks at the work of my office from last April up until the end of March this year. As you’ll be able to read in the report, I spent a lot of this year meeting and listening to thousands of children and young people in every corner of Wales and living in all sorts of circumstances. I’ve also listened to hundreds of parents and professionals about what I need to prioritise to ensure that my organisation is working efficiently and effectively so that we can deliver on the priorities that children and young people have helped me set out.

[4] The ‘Beth Nesa?/What Next?’ consultation was our biggest ever consultation, undertaken with children and young people by our office. Over 7,000 respondents highlighted that very many children and young people in Wales lead safe, happy and active lives and feel listened to and respected by the adults around them. However, there are large groups of children who miss out in a variety of ways, and so, as children’s commissioner, I have to be particularly concerned and interested in those barriers and bumps along the way that children encounter in their lives.

[5] I think, as children’s commissioner, my role in helping Wales to remove as many of those barriers as possible is to firstly identify those barriers and help others identify them. I consult with children and young people to help identify those barriers. I also identify those barriers through my casework and my large-scale participation work with children and young people. The second part of my role is to, where possible, come up with constructive, evidence-based changes required to remove those barriers for children and young people in Wales, and, again, working alongside children and young people wherever possible. The third element is where I need to press for legislative or policy changes where required, or for legislation and

guidance to be adhered to, because sometimes it's already there, but it's not being adhered to, in a consistent way, if it's already in place. Fourthly, I need to hold to account those who are responsible for delivering services to children and young people and upholding their rights and, where necessary, I will use my statutory powers to do so.

[6] Really, much of the work that my team and I have achieved in the last year is laid out in this report, and I'm really proud of the quality of the materials that we've produced for and with children and young people, including the My Planner app for care leavers, which has already been used thousands of times; the LGBT+ young people's media guide, which we developed with young people; our report on school journeys; and the results of our 'Beth Nesa?' consultation. I'm pleased to be able to report again this year that we've helped hundreds of children through our national independent advice and support service and that thousands of children have heard about children's rights, sometimes for the first time, through our participation work. The hard work of my policy and public affairs teams has led to several concrete changes in policy and legislation this year. I'm honoured to have had the opportunity to speak up for Wales's children in the National Assembly for Wales, at Westminster and twice at the United Nations in Geneva.

[7] But there's still a lot more to do. In February, I set out my strategic goals for the next three years, and this report is framed around those goals. I outline those in detail in this report, but they centre on what I would call the four Ps of children's rights. Those four Ps are: provision—what children require to live safe and happy lives; protection; participation; and promotion of their rights so that they know that they've got them. Every year, I will report my progress according to my strategic goals.

[8] Overall, I've got a vision for a Wales where all children and young people have an equal chance to be the best that they can be. I think, this year, we began in earnest to deliver on that vision, and we completed some significant evidence-based work, the highlights of which are included in this report. I'm really proud of the accomplishments of my staff, but I cannot underestimate the expectations that thousands of children and young people have shared with us this year—their concerns and ambitions. I want our work to achieve significant change.

[9] This year, in 2016, I established a renewed governance structure to help me make sure that I would achieve change as commissioner, to help

hold me to account. Part of that has been developing an advisory panel of children and young people, and we had our second day-long lively meeting on Saturday. One of the young people's panel's tasks is going to be to hold me and my team to account on the delivery of our work programme, and we started to work with them on that in our second meeting on Saturday. Next year, you'll hear directly from those children and young people—what they think of the work that I've done—and I'm looking forward to discussing with the Chair and others how I can give the young people's panel an opportunity to engage with this committee and other national institutions in the future. But today, of course, it's your role to scrutinise me on this work, and I look forward to your questions. Diolch yn fawr.

[10] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you for those opening remarks. We'll go straight into questions now then. If I can just start and ask you some questions about your approach to casework. You've highlighted the fact in your report that only 5 per cent of casework inquiries came from children and young people themselves, which is a slight drop. Why do you think that is? Can I also ask you, in previous years, we've had in the annual report a very helpful breakdown of what children were raising with your office, which I think we all found very beneficial, but that's not broken down in this year's report?

[11] **Dr Holland:** Okay. So, about the 5 per cent, I don't think that's a downward trend—it was 7 per cent for the last two years. I think statistically it's probably not a downward trend, but I will keep an eye on that. Personally, I think I would absolutely expect only a small minority of our first calls on a particular children's issue to come directly from the child or young person themselves. I would expect, very often, a parent, carer or professional to broker the first call in to our office. Very often, the cases that come to us are very complex—the children are facing very complex barriers in their lives. Actually, I think it's encouraging that they have adults around them to help broker that first call.

[12] But I do need to remind you that all of those over 500 cases involved an individual child, and, very often—wherever possible, in fact—my caseworkers will try to speak to the child directly as part of their engagement with the case. So, that 5 per cent represents who makes the first call in to the office—it doesn't represent how many children we would've spoken to as part of the engagement.

[13] We haven't broken down the types of cases this year, and I'm really happy to provide you with those data. I do have them, and I'll send them to

you in a note.

[14] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Can I just follow up on that by asking, of the 500 plus cases that you've dealt with, are you able to give us a flavour of how many of them you were actually active in pursuing, how many of them were referred on elsewhere, and whether some were just given information?

[15] **Dr Holland:** Absolutely, yes. Previously, we have reported cases as being either one-off or longer-term cases, you will remember, and I'm sure that's where your question comes from. Personally, I feel that's a slightly unhelpful dichotomy, to say that they're one-offs or cases, because we work much more on a continuum than that, really. So, what we've previously categorised as one-off cases have often involved several phone calls, including speaking to the child, consultation with our policy team, a written note back to the person who phoned in et cetera. Sometimes, it is just signposting, and it's all dealt with in a 20-minute call. And, of course, a proportion of our cases go on to be weeks and weeks of in-depth work. I can give you a bit more of a breakdown. Of the 520, 329 were resolved relatively quickly, in the ways that I've described, and 191 were taken on as longer term, more complex cases.

[16] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Okay, we'll move on now, then, to look at the wider impact of your work. Michelle.

[17] **Michelle Brown:** Thank you. Thanks for coming in. I wanted to ask you about the outcomes of your work in a practical context. Do you measure the outcomes, and which outcomes do you measure?

[18] **Dr Holland:** Thank you very much. Of course, it's an important question for me and my office. Are we still on casework here, or do you mean the work of the office more widely?

[19] **Michelle Brown:** Casework and the work of the office more widely—right across the piece.

[20] **Dr Holland:** Okay. So, to talk about casework first, we've brought in—during the time I've been here, this has been completed—a new case management system, which is allowing us to very clearly map the outcomes of our cases. So, we do that through a case management system and we follow up cases wherever possible. Obviously, if people have phoned up for a one-off piece of advice, it can be a bit heavy-handed to phone them up

again, but where we've been involved on a more long-term basis, we will do a follow-up and an evaluation with them about how helpful they found the service.

[21] In terms of our wider work, we've been working hard on putting a new project management system in place right across the organisation, which means that we've been working really hard on making sure that all of the work we do, whether it's policy-influencing work or project work around certain themes that we're trying to influence or gain data on, is put within our strategic goals. So, we're very clear right from the beginning now, using project initiation documents, for example, to think hard about what we want to achieve at the end of that piece of work and how it fits into our overall strategic plan. We then map that regularly, and that's monitored by our project team and by the management group, and we monitor the outcomes at the end. So, we're looking for clear outcomes, a clear change, in children's rights at the end of every piece of work that we do, and we monitor that. That's been put in place more firmly from April this year, so you'll have clear reports on that in next year's annual report.

[22] **Michelle Brown:** Is that a work in progress, then? My next question was going to be: what are your outcomes so far?

[23] **Dr Holland:** Absolutely. I'll answer both of those questions. I have, as part of my office restructure, which we may come on to discuss as well, put in place a new post of performance and communications, and Sara here has been appointed to that post—and I will see if she wants to add anything to my answer in a minute—and she's been helping me put that in place. We piloted this project management system through our residential care project this year, but we've put it in place right across the organisation since then. So, it is a work in progress, but it's now becoming quite an established piece of work within our office.

09:45

[24] In terms of outcomes this year, we've got outcomes from individual cases and we've got outcomes from the policy work. Do you want me to give you examples of both?

[25] **Michelle Brown:** Yes, please.

[26] **Dr Holland:** Okay. So, let me give you three different examples of

outcomes from casework and show you how individual cases might relate to wider policy changes et cetera in some ways. So, we turn first to—I don't know if you've got the report in front of you?

[27] **Michelle Brown:** I don't have a copy.

[28] **Ms Jermin:** I can give you my copy. Which page is this on?

[29] **Dr Holland:** Page 53, or 52 if you're reading in Welsh. There's a case there where we helped an individual child in a situation about which the Assembly will be scrutinising legislation this term—additional learning needs—and it was about co-ordination of professionals working together. We were able to achieve individual change for that child, but also it provides for us a clear case study, a critical case study, of how services don't always work together, and will feed into our thinking and views on the additional learning needs Bill.

[30] On page 35, or 34 if you're reading in Welsh, here's an example of one of the most complex cases we worked with. It was more than a year's work and that was a case of multiple abuse, where children and families didn't feel that they'd been heard enough through the process. So, again, we were able to achieve change for the children and families who came to us, in that they felt listened to, they felt valued and they felt that their experiences were being validated, really, by our office, or through our office by the organisation that should have been validating them. We actually were able to hold a learning event under the child practice review system and get the relevant safeguarding board to change its framework and protocol for managing cases of multiple abuse. So, that's an example of how it might just be one call into the office one day that led to a year's complex work and actually some longer-term changes, hopefully, that will affect other families and children as well.

[31] One last case, on page 37—there are more than this in the report, but I'll restrict myself to three. Page 36 in Welsh. It's the second case there, the home-school transport one. Again, we were able to achieve change to the chaperones policy, which affected the individual family who contacted us, but it actually changed the policy for that local authority on chaperones on primary school transport. So, that's an example of how our casework would lead to policy changes. But another important way that we try and influence change is through our policy-influencing work. So, just to give you—

[32] **Hefin David:** Can I ask a question before you move on?

[33] **Dr Holland:** Is this too long an answer? Would you like me to—?

[34] **Lynne Neagle:** Can you just maybe give us a couple of brief examples of what outcomes you've delivered from the policy work? Then I'll bring Hefin in.

[35] **Dr Holland:** Very brief, yes. We worked with the English commissioner to significantly change draft guidance on privacy in the youth courts. We significantly changed some of the guidance and codes of practice on advocacy and we got, through my round table on child sexual exploitation, we got the Government to produce a national action plan. Was that brief enough? Hopefully not too brief.

[36] **Lynne Neagle:** Hefin, on the case there.

[37] **Hefin David:** I don't want to hold you back from moving on, but I just wanted to interrogate the outcomes question before you moved on to that. The example you gave on page 53—you gave two other examples, but on page 53 there's a recommendation that comes out of that, which is that

[38] 'the Welsh Government should introduce new legislation and a robust Code of Practice'.

[39] Can I just ask: why does that need legislation? Isn't it just a better structuring and a stronger code of practice? Why is legislation required there?

[40] **Dr Holland:** In the case of that one child, the current good practice wasn't being adhered to, so you're quite right in that case. That recommendation relates to all of our thoughts on additional learning needs, not just to that one case, so it's not just a recommendation for that one case. And our recommendation after years of supporting hundreds of cases related to additional learning needs is that the system needs to change, and we need more robust legislation, which, of course, the Government accepts and it will be introducing that legislation.

[41] **Hefin David:** And what would that be? What would those legislative changes be?

[42] **Dr Holland:** It would be what I hope will be a strengthened additional

learning needs Bill this autumn, which would be a simpler system for having your learning needs addressed. It would be—. I've got a list here—

[43] **Lynne Neagle:** We're going to come on to ALN, if that's okay.

[44] **Dr Holland:** Do you want me to come back to it later?

[45] **Lynne Neagle:** We'll come back to that. Okay—

[46] **Dr Holland:** I just wondered whether it would be possible to give Sara a chance to explain a bit more about our performance and how we're measuring it, because that was specifically what Michelle was asking about. Is that all right?

[47] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes. Sara.

[48] **Ms Jermin:** Just an opening remark, really, I think it's important to remember that, as an institution, we don't deliver a service. So, often, it's not within our gift to deliver tangible positive changes to children's lives—that obviously rests with Government and local authorities—but clearly there's a role for our institution to hold those to account to make sure that they do deliver on those positive changes for children and young people. I think it's important to remember that.

[49] In terms of our strengthened governance structure, obviously as an institution that receives public money, we want to make sure that we deliver our work and have impact from every piece of work that we undertake. And the strengthened governance structure that we have put in place since April will measure the effectiveness across the organisation, so we're not just looking at our work in relation to policy.

[50] There will be a new system in place that will become a public document—so you'll be able to look at that when you come to scrutinise the annual report next year—which will look at four elements of our organisation. That includes the financial performance of the organisation, how we invest in our people, how we engage effectively with children and young people, and our processes as well. Sally has touched on the project management process and how we deliver on that. So, hopefully, that suite of information that will be made public will give you a flavour of how we perform across the organisation and the impact that we have across the organisation, not just with policy. I'm conscious of the time.

[51] **Lynne Neagle:** Will that then include a breakdown of every area in which you've actually secured change from Welsh Government, which is obviously our main concern as a committee?

[52] **Ms Jermin:** Absolutely.

[53] **Lynne Neagle:** So, you'll be breaking that down, so the instance that Sally gave about a change in the code, that will all be in there.

[54] **Ms Jermin:** Absolutely, yes. So, we'll be explicit in terms of our influencing work and what changes have resulted from that influencing work, and be explicit with that information through the balance scorecard that we're developing.

[55] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Darren.

[56] **Darren Millar:** Thank you, Chair. Can I just say, 'thank you' to you, commissioner, and your staff for the support that you've given me with my casework in recent years? It's been very helpful indeed in helping to resolve some local cases.

[57] I want to turn to the financial aspects of the report, if I can. You've alluded to the fact that you had a restructure earlier in the year, and that that's had an impact, really, on your work and, indeed, on your finances. I can see that there's been an impact: a big reduction in your balances in the year, and that you've obviously spent quite a bit more over the 12-month period. Is that one-off expenditure or can we expect to see that repeated in the future?

[58] **Dr Holland:** So, it is one-off and you're right in all you said that there's been a restructure and a reduction in the balance. A lot of those costs are the inevitable costs that come from a restructure, in terms of paying people the redundancy payments that are their due and to which they are entitled. There were also some additional costs—. It was very important to me that I started off with a very clear evidence base, so there were some additional costs in relation to delivering our large-scale consultation. And a third main area of spend in relation to those costs was our new activity information service, which is an intelligent IT system that is helping us to do the sort of work that Sara was describing—to join up and safely share, as an organisation, all of the work that we do, and assess and analyse it. So, that

was a one-off investment that was agreed before I started, but which I wholeheartedly support.

[59] Just briefly on the restructure, if that's okay. As a former Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, you'll be aware that the Public Accounts Committee itself recommended that an incoming commissioner might want to look at the structure of the organisation and see how it would work. Of course, the independent Shooter review also made that recommendation. As part of my first year, as you all know by now, I held this widespread consultation, which helped me to come up with my three-year plan, and then I had to think hard, bearing in mind those recommendations from the pack and from the Shooter review, what kind of structure would help me deliver that plan. I did take some quite difficult decisions to make some changes to the organisation, the staff structure and the office structure. I must emphasise that all decisions were made in clear consultation with my audit and risk assurance committee, who I worked with right along the way, to make sure, to sense-check and to seek their views in terms of both audit and risk assurance of the decisions that I was making. I was also able to consult with the auditor general's office along the way, in terms of things like restructured payments. Clearly, there are costs involved in a restructure, but I do believe that I have now in place a leaner organisation, where I really think I've been able to put the maximum resources into delivering my remit.

[60] **Darren Millar:** One of the decisions you took as part of the restructure, of course, was to bail out, if you like, of the Colwyn Bay office in north Wales. Can you tell us a little bit about the rationale behind that and what impact that's having on people being able to access your services in north Wales?

[61] **Dr Holland:** That's an important question and, obviously, one very relevant to yourself because it's within your constituency. A very difficult decision to make—one that was really waiting for me as new commissioner because the lease was due to end this August. So, a decision had to be made about whether to seek to renew it, to move the office elsewhere, or to concentrate in one office in Swansea. As a management team, we did a very careful analysis of the risks and benefits of six different options, which included moving it elsewhere, keeping it where it was, sharing with another office, home working, or moving all of our work to one base, but from which we would continue to deliver an all-Wales service.

[62] Finance has played a big part in this. I will save £300,000 over the course of my term from the office costs alone. However, it wasn't the only

thing behind it. I think there's something about the synergy and creativity that comes from having my team all in one place, rather than having a small number of staff elsewhere who need support and supervision, of course, that's already been apparent since I've got all my staff together.

[63] I was most concerned—and this is obviously behind your question—that any decision to close that office would not lead to any detriment to our ability to deliver an all-Wales service. I was confident that it wouldn't when I looked at where our delivery was coming from, and much of our all-Wales delivery was being delivered from our south Wales office already, because I only had a very small team in north Wales, of whom two out of the three and a half were information and advice workers who worked on a rota basis all around Wales, with their two colleagues in south Wales. What I've done, as a safeguard to make sure, is that I'm carefully auditing our all-Wales delivery. So, we've been keeping a careful note of—. Since 1 April, we've been measuring the demographics of all of our engagement work, and the demographics include where children live. I can confidently say, having looked at the first six months of figures, that there's been no detriment to our engagement with children and young people. In fact, I checked the figures this morning, and we've engaged with over 700 children and young people since 1 August—

[64] **Ms Jermin:** Yes, since the closure of the north Wales office.

10:00

[65] **Dr Holland:** —since the closure of the north Wales office on 1 August—of whom the majority were in north Wales, in fact, because we had a couple of big events up there.

[66] **Darren Millar:** Okay. Just one final question on these, if I can, Chair? There's one particular line that looks a bit odd in the accounts in relation to depreciation or some sort of write off. There's a big jump in the costs from £24,000 last year to £110,000 this year. What's the reason behind that?

[67] **Dr Holland:** Can you give me the page?

[68] **Darren Millar:** Sorry, it's page 153. So, 'other administration costs' at the top of the page, and then if you go down to the bottom, you've got a figure of £89,000 for 2015–16. It's point 4.3, yes?

[69] **Dr Holland:** Yes, so it's two up, to £89,000, from the bottom, isn't it, as a provision? Yes, unfortunately, the title of 4.3 isn't translated—but it's not ready money, is it, it's provision? That's a direct translation. It's provision. That £89,000 is a provision that was made in this year's budget in relation to ongoing discussions that I was having with a member of staff in relation to the restructure, and I knew it wouldn't be completed before 31 March, so I had to make that provision.

[70] **Darren Millar:** So, that's the potential liability in respect of one member of staff.

[71] **Dr Holland:** Yes. It was a provision made—

[72] **Darren Millar:** It's quite a large sum.

[73] **Dr Holland:** —which was checked and approved by the auditor general and advised—*[Interruption.]*

[74] **Lynne Neagle:** Don't interrupt, please.

[75] **Dr Holland:** That's how we were advised to account for it.

[76] **Darren Millar:** Okay.

[77] **Lynne Neagle:** I'll bring you in in a sec.

[78] **Mohammad Asghar:** Same point, Chair.

[79] **Lynne Neagle:** Go on, then.

[80] **Mohammad Asghar:** Four point three actually hasn't been translated into English—that's what was said. The same point is what it actually means. It's not in English there.

[81] **Darren Millar:** It would have been helpful, perhaps, just to have a further note in the accounts just to—

[82] **Ms Jermin:** To explain that.

[83] **Dr Holland:** I think that's a very fair point.

[84] **Darren Millar:** I had assumed it was depreciation.

[85] **Dr Holland:** I have to be careful about confidentiality of individuals, but I think that's a very fair point.

[86] **Darren Millar:** I understand that.

[87] **Ms Jermin:** We can provide a further note on that if required.

[88] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. That would be helpful, if you could.

[89] **Darren Millar:** Can I just ask one final question? You mentioned that you were breaking down by demographics and location where the children are that you're supporting. Is that going to be a feature in the report, picking up on the Chair's comments at the start?

[90] **Dr Holland:** Yes.

[91] **Darren Millar:** Okay. Thanks.

[92] **Dr Holland:** And I can provide those figures at any time for you from our whizzy new system. So, if you want any at mid-year, for example, I can give them to you.

[93] **Darren Millar:** Thank you.

[94] **Lynne Neagle:** You referred, commissioner, in your answer earlier to the independent review. Are you able to update us on any discussions you've had with the new children's Minister about the review? As you know, there was a very clear recommendation that responsibility for your appointment, et cetera, should be transferred to the Assembly. The previous Minister ruled that out. Are you able to update us on any discussions you've had with the new Minister?

[95] **Dr Holland:** Yes. I actually wrote myself a note on it—I'm just looking for it. Okay. Yes, some of you will be aware, I've discussed with the committee—the previous committee, sorry—my response to the Shooter review and what I've done within my office, but the Chair's referring to the recommendation for Government that accountability for my role is transferred to the National Assembly from Government, which was also clearly one of the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee

on the Rights of the Child report. So, therefore, it's one that I endorse. I've actually had discussions with the children's Minister about this and, indeed, with the First Minister this week. My understanding is that there are no plans to change the accountability at the moment. For me, it's important because it's part of the framework of responsibility for children's rights through the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child—part of the overall framework of how we implement children's rights, not so much as an individual issue, but how we perceive the role of the commissioner overall as part of the framework of children's rights. But, my update is that I believe there are no plans to change.

[96] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you very much. We're going to move on now to some questions on aspects of policy. I've got Hefin on child and adolescent mental health services.

[97] **Hefin David:** That was related to what we were talking about before. The questions I had were based on two of your four Ps: provision and poverty. Provision—picking up on the CAMHS issue—on page 51, it says,

[98] 'I particularly welcome the new ambitious waiting list targets for CAMHS from April 2016. However, it is clear that the targets will not be met in 2016-17.'

[99] To what extent is that a fact of too ambitious targets, or not having the provision and resources to achieve that?

[100] **Dr Holland:** Okay. It is a really ambitious target. It's the most ambitious one in the UK. I believe that the team setting the targets, the team leading the Together for Children and Young People programme, considered whether to set less ambitious targets—that's how they reported it to me—but they felt it was important to aim high. This is how they feel children should be being seen: within 48 hours if it's an emergency, within 28 days for routine treatment. It's a bit longer for children with—for neuro-developmental diagnoses.

[101] What's happened since then—it's really quite an inconsistent picture, I would say, across Wales. So, some areas have managed to reduce waiting lists substantially, and some have not. I don't know if you'd like me to give you some examples of some of those inconsistencies.

[102] **Hefin David:** Yes.

[103] **Dr Holland:** So, Powys is a bit of a one-off. It's been very low and it remains almost negligible in terms of waiting lists. Obviously, the population level is lower in Powys. Cardiff and Vale University Local Health Board has gone down a little this year compared to last year, from 624 children waiting for treatment—or to be seen, rather, on the waiting list—down to 585. So, it's gone down a little. Betsi Cadwaladr has achieved a dramatic decrease this year. When I say 'this year', I'm talking about comparing the figures this July, which are the latest ones that are available, to last July. They've gone down from 550 a year ago to 82 this year. So, that's the most dramatic decrease we've seen across Wales. Abertawe Bro Morgannwg has seen an increase, up to 630 children waiting to be seen by CAMHS services, 219 of whom are waiting over 14 weeks. So, we're seeing a real inconsistency in progress across Wales, and, for some, there are clearly still, for many, highly unacceptable levels of waiting lists. This is, of course, one part of the mental health system, but a very important part of it. The figures are incomparable to adult mental health services, where the numbers waiting are much, much lower in each local health board. So, there's been inconsistent progress. I know a lot of effort is going into trying to deal with recruiting enough staff and finding different ways to manage waiting lists, but the progress has been slow in some areas, and inconsistent across Wales.

[104] **Hefin David:** Where there have been successes, have you taken the reasoning for that and recommended it to other areas?

[105] **Dr Holland:** I think that would be—. I'm sure that the Together for Children and Young People programme is trying to do that, and to look at the different progress, and I think that's an important thing to do. Local areas have come up with their own different ways to try to manage the waiting lists. There's certainly been an attempt throughout Wales to recruit more staff with the new funding, and I think the ability to do that has differed across Wales, but a shortage of staff, I believe, has held back some of the ambitions of some local health boards.

[106] **Lynne Neagle:** You've been very clear that the waiting times are—you've just said it again now—unacceptably high. When we had the Minister in recently, he wasn't able to give any firm commitments as to when we expect to meet those targets. Can you just tell us what you're doing to make Government actually deliver on this? Because this is such a long-running problem. So maybe we could just focus on what you are doing to ensure that Government does actually do that.

[107] **Dr Holland:** Well, over the last year, I've brought up the issue very clearly with the First Minister and with the then health Minister. I haven't had the opportunity to meet the new health Minister, but it's on my calendar and I will be doing so soon. I'll be making the point very strongly. I'll be meeting as part of the expert advisory group of the Together for Children and Young People programme in December, and again we'll be asking why this is happening and what are the plans are for change, and whether we can expect any change in the near future. I think my role is to bring it to people's attention at the highest level I can, but it's the role of Government to deliver the change.

[108] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you. Llyr.

[109] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Diolch yn fawr. **Llyr Gruffydd:** Thank you very much. I Rwy'n nodi yn yr adroddiad bod yna faes arall lle nad ych chi'n hapus gyda'r lefel o weithredu gan y Llywodraeth sef o gwmpas pobl sydd yn dewis addysgu eu plant adref. Rych chi'n argymhell y dylai'r Llywodraeth gryfhau'r gofynion i rieni gofrestru er mwyn addysgu eu plant gartref. Beth ych chi'n meddwl yw'r oblygiadau o beidio â chryfhau'r disgwyliadau presennol? **Llyr Gruffydd:** I note in the report that there is another area where you're not happy with the level of action from the Government, namely people who elect to home-educate their children. You recommend that the Government should strengthen the registration requirements for home education. What do you think are the implications of not strengthening the current expectations?

[110] **Dr Holland:** As some of you will be aware, this is an issue I've spoken out about many times over the last year, and it's an issue I feel really strongly about. I feel quite strongly that we're not giving children who are home educated enough access to their rights at the moment: their rights to an education, their rights to be listened to in terms of saying their views about their education—children in schools have a statutory right to have their say through school councils, children living at home do not—and, in some cases—a minority of cases, I think, in terms of home-educated children—their rights to protection as well.

[111] My concern, if nothing is done, is that there are more children under the radar than the one sad case that we've heard about most recently, Dylan Seabridge. I am told by directors of education and people working on the front line in the health services, for example, that they believe there are

children living in their area who are not accessing any services, so not education or health services. I think that's really quite unacceptable for children in Wales who are entitled to their rights to be healthy and safe and to have an education.

[112] At the moment, the indication from Government is that they'll be publishing non-statutory guidance. My office has clearly—I, through my office, have clearly—indicated that I don't think that's going to be strong enough, that we need statutory guidance. Children who are educated at home and their parents also need, I think, a right to support from local authorities, and, if we know about them, then we will know that the local authority will be able to give them support, as they're expected to do now, but they can't do it for those they don't know about. So, what I'm calling for, which I think is not a big ask of parents, is that they should inform their local authority that they're educating their children at home. They should be required to do that. They can elect to do that at the moment, and many do and many engage very positively with their local authority, but they're not required to do that, and I don't think that's a big ask of parents. They're still allowed to pursue the educational programme they wish for their children. I'm not suggesting that that be changed. And I think it should be a requirement that the child should be seen by somebody from outside the family—an educational professional visiting from time to time—to be asked about their education experience and how they feel about it, because they have that say, they have that right, independently of their parents.

[113] So, that's what I'm calling for. If the Government does go ahead and only publishes non-statutory guidance, I will express my disappointment, because I don't think that will be enough. I've talked to both the children's Minister and the First Minister about this and asked for stronger statutory guidance requiring parents to register the fact that they're home educating their children and I will with the education Minister when I have the opportunity to meet her shortly.

[114] **Lynne Neagle:** Can I just ask in relation to that—you referred in your opening remarks to your statutory powers, can you give us a—? Would this be an area that you would consider using those statutory powers in?

[115] **Dr Holland:** Yes.

[116] **Lynne Neagle:** And that would—. Can you just explain how that would actually deliver change, then?

[117] **Dr Holland:** If I was to produce a report through my statutory powers, for example, they're not strong enough for me to force change, but the Government would be required to explain what they're doing about it and how what they're doing fulfils the children's rights Measure, which in my view it does not at the moment.

10:15

[118] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you. Hefin on ALN.

[119] **Hefin David:** Yes. I'm just going back to the question I asked earlier regarding, specifically, the need for legislation to introduce statutory duties on LHBs and NHS trusts to provide support for additional learning needs and for that issue of the case example you had there, but you said there were more examples.

[120] **Dr Holland:** Yes. I think we say in the report we've had 51 cases relating to additional learning needs over the last year. My office has been very actively engaged in both responding to the draft Bill and the draft code of practice and helping develop the draft code of practice with Welsh Government, because my office has a lot of expertise in this area.

[121] There are four key issues that my office is consistently calling for that I hope to see in a strengthened ALN Bill when it comes in in the autumn. The first one is that I think that people who are exercising functions under this Act—so, the people delivering the services—should have a duty to pay due regard to the UNCRC, as we have in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and the United Nations convention on the rights of disabled persons, because, of course, it covers two sets of rights. So, that's something that I think would really strengthen the Bill.

[122] The second area of concern, really, is about how much health boards and NHS trusts are required to get involved in providing services for these children who have additional need. So, I'm calling for statutory duties upon local health boards and NHS trusts. I think this was mirrored by the previous committee's report as well. In the first draft Bill that we saw, that was pretty weak, and I'd like to see that strengthened in the Bill when it comes in in the autumn.

[123] The third thing we've called for has been strengthened compliance,

sanction and enforcement powers given to the educational tribunal for Wales. We think it needs more teeth.

[124] The next thing is—sorry, there are five, not four. The fourth one is for resources for additional learning needs to be ring-fenced, distributed properly, and for there to be enough money, actually, for it to be properly funded, because there will be extended entitlement if the Bill looks—as it did in the draft—at covering a wider age range.

[125] We've called for advocacy entitlement under the Bill to complement those laid down by the social services and well-being Act to avoid any potential disparity of provision for different groups of children and young people.

[126] So, we've made these clear calls in our work with the Government so far. We've engaged closely with the Government to try and ensure that when the code of practice and Bill come forward for scrutiny, they will be stronger. But, of course, we will again give it our robust, independent scrutiny.

[127] **Hefin David:** Okay. Is it for a Bill to ring-fence resources?

[128] **Dr Holland:** I think that would be the policy associated with—. Would that be right?

[129] **Mr Dafydd:** Yes.

[130] **Hefin David:** Okay, that's fine. You also mentioned earlier a simplified system for addressing learning needs.

[131] **Dr Holland:** Yes, that was already in the draft Bill and we welcomed that.

[132] **Hefin David:** Okay.

[133] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Oscar on this.

[134] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you, Sally, for this report. The fact is, you know, in certain schools in the Newport area, they speak more than 20 languages in primary schools. What measures are you taking to ensure the increased engagement from children and young people in the democratic process? For example, how are you mobilising your

team to ensure that they're responding to casework issues? And, finally, what is the strategic plan for the next year on identifying the priorities for outreach in your department, especially those areas with ethnic minorities, or Gypsy/ Travellers—children from various backgrounds—how are you going to handle that?

[135] **Lynne Neagle:** Could we maybe have a note on that, because I'm keen that we focus on ALN at the moment? I'm sure there are ALN issues related to what Oscar's just raised.

[136] **Dr Holland:** I've got lots I could say about all of that, but if you'd prefer me to put it in a note I can do that, Chair.

[137] **Mohammad Asghar:** That's all right.

[138] **Lynne Neagle:** Would that be okay?

[139] **Ms Jermin:** All our work is equality-impact assessed, which would address those very issues so we're happy to share that information with you.

[140] **Lynne Neagle:** Lovely, thank you.

[141] **Dr Holland:** We've plenty to say about all of that.

[142] **Lynne Neagle:** We've got to get through these policy areas. Just one—

[143] **Dr Holland:** Sorry—just to say I'd be very happy to meet with the Member outside of the committee if you would like to talk about it more informally.

[144] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Just one final point on the ALN Bill. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and Diabetes UK have called for a statutory duty to be included in the Bill for schools to deliver to children with medical needs—things like diabetes, epilepsy et cetera. The Government's current position is that that should be done by voluntary guidance. What's your view? Do you think that should be included in the legislation?

[145] **Dr Holland:** It sounds fairly sensible, but I think I'd like to have a look at their call before I respond to it in detail. I've heard about this call but I haven't read about it in detail, so I don't want to state something without

looking at the evidence carefully. I'm sure they'd be happy to provide me with that evidence, and then I'd be happy to look at that in terms of our response to the Bill.

[146] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you; that's very helpful. John.

[147] **John Griffiths:** Thanks, Chair. On child poverty, you rightly point out that, in Wales, it's the highest in the UK, and obviously it's an absolute priority to deal with the issues. You've talked about Flying Start and Families First failing to make an impact on overall child poverty. Is that a valid statement to make? Because it's very difficult to prove cause and effect, isn't it, and many other factors affect child poverty in Wales. So, could you justify that statement?

[148] **Dr Holland:** You're absolutely right—it's very hard to prove cause and effect, and it's been a very difficult issue to tackle in Wales. I suppose the main evidence for saying that would be the difficulty in reducing the overall rate of child poverty. Of course, we don't know if they would have gone up even higher without it, so I do take your point. I think when we talk about Flying Start in particular, one of my concerns is the significant proportion of children living in poverty who aren't able to access Flying Start because they don't live in Flying Start areas. We know that that's a large number of children living in poverty. I think the Government has to get a balance between geographically targeted programmes, which do have a strong evidence base in terms of take-up and non-stigmatisation, but also providing individual access to such programmes for those living in smaller pockets of poverty or in isolation in otherwise wealthier areas. So, I think that's one of my main concerns about the delivery of Flying Start—not so much the model of the programme itself, but its reach.

[149] **John Griffiths:** Scale and reach. Okay. You mentioned the UK Government, and obviously a lot of the levers—tax and welfare—are within the remit of UK Government, although things are set, perhaps, to change a little. You're clear, though, when you say Welsh Government and local government have levers and you'd like Welsh Government to have a child poverty delivery plan with targets and milestones. Would those targets and milestones relate to the sorts of issues you've raised around in-work poverty, for example? So, you know, things around low wages, childcare, housing and heating costs—would that be the subject matter of the milestones and the targets?

[150] **Dr Holland:** That would be part of the levers but also the targets. What I would like to see is an overall Welsh Government programme for children and young people built on a framework around the concluding observations of the UNCRC, of which the first priority they gave was to child poverty. So, any children and young people's programme by Welsh Government would have to have clear targets for poverty. I'd really like to know exactly what the expectations are of all the effort that's going in, and there is a lot of effort going in to tackle child poverty. What is it, eventually, and what are they looking to achieve? I think it's important that children see that, and the whole programme of Government efforts in terms of children.

[151] In terms of levers, I think the Joseph Rowntree Foundation have done a very useful—. As you know, they've done years of work on this, and they've recently published a really authoritative strategy, really, for UK Government and devolved Governments on what they think are the most evidence-based strategies for reducing poverty. Out of the five key things they say that should be done, two of them are really in the hands of the UK Government and, obviously, tax and benefits are key parts of those. But the other three are actually within the responsibilities of Welsh Government—three out of the five. They are: improving education standards and raising skills, strengthening families and communities, and promoting long-term economic growth benefiting everyone. I think that they are about preventing poverty, but another key role of the Welsh Government is to mitigate the impact of poverty. You quite rightly mentioned what some of those are. It might be help with decent housing, fuel costs and childcare provision. I do welcome the new childcare plans in that I think they'll really help the majority of children living in poverty who have working parents, who often really struggle to pay for childcare. I do have some concerns about the fact that it's not a universal offer, and that children of non-working parents may lose out, especially those who are not in Flying Start areas, and be left even further behind at school-starting age than they are already.

[152] **John Griffiths:** Just very briefly, Chair, on local government—

[153] **Lynne Neagle:** Very briefly.

[154] **John Griffiths:** There's a leadership role for Welsh Government. You're clear about that—the Welsh Government needs to have this strategy—but do you work directly with local authorities in terms of the levers that they have? We know that there's a lot of variability in local authority performance and, obviously, we need to lift up those that are relatively poor performing.

[155] **Dr Holland:** Do I work with them, did you say, sorry?

[156] **John Griffiths:** Directly. Do you work directly with the local authorities?

[157] **Dr Holland:** Yes, absolutely I do. I've engaged several times over the last year with the WLGA and their children's leads committee, for example. One example of where I see some really direct experience of poverty is amongst young people who are leaving care. I talked, I think, just two weeks ago in this committee about the kind of income that some of them have and how they're trying to live, so I won't repeat that now. I plan, over the next year, to engage directly and physically. So, to visit every local authority to ask the most senior people in that authority how they will be helping those young people succeed in their ambitions in life, including not living a life of poverty. I think it's important for me to do that, because there are levers that local government have as well as national government. I should be scrutinising both levels of government.

[158] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Michelle, on protection.

[159] **Michelle Brown:** Sally very kindly already covered—

[160] **Lynne Neagle:** So you're okay. Okay, then. Julie.

[161] **Julie Morgan:** On participation?

[162] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes.

[163] **Julie Morgan:** In your report, you recommend that there should be a youth assembly. What plans do you have to influence that process, and how do you see it happening?

[164] **Dr Holland:** As I say in the report, the National Assembly has no legal obligation to respond to my recommendations, but I've said that it's something that I wish to see. The Welsh Government have made it clear that they would see a youth assembly being something that would be situated within the National Assembly rather than commissioned directly, or set up directly by the Welsh Government. I think that's correct. I think the legislature is where a youth parliament should be. I'm very keen for us to have one in Wales. Children, at the moment, are often well enabled to participate at a local level but then have nowhere to take those national

issues that often frustrate them or interest them, whether it's student grants, housing or education curriculum issues, for example. So, I think there is a real demand from children for influence and debate on national issues, which a national space would give them. I've engaged with groups of young people who are campaigning directly for this, and listened to them and discussed with them about different potential models of a youth assembly, and supported them in going forward. I do think it's important that this is a young-person-led campaign. So, I've supported them to go forward with that. I have held discussions with the new Presiding Officer over the summer, which were very constructive, about the youth parliament. I would like to see—. She's very interested in what models young people themselves bring forward. I believe that they're doing so this month to her and to the Welsh Assembly.

10:30

[165] I believe that their favoured model is one similar to the Scottish Youth Parliament, which I've seen in action and I think is an excellent model. I hope we will have one over the next year. I plan to follow up my discussions with the Presiding Officer and really offer any support I can, but I do feel encouraged, really, that young people are actively involved in this and I don't want to interfere too much with the suggestions that have been put forward.

[166] **Julie Morgan:** Absolutely. I accept that this is much more powerful if it comes directly from young people, but do you feel that young people have got the resources and the backing to do this?

[167] **Dr Holland:** I think it's been difficult for some of the young people that have been involved in campaigning, because many of them are very active in all sorts of things, and have had exams, or have gone off to college, and that kind of thing. But they've done a tremendous job. There's an active campaign group working on this, and they have received some support from adults—the children's rights observatory in Swansea University have provided support to them. I've been engaging with children to discuss this issue over the last year on many occasions. In fact, I'm going straight from this session to a young people in citizenship and politics event just over the Roald Dahl Plass. Again, I will ask young people what they think about the idea. So, wherever I can, I'm asking young people, 'What would it look like for you?' and 'Do you think it's a good idea?'

[168] **Julie Morgan:** I believe this is one of the recommendations of the

UNCRC.

[169] **Dr Holland:** It is. It's a clear recommendation. They did express disappointment that Funky Dragon had gone, and recommended that all of the devolved nations that didn't have a parliament—which was ourselves and Northern Ireland—should reinstate one, or instate one for the first time.

[170] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Final question from Llyr.

[171] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Just following on, really, on young people's participation. Brexit is the defining issue of the moment, if not of our generation, and clearly there'll be impacts, and concerns about potential impacts, on finance and policy et cetera. Do you believe that the voice of young people is sufficiently being heard within these deliberations around Brexit? I noted the First Minister established an advisory panel. I'm not sure that actually there was a young person, or a young people's voice, sat around that table. I don't know whether you have a view.

[172] **Dr Holland:** I think that it's very important that young people's voices are heard directly in relation to Brexit and also that the impact of a Wales post Brexit on children and young people is a really central part of the analysis and the negotiations of Government. I think you're right. I don't think there is a young person's voice on that committee, and I think it would be a good idea to have that.

[173] **Mr Dafydd:** And we'll be meeting with the chair of the panel to have that discussion soon.

[174] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Good.

[175] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you very much. That concludes our session. On behalf of the committee, can I thank the children's commissioner and her team for attending today? We do have a few questions that we didn't come to, so if it's okay we will write to you with those, and we'll have the note on the accounts as well. Thank you very much for attending. As you know, you'll get a transcript of the meeting for you to check for accuracy.

[176] The committee will now break until 10:40, which is quite a short break. Thank you.

[177] **Dr Holland:** Thank you very much. Diolch.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10:34 a 10:43.  
The meeting adjourned between 10:34 and 10:43.*

**Ymchwiliad i Waith Ieuenctid: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 1—Cyngor Cymreig y  
Gwasanaethau Ieuenctid Gwirfoddol  
Inquiry into Youth Work: Evidence Session 1—Council for Wales of  
Voluntary Youth Services**

[178] **Lynne Neagle:** Can I welcome Members back for item 3, which is our first formal evidence session for our inquiry on youth work? I'm delighted that we've been joined by the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services, CWVYS. I'd like to welcome Keith Towler, the chair, Catrin James, regional co-ordinator, and Paul Glaze, chief executive. Thank you very much for joining us this morning. Before we go into questions, can I just ask if there are any declarations of interest, please? Llyr.

[179] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Mae angen i fi **Llyr Gruffydd:** I need to declare an ddatgan buddiant fel un o lywyddion interest as I am an honorary anrhydeddus Cyngor Cymreig y president of the Council for Wales of Gwasanaethau Ieuenctid Gwirfoddol. Voluntary Youth Services

[180] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. No other declarations of interest, then. If witnesses are happy, we'll go straight into questions, if that's okay. John.

[181] **John Griffiths:** I wanted to ask, Chair, about the mapping of youth services, really. To what extent are we in a position to know what's out there, who's doing what, whether there's duplication, whether there are gaps? Obviously, there's always variability between one local authority area and another, and I just wondered, across Wales, really, if we can be confident that it is possible to know who's doing what and, as I said, whether there might be duplication or gaps.

10:45

[182] **Mr Glaze:** I'm happy to take that one. In terms of CWVYS as the representative body for the voluntary youth work sector, we've got 90 members currently—we're always looking for more—and they're split 50:50 between large national organisations and smaller local groups, too. So, we have a handle on the work that they're doing, where they're located and how

they work collaboratively with local authorities, for example. Beyond that, we know there's around about 500 other groups that we know of who are working specifically with young people across the board.

[183] It does vary across local authority areas, you're right. But in terms of mapping per se, it's a kind of holy grail for us, I suppose, from the voluntary sector's perspective, because we know that the sector comprises of around 0.25 million young people. There are about 30,000 volunteers and about 3,000 paid staff. But the exact figures in evidence we just don't have, and that's something that we've always really needed and wanted to do. We haven't got the capacity or the resources, actually, to finalise those figures. We do rely heavily on the Wales Council for Voluntary Action's almanac that they issue every year, and that throws up some interesting statistics in terms of the number of groups that are out there working with children and young people, particularly within the age groups that we represent—the under 25-year-olds.

[184] Some mapping is done in relation to specific Welsh Government projects, for example youth engagement and progression framework. We wrote a report a year or so ago on that, from the voluntary sector's perspective, and as a result of that Welsh Government commissioned Cordis Bright to do some work on mapping of the local voluntary service sector to work with local authorities. That was issued in March or April of this year, and we've yet to see the result of that. So, we'll be interested to see that to see whether it matches our understanding of how the sector works. Does that give some indication?

[185] **John Griffiths:** Yes. So, I think what you're saying, really, is that some mapping work goes on but it's difficult, really, to be able to say with any certainty, in any local authority area, exactly who's doing what.

[186] **Mr Glaze:** It is, but I'll also say, of course, that local authorities are required to submit to audit in terms of the work that they do for the money that they receive directly from Welsh Government. As the voluntary sector, we don't have that expectation or that resource, really, in terms of being able to quantify specifically per local authority area.

[187] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Darren on this.

[188] **Darren Millar:** Would it be helpful if there was a requirement for local authorities to map what's going on in their area, even if it's provision that

they're not making themselves?

[189] **Mr Glaze:** Yes.

[190] **Darren Millar:** Okay.

[191] **Mr Towler:** Can I come in on that? I think the answer to that is 'yes', and I think one of the things that would be a useful parallel is what happened in the play work field around sufficiency of—. So, if we had 22 sets of looking at your youth population, looking at their express needs, seeing what young people are saying themselves, and then trying to map that against what provision exists, I think that would be a really helpful thing to do. What I don't think the local authorities would be able to do is actually, with some confidence, know what exactly was going on in their area unless they start talking to local and voluntary youth work providers. That could be a real vehicle for beginning to map out what exists in local areas. The other point of that is that it provides a fantastic opportunity for young people to start talking about their local communities—what's there, what isn't there, and what gaps exists. I think that that would be a really positive thing to come from your work.

[192] **Darren Millar:** Okay. Thank you.

[193] **Lynne Neagle:** Thanks. Oscar.

[194] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you to the team here. Has the CWVYS sought guidance regarding increasing awareness and training for staff working in youth services about the specific needs of vulnerable groups? And would not widening of the youth services provision in this regard mitigate the often limited scope of youth services in targeting and improving young people's lives in Wales?

[195] **Mr Glaze:** Workforce development is obviously a really important issue for the sector as a whole. In the past there have been facilities that were put together by Welsh Government, where both sides of the sector—both the statutory and voluntary sectors—would meet together to decide workforce development priorities. As CWVYS we're very lucky in having a really good partnership agreement with the YMCA and the Workers' Educational Association college in relation to youth work qualifications, and that's really useful. We would wish that to continue, although that's been cut back slightly because of funding. Local authorities also receive money through the

principal youth officers' group for training and development. It was in the national youth work strategy—laid down in that—that at least 25 per cent of that ought to be available to the voluntary sector in terms of its ability to meet those workforce development needs. They are both generic and specialist services, I would suggest, in terms of the training that's provided. So, to answer your question about the needs of particularly vulnerable young people, it would largely depend upon the take-up of the voluntary sector groups within that local authority area and the relationship that they have, or perhaps don't have, with that local authority in terms of tapping into that resource effectively. I don't know whether that answers your question.

[196] **Ms James:** Also, within CWVYS we have a training committee, where our members discuss and share issues regarding training, and a number of our national organisations have their own in-house training and development for their staff, where they look at specialist provision as well. But that's done outside of Welsh Government funding; it's the responsibility of those organisations. But within the training committee as a sector, the voluntary youth work sector, we do share and assist each other with our training and development.

[197] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. To what extent are voluntary groups, then, being driven to provide more targeted interventions with young people now?

[198] **Mr Glaze:** There is an expectation of that, certainly. And local authorities are tending to head down that targeted route. An example might be Swansea, for example, which has gone down that route some time ago actually. But we would say, and we've got the evidence to prove this because our members tell us this, that they actually deliver both targeted and open-access provision under one roof, sometimes in quite a sophisticated way. They don't have separate doors, for example, for young carers or young people not in education, employment and training. A strength of theirs is that they can think on their feet and deal with those issues, but they're also able to deliver both open access, which is the bedrock of youth work, along with the targeted provision too.

[199] Funders, if outwith local authorities—their criteria obviously need to be met in order for funding to be drawn down. But they do tend to be very targeted. That can work well for some of the specialised services that we've got within the sector, but equally, if they have the mix of open access and a targeted facility, that can be accommodated under one roof. And that's a real strength, we would argue, of the sector, because of that added value that the

groups that we represent can actually provide.

[200] **Lynne Neagle:** Keith.

[201] **Mr Towler:** I think your question, Chair, is a really useful one, because it gets to the heart of what it is, I think, our membership is interested in, which is that good voluntary youth work is based on that trusted voluntary relationship that young people have with youth workers in their local community. I think what we're concerned about is that the focus on targeted routes to get money and focus in for particular vulnerable groups is important, but it can't be delivered in the absence of that universal offer to young people, and that, actually, building that trusted relationship with young people is the bedrock upon which that targeted work can take place. The trouble with funding streams that look specifically at targeted pieces of work is that that doesn't do anything, really, to underpin how that universal offer is maintained. And I think it comes back to John's question around mapping, because that's what you begin to see—the slow withdrawal, almost death by a thousand cuts, of that universal offer, as that more targeted work increases. So, it would always be easier to identify the targeted work in that mapping exercise than it will be to quantify how the universal open-access offer is delivered.

[202] **Mr Glaze:** If I can pick up on that, if I may. In order for organisations to continue, obviously they need core funding to make that happen. Predominantly, targeted work is very much project-based driven and there's no profit in that, of course, because they're non-profit groups. But you know what I mean—it will just pay for that project as opposed to any kind of contribution to the core. And without that core, obviously projects can't be delivered, so it's a bit of a catch-22 for many organisations we work with.

[203] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr on this, then Julie.

[204] **Llyr Gruffydd:** If we get the balance wrong between open access and targeted—and I think there is a concern that the direction of travel is towards getting that wrong—is there then a danger, if it's too target heavy, if you like, that youth work might become a bit stigmatised, that it's seen as something for the poor and needy, and people might be concerned that they're going to be sent to the youth worker? [*Laughter.*] Do you recognise that there is a danger in that respect?

[205] **Mr Towler:** I think there is, because it's a—. I think you're absolutely

right. I think what's really interesting is the extent to which the targeted services can see the benefits of a youth work methodology within a targeted setting. So, if you think about youth crime, you think about mental health issues, you think about obesity and how we get to the core issue here? Well, we use a youth work methodology, and, actually, these youth workers have got a big contribution to make in helping us to understand what is impacting on young people's lives that creates this issue, which we now call a targeted response, whether it's crime, physical or mental health. So, the youth work methodology is recognised.

[206] The targeted work does take those youth workers down that particular route, and I think, in a sense, you could be absolutely right. I guess the majority of people of my age, and most people around this table, will be able to recall their youth club. Well, that kind of thing doesn't really exist. The ability to go in somewhere, find out what's going on, not be 'worked' officially, but to get the opportunity to socialise, to take part in non-formal education, to get an opportunity to go up a mountain, go on a residential experience—all the things that we would want young people to have, that's the bit that's at risk. So, I think you're right—if youth work became too targeted, too focused on just delivering for those who might be described as 'vulnerable' or 'in need', we lose a huge amount of our community infrastructure.

[207] **Mr Glaze:** I agree, and, if I may, as one member put it to me, 'All young people are allowed to have fun; it's not just for a select few'. And I think there's a danger in that, certainly. And it's about the sum of its parts, and all those young people—the mix—is absolutely critical as far as we're concerned.

[208] **Ms James:** And there's research been done by the University of Bath about the value of the informal networking that happens in open access, helping young people to look at behaviour and attitude, and, as open access, to build networks, to further themselves in employability and socially.

[209] **Lynne Neagle:** Julie.

[210] **Julie Morgan:** So, are you saying, basically, that really targeted work can't really be delivered effectively unless there is open access?

[211] **Mr Glaze:** Yes, particularly within the context of the voluntary youth work sector. So, the local authorities, as I'm sure you're aware, have gone

down a very targeted route, and that's up to them. The issue for those local authorities, in the context of supporting voluntary sector organisations, is that there's a notion that perhaps the voluntary sector can take up the open-access provision. And, so, there's an almost natural or forced division, but we don't see it in those terms; we see that the open access and the targeted work can and does happen under one roof, within the context of the organisations we work with. They're very adaptable, they're very flexible, and they can provide those services, and we would argue that that's a real strength that they're able to offer. There's another issue there, in terms of the potential amounts that are available through local authorities, but that's a separate question, I guess.

[212] **Julie Morgan:** In terms of your saying that the open access is declining—that's the area that is going—are there large parts of the country now where you have no access to an open-access youth club?

[213] **Mr Glaze:** I can think of one particular local authority area where we have a pretty strong member organisation, who are still a local community-based organisation. They've got a really good tradition of sourcing funding, but they're the only provision in the whole of that local authority area now. So, the pressure's on them to deliver. It sometimes comes from local authority demands too; even though they're not receiving extra funding for extra young people coming through their door, for example, they're still holding their own. Their sustainability is at risk, but they're still providing both open access and targeted work whenever possible. So, it's their flexibility, I think, which gives them that potential, but, the longer that continues, their sustainability is open to question.

[214] **Mr Towler:** One of the things that we did this year, looking at the sustainability of CWVYS—it's a member organisation that is there to serve the needs of its members, provide information and support as best it can, with a fantastic team that do that work. But one of the things that struck me from—we commissioned somebody independent to talk with members about their ambition, particularly to look at where they saw themselves in a couple of years' time. Fifty per cent of them were hoping for growth, but 50 per cent of them—the other 50 per cent—were really forecasting stagnation. They were just hoping to survive. Paul's got more detail.

[215] There's a real strong message, I think, about how viable this sector is. That's in sharp contrast—when people talk about the value of the voluntary youth work sector, very often statutory colleagues, and others, will kind of

look to the voluntary sector as the way in which we can deliver this offer. I think what we're trying to say is that not all our membership, but a significant amount of our membership, is struggling so much that it can't see a life for itself beyond the new financial year, and that's a reality for them.

[216] **Mr Glaze:** To pick up on Keith's point about the 50 per cent, that was standstill, or stagnation, for this current financial year. For next year, 30 per cent were saying that they don't know whether they've got a future at all. So, those are the hard facts and figures that we're getting from them.

[217] **Mr Towler:** So, the point is that, if people are looking to the voluntary youth work sector as the mechanism by which we're going to deliver youth work, then we're here to say that, actually, that's looking really fragile.

[218] **Lynne Neagle:** And, in light of that fragility, are there any particular groups of young people then who you feel are particularly losing out by these reductions in services?

11:00

[219] **Mr Glaze:** It's across the board, really, because if we've established the position where open-access provision is the key, then potentially all young people across any kind of criteria or background might suffer as a result.

[220] **Mr Towler:** And, we're talking about 11 to 25-year-olds in terms of that youth work offer. It's worth thinking that through a bit in terms of what the needs are, because that's a huge age range—11 to 25. But, if you think about the kind of targeted pieces of work and the particular issues around vulnerability—. Or, to take a random 100 young people from any community and ask them about youth work, I wonder whether 20 per cent of those young people would be able to give you a description of the youth work service in their area.

[221] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you.

[222] **Mr Glaze:** There's a couple of examples of local authorities that have joined their youth offending teams with youth services too. They tend to be local authorities that perhaps don't spend as much within their revenue support grant, for example. So, that's an interesting move, and I don't know what message that sends out to young people or whether the services are actually the same or better or worse, but it's the notion of different public

services having to come together because they've got the word 'youth' in them.

[223] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you.

[224] **Ms James:** Can I speak in Welsh for a moment?

[225] Hefyd, mae pwynt i godi I'd also like to raise a point about the  
amboutu'r ddarpariaeth cyfrwng Welsh-medium provision across  
Cymraeg ar draws Cymru hefyd a bod Wales in that there are variable  
yna wasanaethau amrywiol o fewn yr services within the local authorities  
awdurdodau lleol ac nad oes cynnig and no consistent offer in each local  
cyson rhwng pob awdurdod lleol. authority. That is a point that we do  
Mae hynny'n bwynt y mae angen need to look at nationally.  
edrych arno'n genedlaethol.

[226] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you, Catrin. We'll move on now then to look at  
Welsh Government strategy and leadership. Michelle.

[227] **Michelle Brown:** Thank you, Chair. I'd like to investigate your views on  
the charter and the operation of the charter—whether you think it's effective  
and whether you think something should be put in place to give effect to the  
charter.

[228] **Mr Glaze:** Certainly, from a strategic perspective, we're waiting for that  
kind of focus and strategic leadership, really. The charter was issued in  
March of this year. In the absence of what was the youth work reference  
group, which was the forum for discussing those kind of pieces of work, we  
haven't met since April of this year. So, there's a gap, as far as we perceive it,  
in terms of that leadership and that focus as to where that charter might take  
us. So, that's a real issue for us in terms of that leadership and that gap that  
exists because, of course, not least, we're half way through the financial year  
now in terms of planning and the direction and delivery of services.

[229] The charter, if I'm honest, doesn't say much new about youth services.  
At the moment, it exists on a piece of paper; we've nothing to implement  
that. That said, we were happy to be part of the process that got us to that  
stage. I think we've spent a significant amount of time supporting that  
reference group, which was always a good initiative as far as we were  
concerned. The Minister used to turn up for four or five hours and spend  
time with us for that and that was much appreciated. But things seem to have

hit the buffers, I would say. The charter exists, but we don't know how it's likely to be implemented and how it may or may not affect the delivery of services in relation to open access and targeted for example.

[230] **Michelle Brown:** Do you have any suggestions about how best to implement the charter and how to get the most out of it?

[231] **Mr Glaze:** If the charter is going to be the way forward—[Interruption.] No, it's fine.

[232] **Mr Towler:** As Paul was talking there, there were two things that struck me about how this can be implemented. The first is that there's no guidance for anybody about what the expectations are from Welsh Government about how that offer to young people will be delivered. There is no real expectation of it being delivered and no way of monitoring whether young people are accessing the offer. So, the first thing is: what's the expectation attached to that offer for people in the statutory and voluntary sectors? There's no guidance or leadership on that.

[233] The second part, and I think this is probably the most important part—and I was really impressed with the Deputy Minister of the previous Welsh Government, who set up the youth work ministerial group, because she was very clear in her thinking about the youth work offer speaking to young people in Wales—is that young people in Wales would recognise that this offer existed and would look at it and say, 'Okay, where am I going to access this in my local community? If that's there for me, how am I going to get that?' So, the second part of this is: to what extent is this youth work offer known by young people? I would say it is not known at all by young people. Nothing has happened that has given young people an opportunity to reflect on that offer and to think through how they could access that offer in their local community. So, there are two things: guidance for providers of services, and what this is saying to young people directly.

[234] **Mr Glaze:** Because it's pitched as a youth offer, and it hasn't been explained or given to young people in that context.

[235] **Mr Towler:** I think that's a challenge for Welsh Government. What Ministers now need to think through is, if they are still committed to the offer, and if they are still committed to universal open access and targeted provision, what the expectation is on statutory and voluntary sector providers in the absence of any guidance or statutory basis for the delivery of

youth work. These are pretty fundamental things, really.

[236] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr.

[237] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Jest i ddilyn i fyny ar hynny, mae yna awgrym clir onid oes—wel, mwy nag awgrym—fod diffyg arweinyddiaeth strategol yn dod o'r Llywodraeth. Mae rhai pobl yn cyfeirio at ddiffyg capasiti, diffyg ymgysylltu digonol â'r sector, ac yn y blaen. Byddwn i'n licio clywed eich barn chi ynglŷn â'r rôl y mae'r Llywodraeth yn ei chwarae ar hyn o bryd, ond gan gydnabod hefyd, wrth gwrs, eich bod chi'n awgrymu bod angen creu corff newydd—cyngor penodol i Gymru—ar wasanaethau gwaith ieuencid. Felly, beth rwyf yn gofyn i chi ei wneud yw esbonio beth rŷch chi'n meddwl yw'r diffygion ar hyn o bryd—lle mae'r gwendidau o safbwynt rôl arweiniol, neu ddiffyg rôl arweiniol, y Llywodraeth—a sut yr ydych yn credu y bydd creu corff newydd yn ateb yr angen hwnnw.

**Llyr Gruffydd:** I just want to follow that up. There's a clear suggestion—or more than a suggestion—that there is a lack of strategic leadership coming from the Government. Some people refer to a lack of capacity and a lack of sufficient engagement with the sector and so forth. I would like to hear your views about the role that the Government is currently playing, but acknowledging, of course, that you suggest that there is a need to create a new body—a specific Welsh council—on youth work service. What I am basically doing is asking you to explain what the weaknesses and the gaps are at present in terms of the leadership role of the Government, or the lack of that role, and how you believe that creating a new council or body would meet that need.

[238] **Mr Glaze:** It's been a consistent position of CWVYS for the past four or five years that a national body would benefit the whole of the youth service, but also benefit young people primarily. That's the reason why we came in on this. It was about ensuring that there is a collaborative process between the statutory and voluntary sectors as well. It would reduce duplication. It would improve the effectiveness, we would suggest, of youth services in Wales. It would allow it to have some status and profile, which it currently doesn't have. Things like workforce development could be brought under one roof, for example, and it could be harnessed in that sense, so that everybody was working towards common aims.

[239] The suggestion that we based our models on was informed by our discussions with our colleagues in Scotland—YouthLink Scotland, for example. That's one organisation that represents both the statutory and the

voluntary services in Scotland. It represents 32 local authorities and over 100 voluntary sector organisations. I have been in Edinburgh earlier this week, speaking to them and going green with envy with their resource and the work that they do. But, that said, they do some really good work. They also have the indefinable trust and confidence of the people they work with in the Scottish Government. They would be the first to say that it has taken a while to get to that point, but, for us, I think that's an ambition that we should be aiming for.

[240] A typical example—it's only one of many—is where the Scottish Government pay £500,000 to YouthLink Scotland to work on workforce development issues. The civil servants say, 'We trust you to be able to inform and impart this funding across the whole of the sector, and we don't want to play a part in that because we trust you.' For us, the way that we have kind of expressed it in visual terms is that we are operating at the base somewhere down here, where we need to raise that trust and confidence in each other to get to the point where others are across other areas of the UK. We use that model because we believe that it is one that we could replicate here. Central to that, I think, is that it meets the needs of young people. Young people would be part of that independent council, as far as we are concerned. Therefore, they could hold that council to account, as young people. That's really important for us.

[241] **Mr Towler:** I think that there are a couple of other points. I mean, Paul is absolutely right in terms of what we think the strengths would be and where the gaps are. But, at the moment, we do not have a clear vision about what it is we want the youth work sector to deliver for young people. We have a sector, both statutory and voluntary, with really committed, brilliant youth workers working within it. I think that point is really well—. You know, you should recognise that the skills and the experience that we have in the statutory and voluntary youth work sector are very good indeed. There is some exemplary work that is going on. But there's nothing that kind of binds this together. There's a real absence of the strength of what Paul describes as having witnessed in the Scottish model. You don't see statutory and voluntary youth work sector organisations working towards the delivery of a single aim for young people. You don't see how, currently, young people's participation or voice is heard in the commissioning or delivery of services at a local, regional or national level. There's nothing that monitors the delivery of those services and is able to spot the gaps, look at what works well and deliver that practice. But one of the key things that's missing currently from a lack of national leadership is: no information, no communication at all with

the sector. Certainly, voluntary sector providers are virtually cut out of the regional partnership arrangements that exist across Wales. They don't get a seat at the table. There's no way in which anything is binding that work together. That's not just a gap, it's just a travesty. It's a waste of the resource that we have.

[242] **Ms James:** Mae'n ddefnydd aneffeithiol o egni'r sector gwirfoddol lle mae'n rhaid inni gysylltu â 22 awdurdod lleol, i gyd â systemau gwahanol o ran pwrcasu gwaith, gosod targedau a chynllunio ymlaen. Felly, pan mae capasiti'n brin o fewn y sector gwirfoddol, boed yn lleol neu'n genedlaethol neu'n rhanbarthol, mae'n cymryd egni ein staff a'n gwirfoddolwyr i fynd at y 22 awdurdod lleol a'r prif swyddog ieuencid i drafod anghenion y bobl ifanc yn eu hawdurdodau lleol. Felly, byddai strwythur mwy cydlynol yn gymorth mawr i'r sector i drafod y safonau a'r cyfeiriad cywir ar gyfer pobl ifanc yng Nghymru er lles pobl ifanc yng Nghymru a chodi dyheadau ein poblogaeth ifanc.

**Ms James:** It's ineffective use of the energy of the voluntary sector where we have to contact 22 local authorities, which all have different systems in terms of purchasing work, setting targets and forward planning. So, when the capacity is scarce within the voluntary sector, whether it's local, regional or national, it takes energy among our staff and volunteers to go to those 22 authorities and the chief youth officer to discuss the needs of young people in those local authorities. So, a more coherent structure would be a great help to the sector to discuss the standards and the right direction for young people in Wales, for the benefit of those people and to raise aspirations among our younger population.

[243] **Llyr Gruffydd:** A oes yna gwestiwn ynglŷn ag atebolrwydd y corff yna wedyn? Ble fyddai'r atebolrwydd yn ôl i'r sector a hefyd, wrth gwrs, o safbwynt atebolrwydd i'r Llywodraeth, am wn i, dros yr adnoddau?

**Llyr Gruffydd:** Is there a question about the accountability of that body then? Where would the accountability back to the sector be, and, of course, the accountability to the Government for resources?

[244] **Mr Glaze:** We suggested a couple of models. One was for the Welsh Government to have a role on an independent council that would be chaired by an independent person, but it would also have parity of seats around the table for both the voluntary and statutory sectors, and young people too. That's the suggestion that we would make. The Welsh Government could

either be part of that or it could actually stand back and maybe work on the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales model, where money is given to that body in order to disperse it.

[245] But I think the other thing—. There are a couple of things, if I may, on this. We already have a base from which to work. We have a set of national occupational standards. We're a profession. We also have a clear workforce development base; we have the 'Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes' document, which sets the tone for all training in Wales. So, for us, it's about building on that base, that quality and the adherence to those standards that already exist.

[246] Just to pick up on Keith's point about communication, on youth worker registration, for example, which is coming into play next April, we've got a really good working relationship with the Education Workforce Council, but youth work, as a sector, doesn't have a seat around that table, which seems to us to be a bit of a nonsense, really. In the absence of the conversations that we have with Welsh Government, we have far better communication with the Education Workforce Council on an issue that's going to affect the sector quite heavily, I would suggest, next year. So, again, some of it's about clout—it's about status and profile—but it's also having a collaborative way of working that meets the needs of young people and is accountable on that basis.

[247] **Mr Towler:** Can I just add that, whatever the governance model might be, it would be a hundred times better than what currently exists? Because there is no accountability, really. There just isn't.

[248] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Hefin.

[249] **Hefin David:** The role of this body would be collaborative processes, workforce development, raising the status of youth work and reducing duplication. So, there's going to be a cost to introducing such a body; have you costed it? Is it going to be made up of new people or existing people getting together? Can you give us some indication?

[250] **Mr Glaze:** Yes, sure. The initial response was based on the former Minister asking whether we wanted a regional or a national youth service. That was five years ago, when the Minister made that point. We came up with four specific models that we thought might be appropriate. It wasn't turkeys voting for Christmas, it was a case of 'We would want a role within that new

body', which could be made up of existing people; there wouldn't necessarily be an issue there.

[251] In terms of cost, we haven't costed it to the penny, but we would suggest that some of the revenue support grant that currently isn't being spent by local authorities could be used and folded in to pay for that body's initial set-up. It would also have a fundraising function of its own. So, it would need to look at its own sustainability over a period of time.

11:15

[252] **Hefin David:** You mean that some of the revenue support grant that is not being spent on youth service, but should be, is being spent, but is being spent on other things.

[253] **Mr Glaze:** Yes, effectively. I'm sure you know the figures anyway, but it's £40 million for the budget for youth services in Wales, of which £2.5 million goes to local authority principal youth officers to deliver their services. CWVYS receives £105,000 a year currently on a year-by-year basis. There are national voluntary youth organisation grants that are worth £679,000 per year for seven organisations only that we represent. The remainder, which is about £37.5 million, goes to local authorities under the revenue support grant, of which just over half currently is being spent as we would suggest it ought to be, because it's allocated. But, of course, it's not hypothecated. So, we're suggesting that out of that—the funding that isn't being spent—there's plenty within that that could service the needs of a national body.

[254] **Hefin David:** But it would be diverting resources from the front line, possibly.

[255] **Mr Glaze:** Initially, but at the moment that's not being spent anyway. So, what we're calling for is the hypothecation of that funding, and therefore you would have sufficient within that. Because at the moment, it's not being spent, as far as we would say, because it's not hypothecated.

[256] **Hefin David:** Okay. I appreciate that. Why not, perhaps through local service boards, give youth workers strong advice at local service boards instead? Why is an all-Wales solution more effective than, perhaps, a local-service-board-level solution?

[257] **Mr Glaze:** Our models were predicated on a national overview, but with regional bases too. That, for us, was really important. We have a regional base within CWVYS, as do the principal youth officers' group, as I'm sure you know, and that works very well for both parties. So, we've already got those structures in place. The issue, really, for the local service boards is actually accessing seats around those tables. Also, the capacity within the sector at the moment is insufficient to meet those needs. I think there's a genuine interest in wanting to be there, but we just don't have the capacity to meet those needs. To put it into context—it's anecdotal, but I don't know whether this helps, and it cuts across everything that we're talking about, I would suggest—youth workers are saying to me, 'I'm being expected to fundraise and also to deliver the youth work too. I'm not a fundraiser, I'm a youth worker; therefore, that cuts back my capacity to do anything else that I could do at a representational seat', for example. So, that's the kind of context within which we're working. Those are the kinds of pressures that they're under. Every issue that we seem to come across suggests that a national overview would be far better than the current situation that we find ourselves in, really.

[258] **Hefin David:** I'm just being a critical friend, here—

[259] **Mr Glaze:** Yes, of course.

[260] **Hefin David:** I'm not trying to say 'Don't do it'. I just wonder, if you go from what you've described in my mind as fragmented provision, leaping into the national level without considering the kind of mezzo level might actually be missing something.

[261] **Mr Glaze:** I appreciate that, and that, for us, is where the regional structures would come into place and would meet the current regional consortia, at the moment, that the Welsh Government are currently operating. It's absolutely critical for us. For example, our experience of a regional structure is critical because it gathers intelligence and it works with local organisations, and nationals, in giving them the chance to look at national policies and to have a view on those too. So, rather than being done to, they're part of that process and can be informed and have a role to play. It's a very important role. We wouldn't suggest, for a minute, that we want to overlay a national process that ignores all of that, because, apart from anything else, we'd be cutting our nose off to spite our face, because we have to be in touch with those services that operate at the very local level too.

[262] **Mr Towler:** One of the things that we're looking at at the moment for CWVYS—you know, just looking at the sustainability of CWVYS and what CWVYS delivers to its members in the absence of this debate that we are having—is how local and regionally based voluntary youth work sector organisations get an opportunity to access what you're describing. I'm pretty convinced, because members tell us this, that they just don't have the capacity to engage with local service boards, with safeguarding boards, or whatever the kind of regional structures might be. One of the things that the membership has asked of CWVYS is to consider whether CWVYS could act in a brokerage role. So, you bring together an opportunity, if there's a regional funding pot to bid for, about bringing together some locals that have increased capacity when you bring it together. But, at the moment, local and regional voluntary sector organisations don't get a seat at the table. There isn't a mature commissioning arrangement in place that comes back to the kind of status of the way that the sector is perceived. It certainly doesn't get an opportunity to comment on the design and delivery of commissioned opportunities. So, the idea that we could deliver effective youth work through the current regional arrangements just doesn't seem to me a realistic one. I just don't see how that would happen in the absence of something that's very clearly coming from the centre that sets something about vision, parameters and delivery expectation.

[263] **Hefin David:** That's clear. You've said your capacity is preventing you from engaging. It's not the fact that you're prevented from engaging, it's capacity that—

[264] **Mr Towler:** It's a bit of a double-edged sword, because how would a voluntary youth work organisation even know that the opportunity exists to bid? I know that sounds really—. But I think that's true. So many of our membership would say, 'Well, we had no idea that was even available.'

[265] **Lynne Neagle:** Can I just ask—? Do you think it would help if there was a statutory duty to provide youth provision in Wales?

[266] **Mr Towler:** Yes.

[267] **Mr Glaze:** Yes, definitely. I think because of the application of the consistency of that, too, really. If all areas were required to meet that statutory duty, then at least the consistency would be there and the parity of delivery for young people, really.

[268] **Mr Towler:** And that sufficiency model that we spoke about at the beginning of the session would be a really good way of assessing local need.

[269] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Julie.

[270] **Julie Morgan:** You've mentioned the fact that half of the allocation of the revenue support grant is not spent on youth work. Presumably it is spent on something else, but it's not spent on youth work, and there do seem to be huge variations in the amount of money spent by each local authority. So, I don't know if you've got any explanation you can give for that—why some local authorities are spending so much more than others and how local authorities do top up some of the money they give.

[271] **Mr Glaze:** I think the first thing to say is that because it's non-hypothecated, obviously, local authorities can spend it as they wish, and one of the things that we have yet to find out is whether money is actually being spent. The issue for us that it doesn't appear to be spent on youth services. There are some local authorities, however, that—mathematically, I'm not sure how they do—but there are a couple listed in the last revenue support grant audit where I think 103 per cent was being spent in certain areas. So, it's important to pay tribute to that, as well.

[272] But the issue has been put to us that local authorities are chasing other pots of money in order to supplement what they're not spending out of the revenue support grant. But from our perspective, it's a case of saying, 'Well, if all of that revenue support grant was being used in the manner in which it was meant to be, then there wouldn't need to be any of that chasing of extra funding, because it already exists. It's already being made available.' So, I guess, for us, it's a case of saying or asking the question, 'Why can't it be hypothecated so that local authorities can use that for youth services across the board, therefore enhancing the consistency?' Because the variations that you've referred to are huge, you know. There are wild variations in terms of allocation and spend.

[273] **Julie Morgan:** There is generally a reluctance to hypothecate funds because—

[274] **Mr Glaze:** I appreciate that.

[275] **Julie Morgan:** —of the issue of local democracy. What is the point of

having local authorities unless all they're able to make decisions? So, you do recognise that.

[276] **Mr Glaze:** Absolutely, yes, and that's the position that we find ourselves in. But it's the frustration of knowing that that's available. We also appreciate the local authority context in which they would then say, 'Well, if we had to do this, then, of course, something else might suffer.' But, of course, we're here to talk about youth services.

[277] **Mr Towler:** There are two things at play here, aren't there? One is about how the money is spent and used by local authorities—and, clearly, that is an issue for them, and local democracy is really important. But, I think the fact that there is no statutory basis for the delivery of youth work places statutory colleagues in a difficult position when they want to justify holding on to expenditure for something that doesn't have a statutory function. It's going to look at what it has to deliver statutorily, and that is, without doubt, going to be the case in austere and difficult times. As a result of that, youth work falls lower and lower and lower down the pecking order. I think, when you look at the bold figures and when the membership of CWVYS looks at those figures, it just throws up enormous questions for the voluntary youth work sector, because, of course, we're not sighted on how local authorities decide to use their money. We're just on the receiving end of those decisions. So it's not a criticism of those colleagues, I think it's just a kind of reflection of where we're at, and it's an uncomfortable place for the sector to be.

[278] **Lynne Neagle:** Darren.

[279] **Darren Millar:** Thank you, Chair. Just on this issue of hypothecation, isn't the problem with forcing local authorities to spend up to the amount in the revenue support grant that's given to them in respect of youth services that there may, actually, be very good provision in those areas that is not commissioned by the local authority already, and that there's a risk that local authorities will duplicate, or cause some successful youth organisations to go to the wall by stealing, if you like, the young people who are already actively engaged with them? So, rather than hypothecation, isn't it this need to focus on mapping what's there, first, before determining where money is spent and how the bar is raised, as it were, in terms of the local availability of services? You're calling for hypothecation, but not even you know what's available on the ground at the moment, do you?

[280] **Mr Towler:** We've no idea. It's a mystery to us. I think you're absolutely right: what we need is good hard data. We need something at the centre that actually is concerned about this and wants to take a good look at it. I think what we've said is, or what we see, is that the absence of that work happening at the moment is massively detrimental to the voluntary youth work sector—of that we're absolutely convinced. But we don't know what a sufficient youth service looks like. So, you're right, but we need something to take responsibility for making that happen.

[281] **Darren Millar:** But do you accept it's premature to call for hypothecation before you actually know what's going to be delivered?

[282] **Mr Towler:** No, I don't accept that, because actually, if you look at it through the prism of our membership, it's reasonably desperate at the moment. It's a reasonable call. [*Interruption.*]

[283] **Lynne Neagle:** Darren, let him finish.

[284] **Darren Millar:** But why would you want to force expenditure up to a certain limit if there's actually good provision on the ground in some localities already? I think in my own constituency there's not a great deal spent on youth services, in Conwy in particular as a local authority, yet the reality is there's a very rich level of activity in terms of youth provision from voluntary sector providers. We've got very well-developed local services. Now, as to the quality of those services, as to the reach of those services, as to whether there's sufficient targeting in terms of those services, or co-ordination between the voluntary sector providers, I think there are big questions about that, but at the end of the day, if Conwy was forced to spend up to a certain level, it may be wasted money, frankly, and not good value for taxpayers. That's the point I'm making. So, isn't the mapping something that's got to come first, finding out where the gaps are, and then plugging those gaps? And that's why we need this national body to take some sort of overarching responsibility.

[285] **Mr Towler:** I wouldn't argue with any of that. I would say that there is some speed in making this happen when you think about the 50 per cent of our membership that is in stagnation or is not likely to survive beyond the next financial year. So, the urgency of this is really quite significant, because even in a place like Conwy, I'm assuming that some of those organisations will be pretty much in that state. We've been talking about this, as a country, around youth work for many years, so I think there's something about the

speed with which some control needs to be taken over protecting youth work services. However that allocation is spent and used, we can argue about, but actually I think there's a real need to make sure that people understand the urgency of this before the voluntary youth work sector begins to disappear in front of us.

[286] **Darren Millar:** Okay.

[287] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. John.

[288] **John Griffiths:** On the same point, really, Chair, Julie mentioned this debate about hypothecation with local authorities, and we're all familiar with it, but one of the trends has been, I think, to try and move local authorities to producing certain outcomes. So, as long as they produce the outcomes, that's fine. So, in terms of what Darren raised, if they can demonstrate a certain level of provision and the sustainability of that level of provision, dealing with what you just said, Keith, then is that fine without hypothecation? Is that possible?

[289] **Mr Glaze:** I think the issue for us is about consistency and the application of that across the board. The fact that there are such wild variations suggests that, for example, it's not too far of a stretch of the imagination to say that somebody in Conwy's being well looked after as a young person, but in a place that's spending 38 per cent of its revenue support grant, proportionally the voluntary sector has far less of an opportunity to tap into what might be available.

[290] The one example I can give you is that one principal youth officer was telling me that, within his region, he would normally have supported six of our member organisations to deliver work on behalf of the local authority. Because of the cuts to the programmes and the money that he's had, he knows that at least four of those are likely to go to the wall, which means that young people will have less of a choice and less provision in that area. That local authority, already having taken the view to go down a targeted route, it's a double whammy for those young people in that area. You could argue whether those voluntary organisation should be that reliant on that source of funding, which I think is a separate issue. The fact is that there are young people at the end of that not receiving that service any longer. So, it's about the application, I think, really, and the parity across local authority areas. That would be our argument.

[291] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Can I just ask—? You raised some concerns in your paper about procurement, and particularly how the Welsh Government's procurement is working, and that a lot of the procurement seems to be with organisations in England. Would you like to expand on that and why you think that's happening?

11:30

[292] **Mr Glaze:** Yes. To answer your last point first, we don't know why it's happening, really. We're concerned because we know that there are several individuals and organisations within Wales who are more than capable of delivering that work. What we don't know, I suppose, is whether those organisations and individuals are actually applying to take that work on. As CWVYS, we were part of a joint bid to run the quality mark for youth work in Wales; we lost out on that, and that's fine. We've reflected on that in the response. It was a fair fight; that's okay. But, pretty much all the contracts that have been released within the last 12 or 18 months by Welsh Government have gone to contractors based in England. There is a definite link to those people who've worked for or with the National Youth Agency in England, too. And what that does is raise a certain level of suspicion, but also, from a practical perspective, anybody, naturally, coming into a different nation to deliver some work has to understand the landscape and how that works before they can actually do the work. So, we would suggest that parts of the timescale within which they are commissioned to do the work is actually wasted, really, because they have to do that leg work before they can actually start to report.

[293] There are a couple of reports outstanding at the moment that we were expecting to come out recently. One was by Cordis Bright for the youth engagement and progression framework—a mapping exercise they were doing across the whole of Wales. We're yet to see that. There was also a piece of work that was commissioned, actually within Wales, to look at the voluntary sector and how it works with local authorities, and we're yet to see that one also. But there is a general growing issue, and our trustees have asked us to raise this at the highest possible level, in terms of the procurement processes. They're very concerned, I think.

[294] **Mr Towler:** I think there's also a level of frustration amongst membership organisations that's expressed by the trustees of CWVYS, where consultants are commissioned to come in and do specific pieces of work and then their first port of call, of course, is to contact member organisations of

CWVYS to give them the information that they then reflect back in reports. So, you can understand the level of frustration from members and what the drain on them is when they're providing information that they already know, and if somebody took the trouble to ask them, they could do it themselves. So, you can see where the frustration exists, I think.

[295] **Ms James:** Rwyf wedi bod ynghlwm â pheth o'r gwaith sydd wedi bod yn digwydd o ran 'Dyfodol Llwyddiannus', adroddiad Donaldson, ac mae'n ddiddorol yn fanna lle maen nhw wedi rhoi perchnogaeth o'r cwricwlwm yn ôl i ysgolion ac athrawon a dweud, 'Wel, dywedwch chi wrthym ni sut ych chi'n mynd i weithredu hwn.' Oni fyddai'n braf i gael rhywbeth tebyg ar gyfer y sector gwaith ieuenctid, lle galle ni ddefnyddio'n creadigrwydd ar y cyd â'r sector statudol i gyd-gynllunio'r atebion sydd eu hangen ar y sector, ac nid dibynnu ar bwrcasu trwy'r amser? Wedyn, byddai gennym ni'r berchnogaeth a'r atebolrwydd, ac nid oes dim byd yn well na chi eich hun yn hunanasesu ac yn bod yn ffrind critigol i weld lle rŷch chi'n mynd yn anghywir.

**Ms James:** I have been involved with some of the work that has happened with regard to 'Successful Futures', the Donaldson report, and it's interesting there that they've given ownership of the curriculum back to schools and teachers and said, 'Well, you tell us how you're going to implement this.' Wouldn't it be nice to have a similar thing for the youth sector, where we could use our creativity jointly with the statutory sector to jointly plan the solutions that the sector needs, and not rely on purchasing all the time? Then, we would have ownership and accountability, and there is nothing better than undertaking your own self-assessment and being your own critical friend to see where you're going wrong.

[296] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Can I just ask about European funding, then? Obviously, we've got the prospect now of having a big gap in our funds; how easy is it to quantify how much European funding is actually in the system? Have you made any preliminary assessment of how youth services are going to be affected by Brexit?

[297] **Mr Glaze:** It's a real concern for a lot of the organisations we work with. Perhaps if I talk about Erasmus+ funding, for example. There are several of our member organisations that have taken advantage of that programme, and it's not necessarily about the cash involved, it's also about the opportunities that it throws up for training and workforce development opportunities across the whole of Europe. Equally, we've got one specific

member organisation of ours whose work is about European voluntary services. So, it will accept young people from across Europe and also will support young people from Wales to go to Europe. So, they're very concerned about that in particular. From an international volunteering perspective, that's the only one that delivers that in Wales. So, they're very concerned.

[298] We've got some really good examples of organisations that have developed programmes, such as Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Wales with their Not the Usual Suspects, their democratic engagement processes; UNA Exchange, which delivers its Step by Step project; and also ASH Wales was successful in getting €250,000 to deliver their anti-smoking work across the whole of Europe as well. So, we've had some really good success stories. We're told by the British Council and Ecorys UK that Wales is currently running at about 5 per cent of its allocation, which is roughly what they expected. As you know, there's €1 billion available for the UK as a whole until 2020, and the increase in EU funding for Erasmus means that the budget is £14.7 billion across the whole of Europe as well. I hope that answers your question, but also I think people are very fearful about what's likely to happen as a result of that, and where they might be able to find that funding.

[299] The other issue is about European structural funds, if I may. There is an issue there, isn't there, in terms of local authorities bidding for that funding. Again, anecdotally, members are telling us that they feel locked out of that particular opportunity. Having said that, the sector also is aware that both programmes are going to finish in 2020, so it's about the planning and how you overcome that for the future.

[300] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr.

[301] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Just on Erasmus, my understanding is that you don't have to be a member of the European Union to access it; there's a process where you can actually buy into it.

[302] **Mr Glaze:** You can.

[303] **Llyr Gruffydd:** So, I think one of the messages we may wish to consider to Welsh Government, coming out of this, is that they actually proactively pursue that as one consideration in their negotiations with the UK Government.

[304] **Mr Glaze:** To embellish that, really, as CWVYS we're members of the British Council consultative committee. We also sit on the grants panel. We've got a really good relationship with ERYICA, which is the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency, and we're also the sole partner for Eurodesk UK. So, we're well embedded in terms of the information services that are available, and we are obviously priming our members to get more involved in those kinds of processes. It's interesting that, in the last year or so, people have been talking about the youth work euro as opposed to the youth work pound, which is an interesting shift in emphasis.

[305] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Are there any other questions from Members? No? Okay. Can I thank the representatives of CWVYS for coming this morning to give us evidence? It's been really informative, and thank you too for the paper that you provided. As is normal practice, you'll receive a transcript of the meeting to check for accuracy. Thank you very much.

[306] **Mr Glaze:** Thank you.

[307] **Mr Towler:** Thanks a lot.

11:37

**Ymchwiliad i Waith Ieuentid: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 2—Grŵp Prif  
Swyddogion Ieuentid Cymru a Chymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru  
Inquiry into Youth Work: Evidence Session 2—Wales Principal Youth  
Officers' Group and Welsh Local Government Association**

[308] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, we'll move on now then to item 4, which is our second evidence session in our youth work inquiry. I'm delighted to welcome the Wales principal youth officers' group and the Welsh Local Government Association here today. We've got Dr Chris Llewelyn, director of lifelong learning, leisure and Welsh language at the WLGA—welcome; Barbara Howe, youth service manager, Torfaen County Borough Council; Jason Haeney, who is the principal youth and community officer at Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council; and Tim Opie who is lifelong learning policy officer, youth. So, welcome to you all and thank you for coming this morning, and thank you too for your paper. If you're happy, we'll go straight into questions from Members, and I've got John Griffiths first.

[309] **John Griffiths:** I'm interested to know, really, to what extent local authorities in Wales are in a position to know what's being delivered in the

way of youth services in their areas, not just by themselves directly but as a whole. What mapping takes place? How comprehensive and effective is it?

[310] **Dr Llewelyn:** Shall I kick off? As you know, John, I'm from the WLGA, so I can give you an overview, as it were, but I think my colleagues are probably better positioned and better informed to give a more operational view of things.

[311] In terms of the information that we use nationally, through the revenue outturn data that authorities provide, we get a rough picture of how much is spent on youth services, and then the Welsh Government—or rather StatsWales—produces a bulletin that provides more detail in terms of provision at a national level and at an individual authority level as well. But there is something of a delay in terms of that information being available.

[312] And, then, the other thing that has to be borne in mind as well is that authorities are structured in different ways. They deliver services in different ways, and I think, increasingly, in recent years, as authorities respond to cuts in funding and look at alternative models of delivering services, it becomes more difficult, I think, to make comparisons between services. But, as an organisation, we don't routinely collect that kind of information.

[313] **John Griffiths:** So, the short answer is then that there isn't a comprehensive mapping exercise that shows who's delivering what, whether there's duplication, whether there are gaps.

[314] **Mr Opie:** Can I come in? I'm just thinking, previously, we had the children and young people's partnerships, which carried out a lot of the youth support services element of that. Young people's partnerships would have carried out that work. They had a mandate and they had resource to do so. I think, today, that formal process isn't in place, but at local level I know the principal youth officer or strategic leads for the youth service are carrying out that function. They do have very good contacts with their voluntary sector partners at local level. A few years ago, as well, after the demise of the youth support services, Estyn were delivering lines of enquiry to local authorities through the principal youth officer as to them being that fulcrum for pulling that information together. But, of course, there wasn't that formal mandate for them to do so, but, nonetheless, I think that does go on at local level, and they do have very good knowledge of voluntary sector services. But, at national level, that's not aggregated.

[315] **Mr Haeney:** Within Neath Port Talbot, we've got a youth support services liaison officer, whose job is to look at the mapping exercise across the local authority. He also works with the family information service on websites and how we present that information back then to the public. We also run multi-agency groups, but they're normally targeted at maybe NEETS multi-agency groups, or work-based learning providers, so there's definite room for improvement, but the youth providers network in Neath Port Talbot was a very good forum of getting people around the table, but, without that, that's why we changed the role to a support services liaison officer to carry out the mapping exercise.

[316] **John Griffiths:** Just very quickly, Chair, no doubt then it's variable across local authority areas, but would you say in your area then that there has been, and there is, a comprehensive mapping of youth services? Would you be able to say that?

[317] **Mr Haeney:** I think there's definitely room for improvement. I don't think it's as good, personally, as the youth providers network was. It's basically, I think, that there's fewer people, trying to do more, within Neath Port Talbot, for example, and I think when the young people's partnerships were involved, I think that was a specific job that they could carry out better.

[318] **John Griffiths:** Okay.

[319] **Lynne Neagle:** Do you want to add anything, Barbara?

[320] **Ms Howe:** I can only speak locally, as can Jason, and we co-ordinate the support services network that provides all—. We advise all the local voluntary youth support services to showcase and share good practice, and they've become members of the network. We also have the family information service, and that's really how we—. And we do a local mapping in the youth service. We work very closely with CWVYS and I regularly meet with Paul. So, in terms of actually bringing together formal information, really it's done by the family information service in our area as well.

[321] **John Griffiths:** Would that service, then—that would provide a comprehensive map of what's being delivered in terms of youth services in your area, would it? Where there's again—you know, so you could look at it and see whether there's duplication, whether there are gaps.

[322] **Ms Howe:** That's the intention.

[323] **John Griffiths:** That's the intention.

[324] **Ms Howe:** Yes, but I think it's—. Whereas—I agree with Tim—the young people's partnership, they used to do a comprehensive, formal mapping exercise, it is really now diluted down to individual services, both in the public sector and the voluntary sector. And, if you have officers whose job it is designated to do that, then it's done really well, and the information is given accurately.

11:45

[325] **John Griffiths:** Okay.

[326] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you.

[327] **Mr Opie:** Sorry, can I just add that, under the youth engagement and progression framework, there is a requirement for local authorities to work with voluntary sector partners and other providers around education, employment and training, under the common application process, or the CAP? So, there is some mapping that's done there, but it's not as comprehensive as I think you're looking for around youth services, generally, in a local area.

[328] **Dr Llewelyn:** Chair, would it be useful if we were to pursue this with authorities, and then feed back to the committee, to establish what the position is?

[329] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes, I think that would be very valuable, thank you. I've got Oscar next, then you, Darren.

[330] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much indeed, Chair. My question is to Jason and Barbara, really. Would you agree that the engagement strategy with the voluntary sector needs strengthening? How do you see the Welsh Government's role in this, and does more need to be done at ministerial level to bring about cohesion between the statutory and voluntary sectors?

[331] **Lynne Neagle:** Oscar, we're going to go on shortly to Welsh Government. Was your question on what you'd heard, Darren?

[332] **Darren Millar:** Yes, it was. It was just responding to Jason, if that's okay. I've just had a quick look on your website. You referred to the fact that you'd developed a website, which demonstrated what was available locally in Neath Port Talbot, and it is a good, comprehensive website, but only about the services provided by the local authority. There's no information on there about other youth organisations and the opportunities that young people might have to access other good youth provision. Why is that?

[333] **Mr Haeney:** That's the Neath Port Talbot youth service website, I think—

[334] **Darren Millar:** I understand that, but you gave the impression, in response to John Griffiths, that it was more of a, 'This is what we've mapped'.

[335] **Mr Haeney:** Sorry, the family information service website is the one that's the comprehensive mapping of provision within Neath Port Talbot. Neath Port Talbot youth services website, in particular—if I'm honest with you, I think we're going down the route where it's going to become redundant. We find that young people are not really using the website. I think that social media is the way that we are interacting with young people now, so that's what we find is the best way.

[336] **Darren Millar:** Right. So, if I click into your family bit—the family information service—it will be in there, will it?

[337] **Mr Haeney:** Yes.

[338] **Darren Millar:** Okay. I'll do that. Thank you.

[339] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Before we go on to Welsh Government, we've heard from lots of stakeholders that the universal youth work offer is the bedrock of the youth service, but that that is coming under pressure. To what extent are you finding, as local authorities, that you're being driven to offer more targeted services? Who would like to start?

[340] **Dr Llewelyn:** Well, shall I kick off? I think it's inevitable that—I think there are two things that come to bear. One is the funding position, because, in recent years, budgets have been cut—the revenue support grant's cut by something like 1.5 per cent in this current year, and 3.5 per cent last year, and, I think, 4 per cent the year before. So, inevitably, local authorities are

faced with trying to make ends meet, as it were. The focus is on delivering statutory services, but also, as I mentioned earlier, looking at more creative ways of spending their funding, and, in a sense, making sure that they meet the statutory obligations as far as is possible.

[341] And the other thing then that's happening as well, I think, is with the strategic direction, if you like, from the Welsh Government, the focus on NEETs, and other policy initiatives. I think there is, it's probably fair to say, a slight shift of focus away from the universal service towards targeting as well. So, inevitably then, I think, authorities at an individual authority level are having to respond to that.

[342] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Barbara.

[343] **Ms Howe:** At the heart of the profession is the voluntary engagement, and that's where we have to start, I think, with any discussion around this. Because young people are not mandated, and they don't have to attend any of our provision. And that's central to the profession. More and more, we find that we are performing more targeted work, just due to general capacity. That's going to squeeze the universal access to young people. Having said that—I can only speak for my service—but, even in the targeted work, we still have that voluntary engagement with young people, and young people can still walk away from us, even if they're referred to some provision. Some of our sessions in schools, for example—ultimately, it is education's responsibility to ensure that those children and young people receive a rounded, holistic education. But the engagement, for me, the voluntary engagement, is absolutely central to the relationship, and the meaningful relationship, between the youth worker and the young person. There are very few services that actually target young people from 11 to 25, and those young people can come back, they can enter our service when they're 11, and then, at pinch points in their life, they tend to pop up and reappear, and they can still access that same youth worker, because it's about the relationship as opposed to the targeted intervention.

[344] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Anybody want to add to that?

[345] **Mr Haeney:** I'd echo what Barbara was saying; I think it's the same within Neath Port Talbot. Targeted work, it is an essential part of our work—it's linked closely to a lot of our grants—but the universal service is one of the only services that I know of that is open to anybody; they don't have to have any criteria attached to them and it's in the communities. And I think

that, within Neath Port Talbot, I'm quite lucky—we've got the support of the local councillors; they want to keep the universal provisions open. I can't say that's the same across Wales. I think we're in a quite unique position.

[346] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. You all right, or do you want to add something?

[347] **Mr Opie:** If I may. I was just looking at some of the lines of questioning around youth work being available to all young people. Youth work has never worked with all young people, but that availability is crucial. There was a report carried out by a Westminster education committee about five or six years ago, which—and I don't want to go into the detail of this, but it's very useful in looking at the benefits of universal provision to young people, particularly who are vulnerable, because it removes the stigma and offers them routes into other targeted support. But it's also important, I think, that those young people are exposed to other young people of different aspirations and backgrounds.

[348] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Hefin.

[349] **Hefin David:** Just reading the written evidence, I'm not sure if I picked up in the previous evidence we got from CWVYS an implicit criticism of creative ways of reconfiguring provision through, for example, merging with youth offending services as a way of providing a service. I got the impression that they were quite critical of that because, you know, youth offending and youth services should be actually distinct.

[350] **Mr Opie:** I think there's an argument for that. However, there are a number of different models across Wales emerging through innovative responses to the current funding climate, and I've spoken to those local authorities that have adopted that model, and they are feeding back to me that it's a very successful model, because the youth offending service workers and the youth workers are working with the same group of young people, but they're able to contribute different skill sets to those young people and share their skill sets as well. So—[*Interruption.*] Go on.

[351] **Dr Llewelyn:** Can I come in here? I've not heard the criticism, and it may be the case that they aren't critical, but, in the current climate and the context, I think it is a bit harsh, you know, because by far the greatest criticism of local government is about not being imaginative and creative and looking at alternative models. And, inevitably, I think, in times of financial

pressure, authorities are trying to respond as effectively as they can to the differing circumstances. If they do look at alternative models of delivery, inevitably, I think, some are going to be more successful than others, because it's not always an easy task to come up with a successful solution when faced with adversity. I suppose the trick is, you know, when things do go well, to learn from them, and then, if there are models that maybe aren't as effective as they might be, to look at what the issues are and then respond as well. But we see it across all local authority service areas, and especially the discretionary areas—you know, we see it in culture and leisure in particular—having to look at squeezing as much value as possible from the investment that's taking place.

[352] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Julie, on this.

[353] **Julie Morgan:** Can I just ask on this, in terms—? I wanted to go to the youth offending teams. Would they then include qualified youth workers? I entirely support the idea that local authorities have got to look at innovative ways, but I'm concerned about youth work as a profession and how that is continuing.

[354] **Mr Opie:** Traditionally, youth offending teams have had at least one youth worker attached to them and, in my experience, having spoken to YOT managers in the past, some have said they'd have a team of youth workers. But I think, as I say, it's two different disciplines, because young people are often, sort of, sentenced to receive youth offending service work, but the youth workers Barbara mentioned, the voluntary engagement, and those different skill sets I think complement each other very well in those models that are operating at the moment.

[355] **Julie Morgan:** So, you can get over the compulsory element and the voluntary element in the same setting.

[356] **Ms Howe:** Shall I give you an example of what is actually happening in Torfaen? The reoffending rates were increasing in Torfaen for young people. Whilst we worked together on the preventative side, actually trying to prevent young people going into the system—they reduced, but the reoffending rates were increasing. Following some discussions with both the youth service and the YOS, what we found was that, by those young people coming into a youth service setting, accessing initiatives around meaningful relationships, accessing initiatives around basic skills around cooking, around budget management, around actually engaging with other people, the impact that

your behaviour has on others has led to—. It started off as a tiny project, but it's led to a much larger project now. We open the cafes and things like that to the YOS, which works in partnership with us. And the young people—I'm not saying the offending rates are going down because of the youth services, but I'm saying that we're all part of the jigsaw. What we're finding is that their behaviours and their awareness of meaningful relationships have grown. And because of the voluntary relationship, they actually don't have to be there with us. We're written in as part of their orders now, but they don't have to be there. Ironically, the fact that they can walk away means they don't. They stay with us. It absolutely is paying off. Two very different approaches. They're on orders, they have to attend YOS sessions. With us, they don't, but they do. We take them to doctor sessions and everything like that.

[357] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. We'll move on now then to Welsh Government strategy and leadership. Oscar, would you like to ask your question again?

[358] **Mohammad Asghar:** It's all right, thanks.

[359] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Llyr.

[360] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Thank you, Chair. For me, the crux of this inquiry really is who's driving the youth service in Wales. There's huge criticism in the evidence that we've received, the written evidence, of the role of the Welsh Government in failing to provide the leadership, articulating the strategic vision for youth service in Wales, and then bringing all the partners together to coherently deliver that vision. You, in your evidence, say that it's regrettable that it's rare that the Welsh Government engages with important youth-work stakeholders. You say that there's been a systematic downgrading of youth work within Welsh Government. I presume, from that, that you're not content with the situation as it is. What, therefore, would you like to see happen? We've heard from CWVYS, for example, a suggestion of the creation of a national council for youth work services in Wales. Is that something that you'd support or do you have any other suggestions as to how we can address this fundamental weakness, really, in the current set-up?

[361] **Dr Llewelyn:** Shall I go first? Certainly, within local government there is an acceptance that the role of the central Government—the Welsh Government in this instance—is to set the strategy and direction of travel,

and then the role of local government is to deliver on that strategic vision and direction and take account of local circumstances. Our view, Chair, and right across all services, is that local government is best placed to interpret the national strategic direction, in accordance with the circumstances they face. I think the criticism from the sector in this instance is that the engagement with local government could be better in terms of interpreting, and providing support for local government in interpreting, the direction and what the strategic vision is.

12:00

[362] We had a conference yesterday with Graham Donaldson of the curriculum review and other Welsh Government officials as well. It was a very useful event. I think on both sides it was found to be fruitful. That's an example of where, you know, a strategic direction is set by the Government, but then there is clearly a role for local government and the youth service in interpreting that vision. If one looks at Donaldson's work and the four purposes that are set out, they align very much to the role of youth work and the youth service, in terms of enabling children and young people to fulfil the potential that they've got, to get them to develop and contribute meaningfully to the communities in which they live and the broader aims of society, and to become economically active to create a prosperous and strong economy, and so on. And yet, I think maybe that, in that document, there isn't a direct reference to the youth service, and it's probably fair to say that, hitherto, the engagement with the youth service hasn't been brilliant. But it was discussed in yesterday's conference, and the reaction was very positive. There was a commitment that the principal youth officers' group will be asked to attend some of the network meetings of pioneer schools, and we will have more discussion about how that engagement can take place going forward. But I think that that's the kind of engagement that's needed and, on occasion, doesn't happen. I don't know if colleagues want to add to that.

[363] **Mr Haeney:** I would probably say the same. I think sometimes we feel that we could be consulted a bit more. I think the message that we are getting is that we need to be knocking on the door a bit more. So, on both sides, I think there is room for improvement. There have been some examples of work that has been presented to us that we really haven't seen before and that the sector are unhappy about. You know, we are just going to have to continue working and building bridges with the Welsh Government, I think.

[364] **Mr Opie:** I think the sector, generally, has suffered in relation to status and profile, but we were talking yesterday about green shoots. I think one of those green shoots is the Education Workforce Council. As you are possibly aware, from April 2017, youth workers will be required to register alongside teachers and further education professionals. We are working with Welsh Government through their youth work team and other civil servants who are leading on the legislation, as well as with the Education Workforce Council. So, I think that there are certainly opportunities. What I would say, on behalf of the principal youth officers' group and the WLGA, is that we are here to support the now small team in Welsh Government, and we will do so.

[365] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Your written evidence is much more damning, if I could say so. You sound very, very timid. I mean, this is your opportunity to really articulate to us exactly what the vision should be and how that could be delivered. I mean, you say that you'd like to be consulted a bit more. In your written evidence, you say that policies are published without the sector being involved. I mean, this is a missed opportunity, unless you tell us now today—. The criticism is coming through, loud and clear, from a number of directions, but over the last 30 minutes, I haven't heard it at all.

[366] **Mr Opie:** I think that what we have found in the last couple of years is that we've had formal national conferences and events delivered by Welsh Government, and that documents have been published at those events that we hadn't had sight of before. That is problematic, but, as I say—

[367] **Llyr Gruffydd:** So, how do we fix it, then? That's what we want to understand. What would the answer be? What I'm picking up is, you know, 'Maybe a little bit more of this, or a little bit more of that.' The feeling I get is that it's, you know, much more fundamentally flawed, if you like, in terms of the relationship between Welsh Government and the sector—not just local authority. It may be better in your context than it is for the voluntary sector, potentially—I perceive that that would be the case—but, still, it feels very, sort of, disjointed, I have to say.

[368] **Ms Howe:** If I could just give you one example of something that came out of the Welsh Assembly recently. It was called an outcomes framework and actually it was an outputs framework. For us in local authorities we have oceans of outcomes that we can demonstrate: journeys for young people that they've travelled—real journeys, real progress. Actually just getting out of the house and even facing going back into their house, sometimes, they face

things that we don't encounter—well, I definitely wouldn't encounter or haven't encountered in my life. When we questioned and challenged the outcomes, which was an outputs framework, it didn't seem to land. I went to a couple of those workshops and it didn't seem to land because the outcomes—. There's a lot of initiatives that target academic achievement, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that, but for some young people an achievement of just actually going on a bus, having the confidence to go on a bus and get to meet their friends down the valley is something you can't measure through academia. We have those outcomes. We can show those journeys. We have distance travel tools that we can show that through and that will be missed in an outputs framework.

[369] **Dr Llewelyn:** Can I come in as well? In terms of the written evidence, it is gathered through consultation with the 22 authorities and the services within each of the authorities. As the WLGA, I think as I mentioned at the outset, we engage with the Welsh Government at a strategic level and it seems to me that what comes through in the evidence is the need, maybe, to be more self-conscious and to have a better process or better mechanisms of then communicating with the sector from the strategic down to the operational level. It may be that in the association's interface with Ministers and senior civil servants there is dialogue and discussion in terms of the strategic direction, but what I think we've picked up from the evidence gathering is that, as we then move down the system, if you like, towards the more operational end, it's at that point where I think there needs to be more effective—. Maybe it is a level of self-consciousness and of being aware of the need to communicate, to discuss and to engage with the sector, because I think it comes through that, within the sector, there is the feeling that, maybe, the communication could definitely be better. If there are instances where documentation is produced or strategies are published without consultation, I don't think that anybody would want to be in that position. I don't think it's an effective way across the public sector.

[370] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Michelle and Darren.

[371] **Michelle Brown:** Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to ask you what your view would be on the creation of the national youth work council for Wales. Do you think that would help bring improved strategy and bring everybody together? Do you think that would be an effective way forward?

[372] **Dr Llewelyn:** I think, from a WLGA point of view, we have raised this issue in the past and I think there's definitely room there for a discussion—is

there some potential there for getting some kind of national forum where various partners could get together and discuss issues of common concern? We would certainly be interested. If there were to be the idea of doing that, we'd be interested in a discussion.

[373] **Mr Opie:** I think the sector is somewhat unique in the fact that there isn't that platform to promote and improve youth work in Wales. I sat on a steering group that established the Education Workforce Council and I was there through goodwill from CWVYS and the principal youth officers' group to speak on their behalf, but I couldn't in a, sort of, executive capacity. So, that's just one practical example. I think as well on the issue that, Llyr, you raised about leadership in the sector, there is potential that a body like that could perform that function as a critical friend with Welsh Government.

[374] **Lynne Neagle:** Anything you want to add, Barbara or Jason?

[375] **Mr Haeney:** I think that the principal youth officers' group would support the national youth work council for Wales idea. I think that would be quite an interesting one, going forward. I think it would help build the links, like Tim suggested, as well.

[376] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Darren, then Hefin.

[377] **Darren Millar:** I just wanted to follow up on these communication issues and problems that you, Mr Llewelyn, were sort of identifying between the Welsh Government and local government on youth services. What about the communication problems between local government and local providers in their areas? We were just told by CWVYS that, you know, very rarely are youth organisations invited to sit on local authority partnerships that might be operating in different areas. Why is that? You can't criticise the Welsh Government if you're not pulling your weight yourself in terms of communication at a local level, can you?

[378] **Dr Llewelyn:** Maybe my colleagues can comment about what happens within their own authorities. That concern hasn't been raised with us as a national organisation, so if it is, then I'm surprised that it hasn't been put to us.

[379] **Darren Millar:** I appreciate that there might be variables and some good examples. It sounds like, in Neath Port Talbot in particular, you've got some good local work, and probably in your area as well, in Torfaen. But

what is being done to support, if you like, those who might be lone voices within the local authority, if it's not given the priority that it might deserve—youth work—that are trying to manage this unwieldy sort of bringing together of those different organisations, or even trying to identify them, which is a struggle for some?

[380] **Dr Llewelyn:** We would be open to that discussion. If it was raised with us, we would be happy to engage in a further discussion. I think, with your suggestion of looking for examples of good practice, if there are relations within particular authorities that are deemed to work effectively, and the other partners think it works well, then we'd be more than happy to look at how we could promote that and share it with other authorities.

[381] **Mr Opie:** It's not something I've been aware of, and it's not been raised with me, but I think it's fair to say as well that CWVYS is represented by its membership, and there are a number of other voluntary sector organisations of varying sizes across Wales that do engage with local authorities. But it's certainly something that we'll look into. As Chris says, I'm happy to have that conversation with the sector.

[382] **Darren Millar:** Thank you.

[383] **Lynne Neagle:** Hefin.

[384] **Hefin David:** Do local service boards have a role?

[385] **Mr Opie:** In—?

[386] **Hefin David:** In engaging with youth services.

[387] **Mr Opie:** I think that's a question that maybe CWVYS can answer. I know that they're keen to be involved with the new public service boards.

[388] **Hefin David:** Public service boards, sorry.

[389] **Mr Opie:** Yes.

[390] **Lynne Neagle:** Would local government welcome the input of the youth service into the public service boards?

[391] **Dr Llewelyn:** Yes, I think it probably is a requirement, but it's

something we could look into. There seems to be some potential there.

[392] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay.

[393] **Hefin David:** Just to say, one of the things that CWVYS said to us is that the voluntary services haven't got the capacity or the resources to engage with public service boards.

[394] **Mr Opie:** This has traditionally been an issue—the children and young people's partnerships, because there were 22. It's finding that mechanism for that link.

[395] **Dr Llewelyn:** In terms of the public service boards, I suspect that that would be a widespread problem. I think, in having 22, many of the other partners would—. I think I've seen various public statements that it does stretch the capacity of smaller organisations.

[396] **Lynne Neagle:** Chris, you've highlighted a tension between constricted resources and the fact that the youth service is in the statutory provision, yet, in Wales, we've got the children's rights Measure, which is meant to confer entitlement on children and young people. Can I just ask each of you whether you would support a statutory duty to provide youth services being introduced in Wales?

[397] **Dr Llewelyn:** There is statutory underpinning at the moment. I think it would be a question of looking at the detail of any new proposal.

[398] **Mr Opie:** The directions and guidance that are currently in place for the sector, which links to the Learning and Skills Act 2000, are extending entitlement. I think that, again, talking about status and profile, in recent times, whilst the majority of the sector would agree that they still work to it and it's all still relevant, it may need some kind of restatement.

12:15

[399] Welsh Government have tried on a couple of occasions in the last approximately 10 years to review that and it's hit the buffers for various reasons. But, as Chris says, that legislation and guidance is there.

[400] **Lynne Neagle:** Barbara and Jason.

[401] **Ms Howe:** I think, for us, we feel that we are a statutory requirement because we're written into an awful lot of initiatives, like the youth engagement framework, for example, and embedded in there is youth work. That can't be delivered without youth workers. Families First and Team Around the Child—they can't be delivered without lead workers forming part of the youth work profession. So, I feel like we are in there, implicitly, but not explicitly. So, there are an awful lot of WAG initiatives that actually wouldn't be—couldn't be—delivered without the inclusion of youth work. Extending entitlement, I feel, is an invisible, embedded practice across Wales. People still—and I agree with Tim—adhere to 'Extending Entitlement', and the youth work charter that's recently come out is a fairly good précis, I guess, of the 10 entitlements, but it's 'Extending Entitlement' that is the invisible default document that we all go back to.

[402] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Jason.

[403] **Mr Haeney:** It's the same for Neath Port Talbot. I think 'Extending Entitlement' is the go-to document for us. I think that the statutory requirements for the local authorities on youth work could be strengthened. That would help the sector. But I agree with the youth charter; it's a good example of something that's been done recently that we can work towards and, within the local authority of Neath Port Talbot, there's lots of youth work involvement in lots of different aspects of the well-being of young people and their education. Maybe we could look at strengthening and building that in a little bit.

[404] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. We'll move—

[405] **Ms Howe:** We've got the future generations Act now. How can that go forward without somebody representing young people in their communities?

[406] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. We'll go on to funding now, then. Darren.

[407] **Darren Millar:** Yes. In terms of the funding, there's been a suggestion from the voluntary sector that there needs to be some kind of hypothecation for funding. I just wonder what your response is to that. I know that, again, in some local authority areas, there'll be a very well developed voluntary sector delivering services and maybe less of a need for expenditure by the local authority, because there may be fewer gaps. Whereas, in a number of other local authority areas, I suspect there may be a requirement to spend

more than the amount that is suggested by the Welsh Government through the revenue support grant. What are your views on hypothecation and how useful a tool do you think that would be? I know you're not keen, generally.

[408] **Dr Llewelyn:** Yes. Can I come in first? As you probably know, the association always opposes the idea of hypothecated funding, and I think the arguments are stronger in times of cuts in public spending than in more affluent times. Our argument is that you need to take decisions about how services are managed, run and, particularly, funded as close to the point of delivery as possible, so local authorities are best placed to take decisions about funding because they deliver services and they are at the point of delivery. When budgets are cut, local authorities need to have as much flexibility as possible in order to stretch those resources as much as they can to cover the full range of services that they provide. If local government spending was completely ring-fenced, then what we would find is that a lot of discretionary services would come to an end and we would see more leisure centres, parks and playing fields, and the non-statutory dimension, we would see lots of services coming to an end.

[409] The other point to add, I think, as well, is—and I think there's a common misconception, certainly outside of Government and outside of local government—that the RSG formula, and the figures that are sometimes referred to, namely the IBA figures in terms of the various lines within the formula, is devised as a mechanism for dividing up the funding that's available. Nobody does an exercise and looks at how much it costs to run an ideal youth service and then provides authorities with that amount of funding. Rather, what happens is—the current local government formula, I think, was devised in the late 1990s—that part of the formula covers the youth service. There are notional figures there in terms of how much should be allocated to each authority. It's population based and there's a weighting for deprivation. The population figures are based on projections from the census figures that are available at the start of every decade.

[410] So, as you can see, it's a very inexact way of distributing funding, but it's the best thing that we can come up with. I think, sometimes, externally, there is a view that if there's an IBA figure there that, somehow, that relates to the cost of delivering the service in that area. We've had this debate in education for the last 10 years or so, and our view as an association is that it's not a particularly profitable exercise.

[411] **Darren Millar:** You've already expressed some support for the idea of a

national youth council or some sort of body to hold the Government and others to account for delivery against a national strategy with some clear objectives. Again, one of the suggestions that has been made is that that could also be a body that receives funding from the Welsh Government to then invest in youth services across the country. Do you think that top-slicing from the RSG, putting a pot of cash into the hands of a national youth council of sorts to distribute resources, would be a good idea or a bad idea?

[412] **Dr Llewelyn:** I'd go back to the same argument—

[413] **Darren Millar:** I can predict your answer. [*Laughter.*]

[414] **Dr Llewelyn:** I think it would be a bad idea, because we think that the best decisions about how services are run, provided and managed are taken as locally as possible and that those people who use the services are as informed as possible in informing decisions about the services. We would say that local government is the mechanism for doing that.

[415] **Darren Millar:** I mean, the reality is, though, isn't it, that we've got gaps in provision, because some local authorities are better at delivery than others. Well, that's the impression we get from the evidence that we've received so far.

[416] **Dr Llewelyn:** There'll be variation because the immediate circumstances are different, the historical circumstances are different and there are a number of variables that result in that position. But, again, I'd come to the same point that I think it would be challenging to think that a national organisation could somehow be best placed to take decisions about a service that is, by its nature, very locally based.

[417] **Lynne Neagle:** Julie.

[418] **Julie Morgan:** Why is there such a wide variation in local authorities' use of the revenue grant to youth services?

[419] **Dr Llewelyn:** Well, I think that—

[420] **Julie Morgan:** It's very huge in some cases, isn't it?

[421] **Dr Llewelyn:** I'm not sure, you know, in terms of the particular examples you might be referring to, and I'm probably not best placed to

comment on the individual circumstances, but the truth is that the circumstances are very different. Historically, provision is different and, increasingly, authorities are structured in different ways and, because of what I mentioned earlier about trying to develop alternative models of delivery, I think it makes it increasingly difficult to make comparisons between sectors. Simply looking at the revenue outturn analysis of how much authorities spend on youth provision wouldn't give a full picture—

[422] **Julie Morgan:** We all understand that, in relation to the full picture, but, in the figures that we were given, Carmarthenshire spent 31 per cent of the notional allocation and Rhondda Cynon Taf 113 per cent of the notional allocation. So, is what you're saying that that money is being put in in other ways through different methods of delivery?

[423] **Dr Llewelyn:** The difficulty, I think, is that you're not comparing like with like. We've had this exercise in other service areas as well, and I think looking at expenditure gives you a very partial impression of what happens within those service areas. So, I think it is very deceptive.

[424] **Julie Morgan:** So, on those figures, Carmarthenshire could possibly be providing as good a youth service as Rhondda Cynon Taf, even though there's such a big disparity in the use of the revenue support grant.

[425] **Dr Llewelyn:** Again, without—. I'm not familiar enough with those two authorities to know how they—. There are so many variable factors. The way they allocate costs can vary significantly. I'm always bemused whenever I attend meetings with finance officers and they discuss their budget returns. Almost every authority will do things in a different way because they're structured so differently. So, I don't think that looking at expenditure gives an accurate reflection of the way the service is provided.

[426] **Julie Morgan:** So this is too simplistic, really.

[427] **Dr Llewelyn:** Yes.

[428] **Lynne Neagle:** John.

[429] **John Griffiths:** In terms of those issues, then, is there some mileage in looking at an outcomes-based approach? You mentioned earlier, Barbara, didn't you, that there's a framework that's recently been introduced for outcomes, although I think you were saying that it wasn't, in your view, really

about outcomes, even though that's what it purports to do. But is that approach more valid in terms of us, the people of Wales, having some confidence that youth services in all the local authority areas are delivering what they should be delivering?

[430] **Lynne Neagle:** Barbara, do you want to comment on that first?

[431] **Ms Howe:** Yes, we do have management information systems right the way through Wales for youth services, and that gives not just outputs; that gives real, genuine stories. These are stories that don't just go to one cohort that belongs in year 3 in school. This is a longitudinal journey that we follow through with these young people. Definitely in Torfaen we can evidence—we can show the difference that we make.

[432] For example, we were working with two young women, both pregnant, both had babies removed, and we worked with them on a meaningful relationships programme, not just the statutory youth service. We could never do this alone. We have to work in partnership with the voluntary sector. We absolutely have to. We don't have all of the resources and all of the expertise. Working in that partnership around tailored services around these two young women, they retained primary carer status for their babies. That's life changing, not just for them, but for their babies and their babies' babies. It's absolutely life changing, and we have that evidence that we can show.

[433] We don't have masses of numbers, although we did work with 3,000 young people. We don't have 3,000 case studies, but we have stories that count, that affect lives of young people, and it will affect generations now, for them and their children. It has a massive effect, and just counting beans is not going to give you the stories that you're looking for around this table. Those outcomes are real, and they're long lasting, and they're generational.

[434] **Mr Opie:** I think in relation to the sector as well, it's notoriously difficult to measure soft outcomes, and for the youth service almost uniquely, with the age span that it works with. You don't often see the outcomes until further down the line, maybe 10 years later. That's not to say that we shouldn't be trying to capture some of that.

[435] **Dr Llewelyn:** Can I come in here? I think, as Tim says, it is difficult, because you don't have scientific laboratory conditions, so measuring the impact of any intervention is very difficult, but anything that can shift the focus away from measuring spending process and activity to outcomes,

challenging as it is, I think is a much better idea.

12:30

[436] **John Griffiths:** Could I just ask about the evidence framework that you mentioned, Barbara? So this is something that Welsh Government has—

[437] **Mr Opie:** It was a consultation; it's not something that's been agreed as yet.

[438] **John Griffiths:** Okay; it's going through consultation at the moment.

[439] **Mr Opie:** Sorry, Barbara, I didn't mean to talk over you.

[440] **Ms Howe:** It was a consultation, and it wasn't about outcomes, it was about outputs. We did put our views quite powerfully forward on that in the consultations.

[441] **Mr Opie:** Again, I think some of the requirements in there—had we been in the development of it—weren't within the gift of the youth service. I think it's important that we jointly develop something.

[442] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Are there any other questions from Members? No. Okay, well can I thank you for your evidence this morning? It's been very useful to talk to you. Thank you very much. Can I remind you that you'll have a transcript of the discussion to check for accuracy? Thank you very much for coming.

12:31

### **Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note**

[443] **Lynne Neagle:** We'll move on now, then, to papers to note. We've got paper 4, a letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education on the pupil deprivation grant; paper 5, a letter to the Secretary of State for Health from the Minister for Social Services and Public Health—

[444] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Could I ask something on that? I'm happy to note it, it's just that there's reference to a Government response to the committee of advertising practice consultation on the introduction of restrictions on non-

broadcast advertising of food and soft drinks; could we ask them for a copy of their response? It would be useful.

[445] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes, we can do that.

[446] And the final paper to note, then, is the letter to the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee from us on the Wales Bill. Is everybody happy to note those? Lovely. Okay, well that brings us to the end of the meeting. Can I remind Members that the next meeting is next Wednesday, when we'll be hearing from the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language on our inquiry on youth work? We've also got Professor Sir Ian Diamond coming in to talk about his review into higher education funding. We will also have a private item to agree the next inquiry topic. So, thank you very much for attending, everyone.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 12:32.*

*The meeting ended at 12:32.*