



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](#)

16/11/2016

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Public from the remainder of the Meeting and for Item 1 of the  
Meeting on 24 November

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn  
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**

Eirian Davies	Ysgol y Strade
Yr Athro/Professor Graham Donaldson Christopher Dunn	Rheolwr Rhaglenni, Voices from Care Cymru Programmes Manager, Voices from Care Cymru
Jackie Murphy	Prif Weithredwr, Tros Gynnal Plant Chief Executive, Tros Gynnal Plant
Luke Mansfield	Ysgol Gynradd St Julian, Casnewydd St Julian's Primary School, Newport
Sean O'Neill	Cyfarwyddwr Polisi, Plant yng Nghymru Policy Director, Children in Wales
Emma Phipps-Magill	Rheolwr Gwasanaeth, NYAS Cymru Service Manager, NYAS Cymru

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

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Clerc Deputy Clerk
Michael Dauncey	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Marc Wyn Jones	Clerc Clerk
Gareth Rogers	Ail Clerc Second Clerk
Siân Thomas	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:33.  
The meeting began at 09:33.*

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

[1] **Lynne Neagle:** Good morning, everyone. Can I welcome you all to the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Committee this morning? There have been no apologies for absence. Can I ask whether there are any declarations of interest? No? Okay.

### **Gweithredu ‘Dyfodol Llwyddiannus: Adolygiad Annibynnol o’r Cwricwlwm a Threfniadau Asesu yng Nghymru’: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 1 The Implementation of the Review ‘Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales’: Evidence Session 1**

[2] **Lynne Neagle:** We’ll move on, then, to item 2, which is the implementation of the review ‘Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales’. I’m delighted to welcome Professor Graham Donaldson to our meeting this morning. Thank you very much for coming. We haven’t had a paper in advance, so would you like to make some opening remarks to the committee?

[3] **Professor Donaldson:** First of all, just to thank the committee for the opportunity to come along and discuss with you what I think is a reform that is of huge significance to Wales—the young people of Wales, but also to Wales more generally. It sets Wales in the context of what’s happening internationally in terms of educational reform, right at the forefront of

thinking about not only what it is we should be doing for our young people while they're at school, but how we ensure that the things that we want to happen actually happen in schools. The history of educational reform over a long period of time has often seen a huge gap between what we aspire to happen for our young people and the reality of what actually happens in classrooms on a day-to-day basis. So, we'll get a chance to talk about the specifics in the course of the session, but I want to say right at the outset that, in my experience, the systematic way in which Wales is approaching this reform is unusual in the context of education reform. The tendency is to go for a bit of a reform programme and focus on that, and then find out afterwards that, actually, for that to happen, something else has got to happen. So, although at first sight the kind of programme that we have here in Wales, which is very comprehensive, may look daunting, the reality is that it, in its broad approach, gives us the best chance of actually succeeding in terms of creating the kind of high-quality learning and outcomes for the young people of Wales that we all want to achieve.

[4] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you very much. We've got a number of questions. If I can just start by asking you to expand a little bit more on your role as the chair of the independent advisory board.

[5] **Professor Donaldson:** Yes. I think the creation of that independent advisory group within the structure of the reform is also innovative in the context of reform generally. In the original report, 'Successful Futures', one of the recommendations that I made was that there was a need to create, more explicitly, distance between the political environment that's driving reform and the nature of the reform itself. A lot of countries do that by having arm's-length bodies that undertake the specifics of reform. In the context of this reform, the decision to set up an independent advisory group was a way of meeting that recommendation by building into the governance structure a kind of critical friend role to that structure. As chair of the independent advisory group, I've no executive responsibility; I can't take any decisions in relation to the way in which the reform develops, but I do have access to the main committees and I report to the advisory group itself, the members of the advisory group, about the way in which the reform is developing. In turn, I can also report to the change board that's managing the programme as a whole issues that the advisory group has identified that might undermine the likelihood of success, and also the things that are going well inside the process.

[6] So, my role is partly to make sure that that independent advisory

group is independent; is both supportive and challenging to the process as a whole; is gathering intelligence about what's happening, both inside the structure but also what's happening more generally; and is engaging partly with officials who are responsible for developing the programme and the other key bodies, but also increasingly with the stakeholder groups that are engaged in the process as a whole across Wales.

[7] So, I think the existence of that group is, again, a very powerful signal that there's a determination within the programme to try to see it through so that the inevitable pressures that will arise in the course of a programme that's lasting over a period of four or five years, by the time it comes to fruition, the inevitable pressures that arise during that period don't completely blow us off course in terms of where we were originally trying to get to. So, part of my role and that of the independent advisory group is to try to identify where things might be beginning to distort the process by going off in directions that weren't intended. So, broadly, that's the role that I play.

[8] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. And how often does the group meet, then?

[9] **Professor Donaldson:** So far, it's been meeting every six weeks.

[10] **Lynne Neagle:** Right. And is the line of communication mainly with officials, or do you have meetings with the Cabinet Secretary as well? Do you have the ability to report to the Cabinet Secretary?

[11] **Professor Donaldson:** I meet with the Cabinet Secretary on a fairly regular basis and, again, my job is to give her independent advice based on the deliberations of IAG, but to give her independent advice that has not been filtered through the official network, but is actually communicated directly to the Cabinet Secretary. Increasingly, we're also meeting not just with officials, but with others who are involved in the overall reform programme outwith Welsh Government. And one of the things that we discussed at our last meeting was that we'd like to establish a network of young people throughout Wales so that, as the process goes forward, those who are hopefully the beneficiaries of this process will also have the opportunity to understand what's happening and also give us important perspectives on it from a young person's point of view. We've been talking about how we might do that—at the last meeting. Certainly, the intention is to establish something of that kind.

[12] **Lynne Neagle:** Lovely, thank you. Oscar.

[13] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you, Professor Donaldson. What assessments have been made of the impact of the Donaldson recommendations in Scotland? Supplementary to this, how has this impacted on the implementation timetable in Wales? Finally, has there been any significant deviation in the implementation of the review in Wales?

[14] **Professor Donaldson:** I think one of the misconceptions from the start of the process of 'Successful Futures' was that, because I'm a Scot and was involved in the curriculum reform in Scotland, all we were doing was translating the Scottish reform into Wales. Nothing could be further from the truth. What I saw as my responsibility was to learn from what happened in Scotland, but also what's happening in England, what's happening in Northern Ireland, what's happening in countries in Europe and what's happening across the world, and to try to distil from all of that the implications that we might want to think about here in Wales, in terms of taking things forward.

[15] So, in terms of looking at Scotland specifically, I think there are important lessons to be learnt from the way in which curriculum reform has taken place in Scotland, both positive and negative. The recent OECD review of the reform programme in Scotland, I think, very helpfully identified first of all that—. Broadly, what the OECD seemed to be saying was that the direction that Scotland was going in was a coherent direction and that they saw it as being, in terms of the other countries they've looked at, a persuasive way to move forward.

[16] Basically, that's about thinking about what happens in school, during the time that young people are at school, as moving from being defined almost wholly in terms of what you learn while you're at school and then being tested on whether or not you've learned what you're supposed to have learned. All that matters and is very important, but the reform is going beyond that to say, 'How do we ensure that young people are able to use that learning, and how do they develop as people across the time that they are at school?', such that their learning that they're doing and the subjects that they're taking and so on are not just serving the needs of the subject, but also broader purposes, in terms of their development as young people—hence the four purposes that are recommended in 'Successful Futures'.

[17] When I was looking at Wales, what I did was to initially spend about

three or four months actually talking to individuals and groups, visiting schools and businesses from across Wales. I spent a long time just trying to engage with people, all of whom have an interest, obviously, in the future of Wales and the role of young people, so that young people are in a position to flourish in that future and play their full part in that. What I was able to do from that—. That's where the four purposes of the curriculum broadly came from, because I asked people what their aspirations were and what they would want an educated young Welsh person to look like when they leave the school system and move on to whatever the next stage in their lives might be.

[18] The four purposes grew out of that and from looking at the similar kind of questions that are being asked in countries across the world. Actually, those four purposes are not dissimilar to the kind of things that Australia, for example, is talking about in terms of its Melbourne declaration on what it thinks about how young people in Australia should benefit from the school system. Singapore more recently has been moving in a similar direction, as have countries across the world.

[19] So, what was in 'Successful Futures' certainly took account of what's happening in Scotland, but it also took account of lots of other things. It's really part of a much broader move that's taking place just now to think about the purposes of schooling in a way that goes beyond some of our more traditional ways of thinking about that. So, the need for rigour and depth in learning remains absolutely at the heart of the curriculum, but it's also about how people can use that learning creatively and how they can apply it across the various pieces of learning they're getting so that learning doesn't all happen in compartments—developing skills, creativity and entrepreneurship. It's the way in which the learning process can take place that helps them to understand how to be a learner, not just to learn because there's an exam at the end of it, but to learn how to learn, so that you engage in a learning process because of the importance of learning itself, not simply because there's an exam at the end of it, although the exam, obviously, remains a very important part of that process.

09:45

[20] What I think that we can learn from reform in Scotland, but also much more generally, is that if you're going to focus on thinking about the curriculum and thinking about the purpose of schooling in a rather broader way than we have thought about hitherto, you can't just do that and then say



to schools, 'Now you've got to do this'. If you're going to do that, you've got to think about what are the implications for how we grow and develop teachers who both understand the reform and want to engage in it, and how we engage with school leaders in a way where they are also going to create the conditions that allow reform to happen, and how do we ensure that our accountability systems are not valuing something different from the way in which the curriculum is developing.

[21] So, the big message that has come through, I think, from looking more generally, not just at Scotland, is the need to think about this with all the various components that need to come together—the pieces in the jigsaw that need to come together if we're going to create the kind of high-quality education system in Wales that we need.

[22] I've forgotten the second part of your question. That's the first part—about Scotland—but in terms of Wales, was the second part about how we're doing in Wales in relation to that?

[23] **Lynne Neagle:** It was the lessons for Wales, wasn't it?

[24] **Professor Donaldson:** I think the lessons for Wales are partly what I've just said. One, I think that—and this came through from the review process itself—while it's tempting to think that the more you put in legislation or the more you make it clear exactly what you expect of schools, the more likely that is to actually happen in practice, experience tells us that's not the way it works. The more you specify from the outside what it is that should happen inside a school, the more you stifle those inside the school thinking about their children, and the nature of the learning that their children need. So, one of the lessons for Wales, I think—and it's a debate that's to be had, and this committee will be right at the heart of that—is, 'What's the balance between what you put in legislation and other methods you use in order to achieve consistency across Wales?' The more you put in legislation, the more you lock a curriculum into a particular point in time. The current curriculum is partly locked into 1988, which is when it was created. So, the more you put in statute, the more difficult it is to be flexible, agile and responsive in terms of the way in which the world is changing and the nature of what's happening in the world around schools just now in the lives that young people are currently leading. But also, those young people are going to live their lives throughout the entirety of this century and into the next century. So, one of the key questions that schools have to answer is: 'How do we help prepare those young people for a future that we can't even begin to imagine,

and what is it that we need to do during their time at school?' That part is where this notion of building them as people, as well as focusing on the learning, becomes of critical importance. So, one big lesson for Wales, I think, is to think hard about the balance between what we put in legislation and where we use other means in order to try and achieve the necessary consistency—but not uniformity, necessarily—across Wales.

[25] The second lesson is the one that I talked about—you need you to think about this in terms of all the things that need to come together if you're going to make reform happen. And you need to do that early, I think. One of the questions in Scotland has been that the curriculum was developed in the middle of the first decade of the century. The implications for teachers really only began to be addressed in a big way in the second decade of the century. The Scottish Government invited me to undertake a review of teacher education in Scotland, and I produced a report in 2011 called 'Teaching Scotland's Future', which was about how our teachers need to grow and develop if they're going to be at the heart of what's needed for the future—similarly with leadership and similarly with accountability. So, I think, again, one of the important lessons is: do that early. Think about it in advance, think about it as part of the reform. Don't think about it as a reaction to reform. It should all come together.

[26] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much.

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

[28] **Llyr Gruffydd:** You mention getting the balance right between legislation and other means. Are we at a point where we can actually make that call now, do you think? Or do you have a particular view as to when we need to come to that conclusion?

[29] **Professor Donaldson:** I think we need to be talking about it just now. I think we do need to be thinking about that. One of the big messages in the report—and I think it is reflected in the way in which reform is taking place increasingly, internationally—is this principle of subsidiarity: that, fundamentally, you only constrain what headteachers and teachers in schools are doing where you have to. Rather than saying, 'We decide what's good and how much freedom we'll give them', you turn it round the other way and you ask the question, 'What do we have to do? What's absolutely essential that is done outside the school in order to ensure that young people are getting a high-quality education that's consistent across Wales?' I think that's a debate

that needs to happen in principle just now. Clearly, we're going to have to move to legislation reasonably quickly, and there's a particular issue, I think, about pioneer schools, and the extent to which the existing legislation—if we're asking them to think creatively about what they're doing, then we have to think about the relationship between that and existing legislation. That's a debate that's got to be had just now as well. So, we're certainly talking, I think, about decisions about legislation and something coming through in the course of the next couple of years. Fortunately, that's not for me; that's for the Welsh Government. But it's an issue that really needs to be taken very seriously. My counsel would be: be cautious about what you put in legislation.

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

[31] **Llyr Gruffydd:** We've heard a lot about the process, the situation as it is, lines of communications et cetera. I'm interested now in your view as to how the Welsh Government has interpreted the vision that you articulated in 'Successful Futures' and, generally, your opinion of the way that it's approaching the implementation.

[32] **Professor Donaldson:** The publication of 'A curriculum for Wales—a curriculum for life', which captures, I think, the undertakings that Welsh Government have made about how they're going to take things forward, has been, I have to say, a pretty faithful attempt to take 68 recommendations—I mean, a very, very comprehensive and complex set of recommendations—and translate them into a working programme: big, broad and complex in itself. But I think the intentions that are embedded in the document 'A curriculum for Wales—a curriculum for life' are a pretty faithful reflection of the recommendations of 'Successful Futures'. So, that starting point is a really good one. The devil, of course, is in the detail: what actually happens after all the complexities that arise in that. But, from my point of view, I was, I have to say, very impressed by the extent to which the Government responded to the review in such a systematic way.

[33] In my experience—and I've worked with a number of governments in different contexts—the temptation is to cherry-pick a report of that kind, and to like bits of it and not like other bits of it. I tried to make clear what I said to Ministers, and also when I met with the Committee in the previous Parliament: that cherry-picking would be likely to undermine what we're talking about, because the proposals were deliberately was constructed as a jigsaw, with lots of pieces that had to come together. The way in which,

strategically, that's being developed, I think, is a pretty faithful reflection of what was called for in 'Successful Futures'.

[34] **Llyr Gruffydd:** And in terms of the main challenges, then—you say it's fraught with complexities and clearly it's such a huge undertaking—what would you highlight as the main risks or challenges of that process?

[35] **Professor Donaldson:** I think, again, based on my experience and research on reform in education systems, one of the biggest challenges is to keep on reminding yourself why you're doing it. Because the tendency, once you get involved—especially in a reform programme as broad as this one—is for it to disaggregate and you start focusing on, 'Well, this is the most important bit', or, 'That's the most important bit', and, actually, creating a simple, powerful message that everyone understands and signs up to is both the most important thing to do and the biggest risk that we lose that.

[36] So, given that there has been and is, as far as I can tell from all my contacts, strong and continuing not just support, but enthusiasm for the four purposes that are in the curriculum, that's what we would like to achieve: that for our young people we've satisfied those four purposes and they come out of the school system reflecting the reality of those four purposes. We must keep on reminding ourselves that that's why we're doing it, so that in all the various hundreds and thousands of decisions that'll have to be taken and are being taken in the course of the whole reform, we're constantly asking ourselves the question about how does this relate back: are we embarking on a different work stream and losing sight of what it is that we're trying to do? So, I think one of the most important tasks and one of the biggest risks is that we lose sight of the prize, and that the reform becomes disaggregated. All the things that will be happening will all be important in their own right, but, actually, the real power of this is the fact that it's all coming together behind a unifying set of purposes, which continue to be the driver.

[37] If we can do that in Wales, if that's something that, actually, we can achieve over the course of quite an elongated programme, that will be a huge achievement. The pressures will all be to go the other way. So, that's probably the thing that worries me most in the programme—not worries me because I think it's happening, but worries me because I think it might happen, because, elsewhere, it has happened.

[38] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Just very briefly, has there been any noticeable

difference in the Government's approach following the election? You urged the new Cabinet Secretary to hold her nerve; has there been any change in approach or is the consistency of approach still there?

[39] **Professor Donaldson:** No. Obviously, with the change of administration—albeit some of the faces remain, but a change of Minister—you always wonder as to whether a new Minister—. Quite rightly, they'll look at things and have to make their own mind up about things. I have to say that the Cabinet Secretary—my discussions with her have not suggested that she has anything other than full confidence and enthusiasm for the process. So, that was good.

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

[41] **Julie Morgan:** Just to pick up, you say you mustn't lose sight of the prize and, obviously, keeping sight of the prize is having the children and young people right in front of you in everything you're doing.

[42] **Professor Donaldson:** Absolutely.

[43] **Julie Morgan:** And you did mention earlier on about having a network of young people who would feed in—have you had anything like that so far in what's happened so far?

[44] **Professor Donaldson:** As part of the role that I have in the independent advisory group, I undertake visits to schools on a very regular basis and will always try to talk to young people as part of that visit and get a chance to engage with them about the nature of—. I try to explain to them what I think is going to happen and see whether or not they like that and sign up to that vision, but also what their worries and concerns are. That also helps—that process helps to remind me that there sometimes can be a tension between what we, as educators, think matters and what children think matters. And particularly—and this came through in the course of the review—their focus on health and well-being as being something that young people feel that schools currently don't do well at all; they were, in general, not very complimentary about personal and social education-type courses in schools, but they also thought it was incredibly important. So, health and well-being is one of the important building blocks in the new curriculum and it's an area of learning and experience in its own right. Meeting with young people just keeps on reminding me about the things that can interfere with their ability to learn, to do with their own well-being and their understanding of how, as

they move through school, they can increasingly see ways in which they can help to take control of their own lives and not feel that they're just simply subject to whatever the pressures of the moment are. That is a very important bit of reminding, but I do think—and that's why we discussed it in IAG—we need to be more systematic about that than simply the visits I'm making to schools, hence the notion of setting up some kind of network.

10:00

[45] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you.

[46] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. We'll move on now to talk about timescales and implementation. I've got John, then Hefin.

[47] **John Griffiths:** Could I start off, Professor Donaldson, by asking you about the transition period? Because, obviously, as you've said, it's a massive change; it's a very important and far-reaching reform that we're engaged upon. Is there a danger, do you think, that, during that transition, some of the children in school at that time may suffer before we get to the new education system that, hopefully, will deliver for young people in Wales?

[48] **Professor Donaldson:** In any change process, there's a risk that the point of change has unintended effects for young people who are in school at that point of change and, therefore, the process by which this morphs from the current system into the new system is an incredibly important one. I do think that the chances of doing that well and minimising those unintended consequences are increased by the involvement of pioneer schools at the heart of the process, because those pioneer schools, of course, have responsibility for the children they have just now. They also have the responsibility to think about the future. So, working with pioneer schools I think will help to keep feet on the ground about the process of how you move from one system to another. Working with the pioneer schools, I think there'll be an opportunity to identify what the implications are of the way in which that process takes place.

[49] I think the fact that the timescale is over a period that's running into the start of the next decade is quite important, and there's not a kind of cliff-edge reform so, in 2018, assuming the new curriculum framework becomes available, every school has to do it instantly. I think the opportunity for that to take place over a two or three-year period, taking us into 2021–22, increases the capacity we have to try to make sure that we manage the

process well in ways that don't damage the children who are there just now.

[50] But, of course, a lot of what's in 'Successful Futures', a lot of what's happening, can be done within the existing framework, and there are schools across Wales that are already exemplifying some of the things that we're talking about. Schools are doing that. The worry that people have is, 'Will this undermine the capacity of young people to do well in GCSEs, if we're changing things up to the age of 14/15 and then they move into GCSE preparation?' There are schools that already, at the existing key stage 3, have been doing some very innovative things and some of the schools I've been in are producing better GCSE results. So, I don't think there's any inevitability about the process in any way undermining the chances of young people who are there, but it is a risk and it needs to be thought through very carefully. The pioneer school approach, I think, will help in that.

[51] **John Griffiths:** Yes, okay. Obviously, the committee's concerned about whether the timescale set out by Welsh Government is realistic and achievable, and I just wonder, really, in your work, heading up the advisory board, and the external engagement that you've had that you described earlier, what you've picked up from the profession from those who are going to have to deliver on the new curriculum, have to deliver the change process? Are you picking up any concerns around the timescales set out by Welsh Government and the doability of this?

[52] **Professor Donaldson:** Inevitably, there are concerns, but I have to say the concerns at the moment go in opposite directions. There's a head of steam that's building up for doing things more quickly, a 'just let us get on with it' pressure that's there, and then there's a countervailing pressure that's saying, 'We're being too ambitious, we'll never do it in the time that's available' and that we ought to elongate the timescale. So, there's nothing that's coming through to me that would conclusively say that the existing timescale is one that it's not possible to deliver the reform within. I have deliberately—and it was said in 'Successful Futures'—counselled not rushing at the reform. When you have a reform that's as radical as this reform—and it's a culture shift we're talking about in terms of the implications of the reform—the risk is that we pick up part of the message and rush in and do something that doesn't reflect, actually, the full potential of what we're talking about, but then that gets locked into the system. So, one of the things that I've counselled in 'Successful Futures', and it has been built into the process, is to take time for people to understand, particularly teachers and headteachers in schools, the full implications and the full import of what

this reform is about. We're now at a point where there is undoubtedly—it's certainly there in the pioneer schools—impatience and a desire to get on and do specific things. All I can say is that education systems across the world would give their eye teeth to have teachers who are desperately asking to be involved in reform rather than reluctantly waiting to be pushed.

[53] **John Griffiths:** Well, I think that's very good to hear. Could I ask: in terms of the four strands that implementation is based upon, which of those presents the greatest challenges in terms of the timescale and the doability element in your view?

[54] **Professor Donaldson:** The four strands—

[55] **John Griffiths:** The four strands that Welsh Government has based the implementation on.

[56] **Professor Donaldson:** They've got the building blocks and the enablers. Do you mean the—

[57] **John Griffiths:** I've got the four strands that I'm referring to: strategic design, which the timetable sets out on; high-level design of the areas of learning; then strand 3, which is fully developing and populating the areas of learning and on from that; and then refinement, testing, preparation and support. There are particular time frames set out for each of those. So I'm just wondering, of those, because that's the basis, really, that we understand roll-out is to take place upon, which might present the greatest challenges.

[58] **Professor Donaldson:** I think the current stage is a move from the kind of broad strategic design to the specifics, the more technical aspects, of what the new curriculum framework will look like. Embedded in that are a lot of really quite complex educational issues about the nature of a framework, about how you best define progression in children's learning, how you best describe the content of the curriculum, and what's the best way to describe that. So, that's just the point that we're at just now in the programme. This is going to be a very critical period, because, after Christmas and the start of the new year, it's very important that the pace increases in terms of addressing the difficult technical questions that are in there. We are at one of those tipping points, I think, in the process. We'll know once we get into the new year just how well that's been done. It's certainly something that's exercising the independent advisory group in looking at the process as a whole and trying to do what we can to offer advice, because we have an



advisory role as well a monitoring role, about some of the issues that are inherent in that. That's going to be a vitally—. The next couple of months are going to be very important.

[59] **John Griffiths:** Okay. I wonder, Chair, if I could just ask briefly on assessment.

[60] **Lynne Neagle:** Very quickly.

[61] **John Griffiths:** Very quickly, then, on assessment, Professor Donaldson, you will know the history of the debate in Wales around assessment and standard attainment tests' abolition, perceived unreliability of teachers' own assessments, et cetera. So, as part of this timescale for implementation, how significant is it, and are we, in what's proposed, going to get it right for the future given that there's a perception that we've had quite a lot of difficulty around that agenda?

[62] **Professor Donaldson:** Yes, I think you're right to identify assessment as one of the trickiest issues in the whole process, because, first of all, as was made clear in 'Successful Futures', we must do all we can to preserve the critical role that assessment plays in helping young people understand how they can progress in their learning, and helping the teachers to understand how to help them do that. And therefore, that notion of assessment as being absolutely integral to learning has to be preserved in the process. What we've had—and this is not by any stretch of the imagination unique to Wales, it's happened in lots of places—is that an understandable desire to improve the nature of accountability, the 'How well are our schools doing?' questions, has in turn led to the nature of assessment being distorted. So the assessment starts to look at what other people are going to think about the results of assessment, rather than how is assessment being used to help young people learn. And the evidence on that is huge, about the distorting effect that that has as soon as you take your eye off the ball in terms of assessment being primarily for children's learning.

[63] So, the nature of what's happening just now, I think, is very important. I think my advice to Welsh Government has been not to look at accountability and assessment together, but to look at a curriculum and assessment framework that will do the job for the young people of Wales and where assessment can play its full role in helping young people to learn, and then we'll think about how do we establish the mechanisms for accountability that don't undermine that framework. But the stricture will be that that

accountability must not undermine the role of assessment in helping young people to learn. And one of the risks at the moment is that we're ending up with a situation where, in the way the system works, we've got data that come out of the system that are neither very reliable for accountability purposes, nor very good in terms of helping young people to learn. And the challenge where we are just now is to get it right in terms of learning and then think of the accountability—what we need in order to satisfy you and others that the schools and the school system are working as well as they should be.

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

[65] **Hefin David:** Thank you, Chair. How prepared are teachers for what you've already described as a daunting and complex culture change?

[66] **Professor Donaldson:** Well, at the moment, teachers quite naturally are focused on and have been focused on the current system. I think the work that's been done with pioneer schools—. The emphasis now—the strong emphasis—on the kind of learning that needs to take place on teachers' part in order to be able to realise the full potential of the opportunities of the new curriculum—. I think the involvement, interestingly, of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in terms of working with a number of pioneer schools to think about how schools themselves learn, how we learn about how best to serve children, and that's the work the OECD are doing—that obviously links to what that means for teachers.

[67] **Hefin David:** But if I'm a teacher in a school, how do I feel, and how am I going to be prepared?

[68] **Professor Donaldson:** Well, that's not a question I can answer, because those are decisions to be taken by Welsh Government, but I do think that the process that's under way is one that recognises the need to prepare teachers for the new curriculum, and do that now, rather than wait until the new curriculum exists. So, I would expect, over the course of the next year, a lot of work to be done in terms of professional learning, but building out from the pioneer schools, because for identifying what that professional learning means, it's the pioneer schools that will help to identify where the needs are, what the needs are and how you do it, and then you—

[69] **Hefin David:** But your changes aren't going to work if teachers aren't adequately prepared, so I would have thought it would be an important part

of your planning process to advise Welsh Government on how teachers can be prepared for this.

[70] **Professor Donaldson:** And that's a process that is under way just now, in terms of thinking through the nature of the way in which the professional learning is going to take place. I think the switch in thinking from the new deal to thinking more broadly about professional learning is the first sign of that, because it's a recognition that there's a need to think about this afresh. And it's true not just in Wales, but elsewhere, that the focus on professional learning is very important. But professional learning has to take place in relation to something—you know, you can't just do professional learning per se. So, I think the point at which the professional learning process goes up a gear, or goes up a number of gears, will have to work as the shape of the new curriculum becomes clear. So, I think it's in the course of 2017 that that process begins to jack up, because if you start doing a lot of professional learning in an apparent vacuum and it's not relating to—. You know, people say, 'What actually are we talking about here?' Well, you've got to know what you're talking about. Teachers naturally want to know what the new frameworks are going to look like. Professional learning really has got to be geared to the new framework that will be emerging over the course of the year.

10:15

[71] **Hefin David:** I'm concerned there's a gap there, and I'm concerned there's not enough, perhaps, reflective practice going on. Have you had dialogue with universities that are engaging heavily in teacher training and development?

[72] **Professor Donaldson:** Well, I have, yes, but I must remind you I'm an adviser to this process; I don't run the process. I'm not responsible for the process as—

[73] **Hefin David:** 'Are they prepared?' I suppose is what I'm asking.

[74] **Professor Donaldson:** I know that the John Furlong report, 'Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers', said some very radical things about how we prepare new teachers for the new curriculum, but also more generally, and I know there are discussions taking place with all of the universities in Wales that are involved in teacher education to try to ensure that the universities understand the role that they need to play and that, where necessary, they

can up their game in relation to that. So, I think there's certainly a job to be done in terms of the nature of the university sector in Wales. Some universities are already rising to that challenge and have quite radically moved forward. Others are a bit slower in that, but I think the process is under way to make that happen, and it's not just initial teacher education, obviously, it's also the teachers that are in schools just now. A lot of that has to happen through the consortia. A lot of that has to happen through the processes that we have in place for professional learning changing to address the new curriculum.

[75] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. How important is Professor Furlong's role on the advisory board, then, in taking forward these issues specifically?

[76] **Professor Donaldson:** Very important. I was delighted that Professor Furlong accepted the invitation to join the board, and that aspect of what we do, which I think was the implication of the question, will become increasingly important in the course of this year. A lot of the early work has been around thinking about the nature of the curriculum and some of the issues embedded in that, and getting the strategic direction right. I think the phase that the Government is now moving into, and the whole reform programme is now moving into, has to look very hard at those things that need to happen, and teacher education and teacher learning are a very important part of that phase. John Furlong is right at the heart of that process.

[77] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Michelle.

[78] **Michelle Brown:** Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to—. The pioneer schools are responsible for working out the detail of the curriculum. Is that right? How is the actual content of the curriculum that the schools will be delivering finalised and actually signed off, if you like? And who's ultimately going to be accountable for the decision over what to put in the curriculum?

[79] **Professor Donaldson:** The nature of the fleshing out of the curriculum, as it currently stands, which is the process that's about to get under way—the pioneer schools are at the heart of that process, but not just the pioneer schools. So, in addition to that, what will be made available to those who are fleshing out the curriculum is different kinds of expertise. There's the expertise of the teachers and the schools, but there's also subject expertise, which is very important. So, if we're going to ensure that the teaching of science in Wales is as good as it can be, then we've got to use the expertise

in the schools but we've also got to bring in expertise that reflects leading thinking about the nature of science and the nature of science education. The process will bring not just the schools themselves—their expertise matters—but will bring other forms of expertise to bear in order that we ensure that what comes out of this process is right at the leading thinking about the nature, for example, of science education.

[80] The formal process, I suppose, that would be gone through is that overall responsibility for this lies with the change board, which is chaired by a deputy Permanent Secretary, Owen Evans. That, I suppose, is the point at which decisions would be taken and advice given to Welsh Government and to Ministers about the final shape of the programme. So, the process I think will be quite—. There will be moves between the way thinking is developing, evaluation of that, going back, and that becoming a process that's going to take place over a period of time. The best model for that, and the thing that gives me some confidence that this is a process that can work, is the way in which the digital competence framework was developed. What that involved was a group of pioneer schools that were brought together and given the challenge of what is it that the young people of Wales—. What's the competence they need to develop, in the digital world that we are dealing with, that goes beyond the ability just to use the apps that are around and be comfortable on social networking and so on? But there was also expertise in the whole area of thinking about digital competence from universities and elsewhere that was made available to the digital pioneer schools. There was a process that was gone through of producing initial versions of it, revisions to that, further versions of it and revisions to that. So, that kind of process eventually led to the digital competence framework as we now see it, which was then signed off by the decision structure, and the Cabinet Secretary authorised it to be made available more generally.

[81] **Michelle Brown:** Right. So, the change board is responsible for actually authorising the final content. Am I right in—?

[82] **Professor Donaldson:** The change board is the top of the pyramid in terms of the decision-making strategy.

[83] **Michelle Brown:** Okay. And how accountable are they, and to whom? I'm sorry, that might not be within your sphere.

[84] **Professor Donaldson:** It isn't, but it would operate within the normal framework—the change board and the Welsh Government, which is obviously

accountable to the Welsh Assembly, and that's my understanding of the process that would take place at those very high-level parts of the system.

[85] **Michelle Brown:** Okay, thank you.

[86] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr, then Darren.

[87] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Primary schools clearly have a key role to play in this, but what would your advice be to Government about making sure that non-pioneer schools as well are very much on board and in the loop, because there is a message or a signal coming back from many schools that they are concerned that they're not maybe part of this process as maybe they would wish? And in our evidence, for example, we've had, from the Education Workforce Council, concerns about a growing sense of a two-tier system that could be potentially divisive and unnecessary. To what extent do you think that's a valid concern, and how do you think we could mitigate the risk of maybe only taking a small number of schools with us on this journey and maybe leaving the others behind?

[88] **Professor Donaldson:** It's a valid concern. It's one that the independent advisory group has been addressing and asking questions about in the process. It seems to me that the pioneer schools should see themselves as being the ones that will be directly involved in the process of taking this through, but they should be working with their partner schools, with the schools within their learning community, or more widely, so that every school in Wales is both kept informed about how this is going. Pioneer schools are a key part of the process by which that happens, but others also get a chance to contribute to that process. And, as I understand it, the discussions that are taking place just now are looking at ways in which the consortia and the local authorities can ensure that that process is actually happening on the ground, and that we have a process, because if we do end up with a kind of elite set of schools that are going off in one direction, and everybody else is wondering what's happening, then this will not have worked as a process.

[89] So, it's very important that the school system as a whole is moving forward. The pioneer schools will be the spearhead of that, if you like, but it's not them on their own that need to do it. And therefore, the way in which pioneer schools can work with the partner schools around them is the critical thing we need to establish.

[90] **Llyr Gruffydd:** But that in itself is a challenge because of capacity, I'd imagine, for those individuals who are fully involved. Not only are they developing the curriculum, but also now they're being asked to go to other places to explain to others. It's a lot of time out of the classroom for some of these people.

[91] **Professor Donaldson:** That may be an issue in terms of how we do it, but there are lots of opportunities for heads to meet in areas and so on. I think it's what you do inside those meetings that becomes important. So, it's getting it on the agenda, it's establishing the context within which this can happen, using existing mechanisms, that I think is the way to do it in the short run. As we move forward, and the thing becomes—. As the substance of what it is that we're talking about becomes clear, then we need a more direct process of engaging with all schools. But that's a little bit down the line.

[92] As I say, we're just at that point where the risk is, if you go too hard and there's not a lot of substance, you know, because the hard thinking hasn't been done, you'll have people saying, 'I'm not quite sure what this all adds up to; I don't understand what you're talking about'. So, there's a timing issue in all of this that is very important, I think, and that will be a call for both Welsh Government and the consortia and local authorities in the course of 2017 as we move into September 2018 and this being available.

[93] But there will be both time and opportunity to do that; it's more, I think, the mood music that's around. If the mood music, if the kind of implication, is that there are schools that are doing it and schools that aren't, we'll have got it wrong. We've really got to try and create the context where all schools are thinking about the way ahead—and many are, because I've been to many schools that aren't part of the pioneer network, but they're already saying and wanting to show me, 'These are the kinds of things that were doing; this is the thinking that were undertaking in order to do it'. So, there's an encouraging desire to move forward, and, as I said earlier, a lot of countries would give their eye teeth to have a schools system that's complaining about not being allowed to reform, rather than complaining about being forced to reform.

[94] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Darren.

[95] **Darren Millar:** Yes, I'm also concerned about this capacity issue of pioneer schools to meet the aspiration to be developing the curriculum and

talking to everybody else about what they're doing, and I wonder to what extent the independent advisory group has made any recommendations to the Government about releasing extra resources to those schools to help them to fulfil the aspirations that you have for them to be developing this in a subsidiarity sort of way, rather than there being a top-down approach?

[96] **Professor Donaldson:** I think we're not at that stage yet. You know, as I say, during the course of the next calendar year, there will be a call about what the implications are in terms of using pioneer schools as being at the centre of a network as advocates—. Because one of the huge strengths of this pioneer process, if it's got right, is that, instead of schools being told by people like me, you know, who are out there somewhere, 'This is what you need to do', they will actually have in their local area schools that have been involved in the process, and they can be in a position to both explain and advocate what they do. That's what's happening with the digital competence framework just now. So, the signs are that this is something that can be made to work, but it will require very close monitoring as the process goes forward, and, inevitably, there'll be areas that move forward further than others, there'll be difficulties that emerge in the process, and I think the consortia will play a very important part in that, because there is a lot of resource is tied up in consortia.

[97] **Darren Millar:** Obviously, with a framework, though, that's cross-cutting across all subjects, across the whole of the school. When you're talking about the areas of learning, they're tighter, aren't they? You're talking about curriculums for subjects, effectively. So, I mean, isn't it a bit odd to compare that to the digital competence framework and that giving you a high level of confidence in the ability to change the curriculum to meet the recommendations that you've made?

[98] **Professor Donaldson:** I think the process of the DCF, the digital competence framework, if that hadn't worked, it would be very worrying. You know, if what we're seeing was a process where, somewhere or other, we didn't produce something that commanded confidence. But the reaction to the digital competence framework, from well beyond the pioneer schools that were involved in the process, has been incredibly strong and positive. So, I think, as a way of thinking about how you build support for reform, and understanding about reform, then what we've seen with the digital competence framework certainly would give me some confidence that, although it's on a different scale and it's in a different context, that process, that way of thinking, is one that we can pursue. And remember, we're talking



about the framework becoming available in September 2018, and we're into 2021 before we're talking about widespread adoption. So, there's a long period of time during which schools can partly dictate the pace at which they move during that period. Therefore, there are all sorts of opportunities for phasing, for focusing attention and resource on particular areas. Now, it's not my job to do that, but I think that, in principle, both the timescale and the experience we have with the digital competence framework suggest this is doable.

[99] **Darren Millar:** So, the digital competence framework is available. We know that 2021 is the deadline for its statutory implementation, if you like. But, on top of that, all of these other new parts of the curriculum are going to be coming through, and everybody's going to be expected to deliver all of that in addition to the digital competence framework, which sounds very reasonable and relaxed in terms of the way it's being implemented. So, this is going to be a much bigger challenge than, perhaps, you're making out, isn't it, Professor Donaldson, in terms of the capacity of schools to be able to deliver all of this change, especially as we approach the 2021 timetable?

10:30

[100] **Professor Donaldson:** That may be right, but I don't think it necessarily is right. I think that the process that we're talking about is one that, given the timescale that we're looking at, allows a fairly sophisticated process of engagement with different departments. In secondary schools, it's not a whole-curriculum commitment—you've got a subject department, so it's science you're talking about, or it's maths, or it's any other department. So, that is a bit analogous to the digital competence framework. In primary schools, it's a broader approach to the curriculum, but a lot of the kind of thinking that lies behind 'Successful Futures', primary teachers are already almost intuitively are attracted towards that—that way of thinking.

[101] So, I think the issue is a real one. I think it needs to be thought through very carefully, but, from where I sit at the moment, it doesn't look to me as if this is a showstopper and just can't be done. I think it'll be challenging, but I think it's a reasonable prospect if it's managed properly.

[102] **Darren Millar:** Just—

[103] **Lynne Neagle:** Very quickly.

[104] **Darren Millar:** Yes, just in terms of the implementation of the subjects—the areas of learning—would it not be better to phase that approach by subject, rather than all subjects becoming available on a single date, in terms of the timetable that we've got at the moment?

[105] **Professor Donaldson:** Well, by implication, because there's a two or three-year window after it becomes available, it is being phased, because schools can determine the pace at which they go so that they can focus on particular bits of the curriculum over a two or three-year period. So, there's a lot of flexibility built in there that does allow for, I think, a kind of phasing. As I say, 2018 is not a cliff edge—it's not all got to happen instantly in September 2018. There's quite a lengthy period that allows for that to be a managed process. But, the issue is a real one—it needs to be well managed if that's to happen. It needs to be thought about very carefully, and any additional resource implications have to be identified early and catered for in the process.

[106] **Darren Millar:** Okay, thanks.

[107] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you very much. We've run out of time. We've had a very good session. Can I thank you for attending this morning? I'm sure Members have all found the opportunity to talk to you very useful, so thank you very much for your time and for attending. We will send you a transcript of the meeting this morning for you to check for accuracy. Thank you.

[108] **Darren Millar:** Can I just ask a question, Chair? Does the independent advisory group produce minutes of its meetings?

[109] **Professor Donaldson:** Yes.

[110] **Darren Millar:** Are they publicly available?

[111] **Professor Donaldson:** Yes.

[112] **Darren Millar:** Okay, thanks.

[113] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you very much, Professor Donaldson.

10:34

**Gweithredu Dyfodol Llwyddiannus: Adolygiad Annibynnol o'r  
Cwricwlwm a Threfniadau Asesu yng Nghymru: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 2  
The Implementation of the Review Successful Futures: Independent  
Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales:  
Evidence Session 2**

[114] **Lynne Neagle:** We'll move on now to our second evidence session this morning. I'm delighted to welcome two representatives of pioneer schools to talk to us this morning: Luke Mansfield from St Julian's Primary School in Newport, and Eirian Davies from Ysgol y Strade in Llanelli. Thank you very much, both, for coming. I know that you've also come at short notice, so we're very grateful to you for that. Would you like to make some opening remarks?

[115] **Mr Mansfield:** Yes, it's a fantastic opportunity to have been involved in curriculum reform like this—it's never been done before—and to be working with the Welsh Government. Teachers, historically, are told what to do by the Welsh Government, and we just do what we're told, so it's great to have the opportunity to work together and to bring in experts as well to look at how we can really raise the standard of education for our learners in Wales.

[116] **Mr Davies:** Yes, I'd like to echo those remarks. We're thrilled to be a part of it, and it's such an exciting venture for us in Wales, to be different again, to be the leaders. I think we're at the stage now, and listening to the debate so far here, where there's an eagerness to get on with it, there's an eagerness to progress, and some elements, possibly, of frustration in leading that change. We're in that middle period at the moment, but there's definitely a lot of enthusiasm within schools at the moment to get this done and to get this done well.

[117] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you very much. We'll go to questions from Members now. If I can just start by asking you to maybe say a little bit about whether you're involved in curriculum or professional development, and which working group you're involved in.

[118] **Mr Davies:** A ydw i'n gallu **Mr Davies:** Can I turn to Welsh on mynd i'r Gymraeg ar hyn? A ydy this, if that's okay?  
hynny'n iawn?

[119] Wel, rydw i'n bennaeth Well, I'm an assistant headteacher at

cynorthwyol yn Ysgol y Strade yn Llanelli. Rŷm ni'n ysgol ddwyieithog â Chymraeg fel iaith gyntaf. Rŷm ni yn gyfrifol, neu wedi cael y cyfrifoldeb am arwain ar ochr datblygiad proffesiynol i staff. Mae gyda ni dros 1,000 o ddisgyblion yn yr ysgol.

Ysgol y Strade, Llanelli. We're a bilingual school and Welsh is our first language. We are responsible, or have had the responsibility, of leading on the professional development side for staff. We have over 1,000 pupils at the school.

[120] Rŷm ni wedi adnabod ers rhyw dair neu bedair blynedd bellach bwysigrwydd datblygiad proffesiynol i'n staff ni er mwyn sicrhau cynnydd disgyblion. Dyna ein prif ffocws ni. Cynnydd disgyblion yw'r peth y dylai fod ar flaen y gad a dylai fod yn un o'r blaenoriaethau wrth i ni symud ymlaen i'r dyfodol. Rydw i wedi clywed yn barod o fewn yr ystafell hon y pryder, o bosibl, yn y cyfnod yma o newid, ein bod ni'n colli cenhedlaeth o blant sydd yng nghanol y newid. Mae angen i ni sicrhau yn y cyfamser bod ein staff ni yn barod, bod ein staff ni â'r gallu i gwrdd â'r her yma o newid sydd o'n blaen ni.

We have identified, for about three or four years, the importance of professional development for our staff in order ensure the progress of our pupils. That has been our main focus—the progress of pupils should be at the forefront of our minds and our priority as we move ahead in the future. I've already heard it mentioned here that the concern in this period of change is that we might lose a generation of children, possibly, namely those who are in the middle of this change. So, we need to ensure in the meantime that our staff are prepared, that our staff have the ability to meet this challenge of change that lies ahead of us.

[121] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Mr Mansfield.

[122] **Mr Mansfield:** Nid ydw i'n gallu siarad Cymraeg. Rydw i'n dysgu.

**Mr Mansfield:** I can't speak Welsh. I'm a learner.

[123] So, I'm going to talk in English if that's okay. So, I'm deputy headteacher at St Julian's Primary School in Newport. It's a large primary school, with over 600 pupils on roll. We've been involved as a digital pioneer, but also with the professional learning pioneer as well. We've been involved in all sorts of aspects of the curriculum development, looking at working with the consortia and how we can basically build networks around our area to bring the partner schools on board, to make sure that everybody's on board with this, because it's very easy for non-pioneer schools to feel like they're not part of this process, and we don't want this to be something that is a

new curriculum for a certain, select number of schools. This is something for all schools in Wales, so we've been really conscious of building networks to work with other schools and to get key messages out. Communication is vital, particularly around this time, and so that's been a key role, particularly in our group of digital pioneers, looking at how we get the key messages out based around the digital competence framework.

[124] So, we're currently looking at how the digital competence framework, obviously, being a cross-competency skill, can feed into the other areas of the learning experience, and also how to look at professional development for teachers in this area. When you say 'digital competence' to teachers, it's often the thing that scares teachers and makes them panic, thinking, 'Oh no'. We were saying, teachers sometimes say, 'Well, I can check my e-mails and I can make a PowerPoint presentation, but what's all the rest of this digital competence?' I think it's really important that we look at how digital competence can be mapped across all the areas of learning and experience, but also how we can develop teachers and school staff to equip them with the necessary skills they need. Often, children will come in and, dare I say it, they're 10 steps ahead of the teacher in digital technology. So, it's really supporting teachers in developing their skill set, and also looking at how we can effectively map these skills across the curriculum.

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

[126] **Julie Morgan:** It's great that you're so enthusiastic. That's very encouraging. On your relationship with the non-pioneer schools, you said you made a particular effort to reach out. Could you tell us what form that takes and how they have responded to your efforts?

[127] **Mr Mansfield:** Certainly. I've spoken at many of the curriculum pioneer events and new deal pioneer events, and things are often leaked and put on Twitter. So, different messages get out and it really started from that. We've been working with the consortia and we were already involved in going to train various schools in different elements. Programming became a big thing in primary, teaching children computational thinking and how to solve problems, and so we were already offering, as a school, workshops for other teachers to come and be involved in. From that, people heard that we were involved in curriculum development and it really just started with e-mails being sent back and forth. You'll get a school saying, 'We've heard you've been involved with the digital competence framework, can you come and talk to us about it?' and I think that's key—breaking down the barriers of schools

feeling like they can't ask other schools for help.

[128] The culture that we work in in education is often one of competition with each other and it's systemic through the whole education system, actually. We need to break down those barriers and look at how we can support other schools and work together to share best practice, to know of schools that are great in certain areas. So, you know, the school down the road is brilliant at, say, assessments, and so we can learn from them and what can they get back from us in return? So, we built up these networks, almost, of people who I just had contacts with and then they would talk to their colleagues, and when you start to impact one network, it then spreads out and things do get out and things do spread. Obviously social media and the internet are a fantastic way to get key things out as well, so we're constantly posting things on our Twitter account. And again, working with the other pioneers to really look at how we best get the networks—and the consortia have had a key role to play in that.

[129] Being part of the Education Achievement Service consortium, we were already delivering various workshops, like I say, but now our role is split into two, really: looking at how we impact wider Wales and working with Welsh Government, but also working with the consortia to impact regionally and get the messages out. We've got some events coming up. There's a teach-meet-style event with lots of short presentations to get key messages out really quickly. So, yes, it's really looking at local schools and the context that they have and also bringing together regional, wider events as well.

[130] **Julie Morgan:** So, you feel that the non-pioneer schools in your area are very aware of what's happening and are drawn into it, overall. Would you say that?

[131] **Mr Mansfield:** I'd like to think so. There's certainly a lot of work being done. Communication is a two-way thing, I always say, and you can give all the messages you like and you can speak at as many schools—. I've done over 15 in-service training days and staff training events recently, but unless the—. Schools all know that there's a new curriculum coming and schools really have to take ownership of it themselves, whether they're a pioneer or not, and get involved. There's plenty of information going out there and it's really encouraging all schools to get involved in the process and seek the information for themselves as well. But, yes, I'd like to think that all schools feel like they're kept informed—

[132] **Julie Morgan:** But you don't know.

[133] **Mr Mansfield:** It's difficult to talk, because obviously, being in the networks that I'm in, I'm very well informed.

[134] **Lynne Neagle:** Mr Davies, have you got anything to add to that?

[135] **Mr Davies:** No, I think I'd agree completely with what Luke was saying. One of the biggest frustrations, I think, for schools that are not involved in the project is that they are currently labelled as 'non-pioneers' and that is very far from the truth. There is a lot of excellent practice that happens within those schools that we need to learn from as well. As a Welsh-medium school and as a Welsh-medium secondary community, I think we're probably slightly ahead of the game in terms of networking, due to necessity, due to the fact that the resources, possibly, aren't as widely available as they are in the English-medium sector. We have had to, over the past years, develop these strong network links and those links are now coming to the fore in terms of being able to share good practice, and in terms of being able to share resources.

[136] One of the biggest strengths for us, as an individual school, due to this project, is that we've developed a new network of Welsh-medium and bilingual schools that are now working in partnership. We meet regularly, we've invested time in developing lesson observation success criteria that are common throughout the schools. The aim of that being, when we observe lessons, we observe them to the same standard and we're able to compare across schools. We're now looking forward to next year, now that we have our initial baseline and recommendations for teachers within our schools, to develop learning triads across the network in order to share good practice. It works very well within schools, but this has given us much greater scope to look outwards, within that context.

[137] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr, then Darren on this.

10:45

[138] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Diolch, **Llyr Gruffydd:** Thank you, Chair. I Gadeirydd. Rydw i jest eisiau gofyn, would just like to ask, please, you're rŷch chi'n sŷn am y gwaith rŷch chi'n talking about the work that you do in ei wneud yn datblygu'r cwricwlwm, developing the curriculum, but also ond hefyd yn mynd mas i siarad ag going out and speaking to other

eraill—roeddech chi'n sôn am 15 diwrnod INSET ac yn y blaen—ble mae hynny'n eich gadael chi o safbwynt capasiti a'r adnoddau dynol sydd gennych chi i wneud eich gwaith o ddydd i ddydd, oherwydd yn amlwg rŷch chi'n cael eich tynnu i fwy nag un cyfeiriad? A oes yna gymorth ychwanegol yn dod o rywle, neu a oes angen cymorth ychwanegol arnoch chi?

[139] **Mr Davies:** Mae'n her. Mae'n bwysau gwaith ychwanegol, yn sicr, ar uwch-dîm arwain yr ysgol. Mae'r rhan fwyaf ohono fe yn cwmpo wrth ddesg un person. Beth sy'n bwysig, a beth rŷm ni wedi trio ei wneud yw creu'r rhwydwaith, fel roeddwn i'n dweud, fel bod modd rhannu'r baich yna, fel bod modd benthyg arbenigedd o un ysgol i'r llall. Ond efallai bod heddiw'n enghraifft dda: rŷm ni'n eistedd yn fan hyn heddiw oherwydd bod e-bost wedi cyrraedd ddydd Mercher diwethaf yn gofyn i ni fod yma. Mae wedi achosi'r anghenraid i warchod gwersi o fewn yr ysgol, ac mae hynny'n rhywbeth nid ydych yn ei gael yn ôl, ac mae'n rhaid bod yn ofalus iawn, rwy'n meddwl, i sicrhau ein bod ni'n mynychu'r digwyddiadau sydd wir yn symud y project ymlaen. Ac rwy'n meddwl, heb fod yn rhy 'controversial' yn hyn, rwy'n meddwl bod yna ymdeimlad, weithiau, nad yw rhai o'r cyfarfodydd yn symud yr agenda ymlaen yn ddigonol, a'u bod yn cymryd ychydig yn ormod o amser athrawon allan. Mae rhai

schools—you mentioned 15 INSET days there—where does that leave you in relation to capacity and the staff resources that you have to do your day-to-day work, because obviously you're being pulled in more than one direction? Is there any additional help available, or do you need additional help from anyone?

**Mr Davies:** It's a challenge. It's additional work pressure, certainly, on the senior leadership team in the school. The majority of it falls on the desk of one person. What's important, and what we've sought to do, is to try to create the network that I talked about so that we can share that burden, and that we can borrow expertise from one school or another. But perhaps today is a good example, because here we are, sitting here today, because an e-mail arrived last Wednesday requesting our presence. And it has caused it to be necessary to cover lessons within the school, and that is something that you don't get back, and you have to be very careful, I think, to ensure that we do attend the events that truly do move the project forward. And, without being too controversial here, I do think that there's a sense, sometimes, that some of the meetings do not move that agenda forward sufficiently, and that it takes a little too much of the teacher's time away from the school. There have been some two-day



digwyddiadau deuddydd wedi bod ar events that we've had where, ein cyfer ni, lle yn wir efallai y buasai honestly, it might have been possible wedi bod yn bosib i gwtogi'r rheini i to have that as a day's work and ddiwrnod o waith ac eto, trwy then, through networking, to share rwydweithio wedyn, i rannu a lledu'r the message. So, it is a heavy neges. Felly, mae hi yn drwm; dyna'r workload; that's the simple answer. ateb syml.

[140] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Darren.

[141] **Darren Millar:** You're obviously here today because you're shining examples of pioneer schools that are doing the work well and you're clearly networking with others, and that's all great and good, but to what extent are you communicating with other pioneer schools, not just the non-pioneer schools, but other pioneer schools? And is their experience the same as yours, or not, particularly outside of your current consortia areas?

[142] **Mr Mansfield:** One of the great things that's happened at a lot of these events, particularly in the earlier events, was the chance to meet other staff, other professionals, and find out about their context and what they're doing well. This is something we want to keep doing and driving forward, because obviously all the pioneers are now experimenting and doing things in their own schools, and it's important we all share things, and we have to be honest with each other about what works well and what doesn't, and they're important things to share with each other, even as pioneer schools. I think I can talk from the digital pioneer perspective on this.

[143] With 13 main digital pioneer schools, spread out across Wales, communication is difficult at the best of times, and we've been meeting, and we have our two-day meetings spread out throughout the year. But one of the ways that we've been doing this is using all the online resources that we've got. E-mails are going out, lots of video-calling is going on, particularly when you've got people in north Wales and people in south Wales who are working on the same sub-group of the digital pioneer group, trying to share ideas and work together. Technology moves along so fast, as I'm sure you'll be aware. So, when we started back in September, there were certain things available that we were using in our schools and we said, 'This is great, we need to share this; let's get this out to teachers.' Now, we've moved on so much and it's just great to have those connections with like-minded people, if you like, really seeking out the best tools for developing digital competence and how to move teaching and learning forward. And so

it's something that, I think, is being done, but always needs to be done further and the mechanisms to do that need to be developed as well.

[144] **Darren Millar:** Is that your experience too?

[145] **Mr Davies:** It is, yes; a very similar experience. I think the partnerships that we've developed were born from the necessity of attending meetings, as the new deal pioneers, as it began—we were told abruptly that we were no longer new deal pioneers a month or so ago. But, in terms of the partnerships we developed, they were due to the fact that we could see that there was speciality within one school that we didn't particularly have, and therefore sharing that expertise was essential to us to be able to deliver on our programme and share the workload.

[146] **Darren Millar:** Okay. And just in terms of the greater number of pioneer schools, now that it's been broadened out, particularly on the digital competency framework, one thing that some organisations are telling us is that not all of the teachers in those schools know that they are in pioneer schools, which seems quite bizarre. You've obviously disseminated the fact that you're a pioneer school to all of the staff and are trying to get them involved, probably because the issues that you're talking about are cross-cutting, across the whole of the curriculum, in terms of teacher training and assessment, and in terms of digital competency. Do you think that the experience of other pioneer schools is as good as yours in every case, or is some of the feedback you're getting that there is perhaps a different picture in some parts of Wales, particularly for those subjects? I appreciate you're not subject pioneers as such, but can you give us any feedback on that?

[147] **Mr Mansfield:** I think it comes down to leadership and how the leadership handle the role. Back when we were selected as pioneer schools, it was sort of an application process. We submitted the application and the consortia then helped to decide who should be selected as the pioneer schools. And I think straight away the schools thought, 'Wonderful, but what exactly are we letting ourselves in for?' There were some clear things in the application that we knew that we'd be doing, but developing a new curriculum, I always say, is a messy process, because nobody really knows exactly what we're aiming to get. We know we want a new curriculum, but exactly what it'll look like and how it'll evolve was a mystery at the start. I think some pioneer schools might say that they're not entirely sure exactly what their role would be. The digital competence framework was slightly different because it was a smaller group, and we made progress—again, not

so much at the start, but then things started to speed up and as it gathered motion and the deadline was approaching, things started to take shape and to form.

[148] But it really strongly depends on the leadership within the school as to how much they share the messages with their own staff. Again, the size of the school—we've got a very big school—and sometimes getting messages out to the whole staff and helping everybody to have buy in is a difficult thing. From the point of all staff feeling involved in the process, we've really tried to keep staff up to date and to keep governors up to date about the things that are going on.

[149] It's very easy—. With digital skills in school, you will often find the schools that thrive the most have that one passionate person who loves technology. The minute something new comes out, they're reading about it and then they're buying it, saving up their pay packets to be able to afford the latest thing. And they're the schools that are often far ahead with technology, just being driven by one person, but it's sharing that message. I think it's important for pioneer schools to make sure that that doesn't just stop with that one person in the school—that it is shared. It's something that we're working on in school at the moment as well, to make sure that we're forming a team of people who are really going to drive this forward, and trial things and experiment with things. Now that the framework is out, it's ready to be tried and tested and that's the responsibility, actually, of everyone in the school, and it's important that everybody has the chance to feed back on that.

[150] **Mr Davies:** Possibly our experience as a professional development school—a former new deal school—is different to the digital pioneers. The digital pioneers had some very clear ideas from the start of where they needed to reach, whereas as a professional development school, we were at the beginning waiting to see a framework that we could build around, because it's very difficult to train staff for something that doesn't exist.

[151] I think that frustration was something that built over the first few months, and it led to the development of partnerships that then had their own ideas. The possible concern with that is that there are many, many ideas now spread throughout the entire network that haven't been brought together yet. That needs to be the next step now, in bringing those ideas together, bringing some collaboration within a smaller steering group, possibly. A room with 100-plus teachers in there, all with their different

roles and ideas, isn't the way to bring those together, so possibly the consortia need to have a mechanism by which they can bring the ideas together in terms of the development of staff. I think now our work as a professional development school really starts in earnest, as we build on the digital pioneers, and as we build on what we can see that's been brought out from the curriculum is coming to fruition.

[152] In terms of your point about schools not being aware of the fact that they're pioneer schools, I do have to point out respectfully at this point as well that in terms of the school—sorry, I've got the Welsh term, '*rheoli perfformiad*'—the performance management within the school asks them to reach targets at GCSE, to reach targets at key stage 3 and to ensure that pupils show progress. I find it very difficult sometimes to have those conversations with teachers about the pioneer network because, actually, at the moment it's nothing to do with what they're doing in the classroom with the children.

[153] Coming back to the question, I listened to you asking Professor Donaldson earlier regarding the implementation and the dangers involved with that. Teachers are still very much focused on the curriculum that we have currently and the measures that we have currently for accountability, and that is at the forefront of their minds and of school leaders' minds. Where we go from there, I'm not entirely sure.

[154] **Darren Millar:** Just one final question. Obviously, you've grasped this opportunity to be involved in shaping the new curriculum as individual schools, and what you've described seems to be a sort of organic growth in the pace and the shaping over the period of time that you've been involved. To what extent has that been led, if you like—the shaping of the digital competency, and the shaping of the professional development work that you're doing—by the consortia, rather than from the schools up? Which way round is it? Or is it a bit of both?

[155] **Mr Mansfield:** It's been interesting. We met, like I say, back last September, and started to put together this thing. We met in a room in City Hall in Cardiff and the teachers kind of arrived. Even though we knew this was a curriculum that was being developed with teachers, and the teachers were leading on this, we kind of arrived waiting to be led. And the personnel from Welsh Government sort of stood in front of us and said, 'This is what we're aiming for; now, let's go for it, what we do we need to do?' And, we as teachers, went, 'We don't know, we don't know exactly what we're aiming

for.’ And, so, we started to research things. The initial period was incredibly slow and, often, we were leaving meetings feeling really disheartened, thinking, ‘What have we accomplished? Have we accomplished anything at all?’ We’d have long discussions about this, throwing ideas around, and discussing what does a digitally competent 10-year-old or 14-year-old look like, and how do we then make that happen, or how do we equip them properly with the curriculum. But, actually, it felt like there was very little leadership.

[156] Now, that could have been on purpose, in that, I think, for any pioneering work to be done, there needs to be that period of panic. And it’s after that initial period when you think, ‘I don’t really know what to do’ that you start to develop things. And you look at all the great pioneers through history—they’ve all had that period of frustration and panic, and then it sort of leads to something great. I don’t think we’re at the great point yet. I think we’re on our way there, we’re on a journey there, and there’s certainly a lot to be learnt, but from a leadership point of view, it has felt frustrating at times, feeling like there hasn’t really been any clear leadership, which may be right, or maybe we could have done with some clearer leadership to really point us in the right direction. We’re classroom practitioners, and that’s our expertise, but it’s important that this is done with experts, advising and guiding, and also with wider stakeholders as well.

[157] **Darren Millar:** And you said that that deadline focused people’s attention—

[158] **Mr Mansfield:** Absolutely.

[159] **Darren Millar:** —and there was an acceleration of pace. That was your experience too, was it?

[160] **Mr Davies:** Again, slightly different for us, because we didn’t have a clear goal, but also, we had nothing to build on. So, it wasn’t possible to sit down in the same way with the digital competency and the curriculum to think ‘What should a 10-year old achieve, what should an 11-year-old achieve?’ and so on. So, we had this kind of cryptic idea. We had the professional standards for teachers. However, those, we knew, were being reformed, and therefore, there was very little point in producing a package based on those. Had we been able to hit the rewind button, I think the first step should have been that the professional development schools looked at the professional standards of teachers, get those in place, and then we’d

have a framework to build on.

[161] Now, our school is part of that committee that is trialling out the new standards, and it's a very positive thing, because we now have a clearer idea of what the expectation is, and we have a clearer idea of, as is said in 'Successful Futures', this line of progression through the profession that we didn't have before, and we certainly didn't have a year ago.

[162] **Darren Millar:** Okay, thank you.

[163] **Lynne Neagle:** So, are there any areas that are outstanding, then, in terms of where you feel we should pinpoint that you need better communication from consortia and from Welsh Government?

[164] **Mr Davies:** With the consortia, I think there is a feeling as well that different consortia are giving out different messages, and different consortia have greater resources than others in order to do that. There is quite a large disparity between some of the southern consortia compared to the northern and the central consortia in terms of funding and in terms of ability to deliver on this, purely from a personnel perspective. So, I do believe that that does cause quite a bit of talking in terms of what our neighbours are getting compared to what we're getting. So, yes, possibly a steering group there that brings everything together. But, again, we still have a lot of ideas throughout the entire pioneer network that somehow need to be brought to fruition—that need to be brought to one idea that we can give out. It's fine to get teachers to create this and build it from the ground up, but, sooner or later, we need one clear goal—we need one document to say, 'This is the model'. At the moment, we don't have anything near that.

11:00

[165] **Lynne Neagle:** Llyr on this.

[166] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Yn eich barn chi, job pwy yw hynny? Pwy ddylai eistedd i lawr a thynnu'r cyfan at ei gilydd? **Llyr Gruffydd:** In your opinion, whose job is that? Who should sit down to pull everything together?

[167] **Mr Davies:** Nid wyf yn ddigon cyfrifol nac uchel i fyny yn fy swydd i ateb y fath gwestiwn â hynny, ond, yn sicr, fel yr wyf i'n ei gweld hi, mae'n **Mr Davies:** I'm not responsible enough and my position isn't high enough for me to answer that question. But, certainly, how I see it

rhaid bod y consortia yn dod i mewn ar hynny, achos nhw yw'r rhai sydd yn ein harwain ni a nhw yw'r rhai sydd yn dod â'r negeseuon draw atom ni. Felly, byddem ni'n gwerthfawrogi gallu cael yr arweiniad yna.

is that the consortia have to come in on that, because they are the ones who are leading us and they are the ones who are disseminating the messages to us. So, we would appreciate having that leadership.

[168] Nid wyf yn dweud am funud—rwyf eisiau i hwn gael ei ddweud—nad ydym yn cael cefnogaeth. Mae'r gefnogaeth yno, ond mae angen bod y meddylfryd yn glir rhwng y gwahanol gonsortia i'r neges fod yn debyg i bob ysgol ar hyd Cymru, yn hytrach na syniadau gwahanol yn digwydd ym mhob consortia.

I'm not saying for a moment—I need to say this—that we're not receiving support. The support is there, but we need for the mindset to be clear—a shared mindset between the consortia—so that the same message, or a similar message, is being passed on to the various schools in Wales, rather than there being different ideas in different consortia.

[169] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Diolch.

[170] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. I've got Michelle, then Oscar and then Hefin.

[171] **Michelle Brown:** Thank you. How is the work of the pioneer schools and the outputs of the pioneer schools on curriculum development being co-ordinated with other pioneer schools?

[172] **Mr Mansfield:** In what way?

[173] **Michelle Brown:** Are you specialising in a particular subject? The work that you do on curriculum development—you must be coming up with recommendations and ideas. How does that fit in with the work of the other pioneer schools? Because they must be coming up with very similar things and, in some cases, very different ideas. Who co-ordinates that?

[174] **Mr Davies:** Neither of us is part of curriculum design or a school that's looking at curriculum design, but my understanding is that there are sub-groups or sub-committees that do work on specific areas and the areas of learning and experience, and they're developing their area of the curriculum through that. I don't have the information to hand as to how exactly that

happens.

[175] **Mr Mansfield:** From the digital pioneer point of view, you're right in saying that all of us would meet for the two days and have our two-day meetings, and then go off back to our own settings and our own schools. We'd come up with different ideas or think about things and think, 'Oh, actually, I don't know whether that's quite right—shall we change it?', and we'd just come back and discuss it. There were some lengthy debates about the content and the number of strands and elements that the digital competence framework should have, so there were mechanisms in place for discussing that and having debates about things, often late into the night on Skype, which was interesting.

[176] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Oscar.

[177] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair. I want to make sure that I tell Luke that my constituency office has been in St Julians for the last eight years. When I was there in the beginning, they were full of ethnic minority children—actually, they were non-achievers. How they've turned that around in the last eight years—hats off to them. I'm very proud of them—I'd give them 10 out of 10. How have you done it? How have you motivated these children? Forget the curriculum—that's my first question: how have you achieved what you've achieved in the last eight years? Hats off to you.

[178] The second question is: in December 2013, the chair of MEGA—the ministerial expert group on advocacy—said,

[179] 'There are examples of good practice but the overwhelming impression is one of a postcode lottery...based on "finger in the wind" calculations rather than any more scientific estimation of need.'

[180] In your opinion, where do we stand in November 2016 on this statement, both of you?

[181] **Mr Mansfield:** Good question. I think teachers, schools and leadership teams are very adaptable, and we've got to be able to adapt to the children we serve and the communities that we serve. In our area now, in St Julian's, the children we see—we're seeing a great intake of children coming from overseas and the demographic is really changing.



[182] **Mohammad Asghar:** How have you motivated them?

[183] **Mr Mansfield:** It's important that we try a range of different things. Sometimes things work well, and sometimes things don't. One thing that changes in lots of schools' demographics—one thing that's changing in our demographic at the moment—is the number of children eligible for free school meals, which has an impact on everything that we do, because that impacts our funding through the pupil deprivation grant and things like that. Then, how we allocate those resources is vitally important, and the grants that we receive to support children in these different groups that we're talking about are absolutely vital. But it all comes down to developing the teachers, underpinning good teaching and learning, and really investing in the staff—providing staff training, keeping morale high. We're at a period, I think, where teachers feel overworked, overburdened and almost squeezing the passion and creativity—the reason these people went into these jobs to start with. I think that if we're really going to continue the drive, we've got to get a couple of key messages out. The first thing is that teachers are valued and trusted and are really important roles in society. Get that key message out there and make sure that teachers know that they're valued. Secondly, look at accountability and the way that accountability is structured in the school. We're talking about being pioneer schools. I think, to be truly pioneering, you need to have almost a sense of freedom in certain areas, and schools often aren't working in freedom. We've talked about exams and the pressures of exams, and assessments are one area that is being looked at, but if you look at the whole accountability structure within schools, it actually restricts some of the creativity, and so we've got to really look at how the accountability is done and how grants and money are shared out, and these sorts of things that are absolutely vital if we're going to pioneer and come up with the best ideas and the best curriculum for our learners, to see the impact that we've had continue and grow.

[184] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. I've got John then Hefin on this.

[185] **John Griffiths:** First of all, it's great to see you here, as St Julian's.

[186] **Mr Mansfield:** There are pictures of you all around St Julian's at the moment, because the children met you the other day.

[187] **Darren Millar:** I'm sure they'll be defacing them. [*Laughter.*]

[188] **John Griffiths:** Not at all. Luke, I was just going to ask—. It's coming

back, really, Luke and Eirian, to what you were saying, really, about communication and how clear it is what's expected of you and whether that leadership is there in the consortium more generally. Would you say that you're quite clear about implementation now—you know, what the timescales are for the different strands of implementation and what you're expected to do for that to make sure it's delivered effectively?

[189] **Mr Davies:** In terms of the timescale, I think that's been apparent from the beginning of the process. In terms of the knowledge of what our role in it is, it's been, possibly, a little bit of a free for all. Going back to what Luke said about the beginning of just running around in circles and not quite knowing—the headless chicken scenario—we're out of that now, but we're still not being told exactly what our role is, because, of course, in this process it's supposed to be like that. However, sometimes, I think that schools would prefer to know exactly what a clear role would be, what is the start point, what is the end point. I mean, if I observed a good lesson, I'd expect the children at the beginning of the lesson to know what they're expected to achieve by the end of it and, at the end, that they have achieved it. This hasn't been done in that way at all, and, as teachers, I think we find that mightily frustrating, that we haven't got that clear idea. So, it's swings and roundabouts, isn't it? We're asking for the ability to be creative, but, then again, that has to be within a confine; otherwise, the end of this year is the same as the end of last year; we'll end up with a roomful of separate ideas that aren't being brought together.

[190] **John Griffiths:** So, if you look, for example, at the areas of learning and experience and the timescale, which is due in 2017 to define and elaborate the areas for the pioneer school networks, do you feel that you're on course to achieve that?

[191] **Mr Davies:** We've been doing a lot of work. As a Welsh-medium partnership, we've been doing quite a bit of work on this with CYDAG Ddeddwyrain Cymru and what we've looked at is the possibility and the strong likelihood that the curriculum is going to be based widely on a thematic model, with the six areas of learning, and, therefore, we have defined those areas within the school. Throughout the partnership, we've decided on different themes that we could experiment with. Now, I'm very cautious in using that word 'experimentation', because it seems as if we have no idea of the outcome, and, in many respects, that's true. However, what we decided in preparation, for our staff more than anything else, is that, next summer, years 7 and 8 will run two weeks of a specific theme. We're also involved in

Erasmus, so we brought this idea of refugees as a theme into a two-week project that is spread across the six areas. And we've tried our best to disseminate our departments, to take them out of their comfort zones and place them into the six areas of learning, and we're going to try it out to see what happens.

[192] The use we're making of our funding at the moment is to release a group of staff, a steering group for that particular theme, from lessons. There's going to be a block of lessons before Christmas, then in the spring term as well, to allow them to plan, because I think what hasn't been built into this is that you can get a curriculum, and that can be brought to fruition, but that has to be implemented on the classroom floor. And that's what worries me is the workload on teachers. Once we do get this written curriculum, how do we then present it to the pupils? I've got many departments now who are up to here, and possibly over, in rewriting their GCSE and A-level schemes of work, in line with the new specifications that have been brought out. And there is a massive concern among my staff at the moment that this curriculum that's been written at the moment will eventually feed into GCSE, and all this work that they're currently doing, within a few years, will be null and void. And it worries people. It worries people to the point that it does cause widespread stress, because writing a scheme of work is—well, it takes months. It takes months and years, and these teachers pour their heart and soul into it.

[193] Back to your question about inspiring students, people are inspired by people. But, at the moment, I am worried that our teachers are being less inspirational because they are being confined so much with preparing and creating this curriculum within the classroom. And that is holding some back, and, obviously, as we see from the numbers, it is causing a lot of people to leave the profession as well. One of our main leaders as a school is a project we've run with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's, whereby as a group of schools—there are eight schools involved—every Wednesday, our prospective teachers, sorry, not student teachers anymore, but prospective teachers, will meet up to hold seminars. The schools provide some new information for them, or some training for them, in a half an hour session, and then a seminar to discuss among each other the good practice that they've seen within their schools and how they implement it. It's been very, very successful, because teachers have had time to sit down and discuss with one another the job of standing in front of pupils and teaching them and getting that progress to fruition. And it is something we're seriously considering for our newly qualified teachers, and also, then, for the

trial system for our qualified and experienced teachers.

[194] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Have you finished, John, because I want to bring Hefin in? You'll have to be really, really brief.

[195] **John Griffiths:** Very, very quickly, just in terms of initial teacher training then, given what you've said, do you feel there's an alignment there between what initial teacher training is now and the new developments around the curriculum?

[196] **Mr Mansfield:** I think there's a long way to go, and, certainly, initial teacher training is involved in this process now, and it's making sure that these things are developed together in tandem, to make sure that courses adapt in the same way to reflect the new curriculum and things that are being developed. And, certainly, we've seen good practice of that, from lots of universities and higher education institutions, but there's a long way to go, definitely. And with the standard of students, or prospective teachers, coming in, it's always interesting to see and find out which universities they're coming from. But also, we've noticed a decline in those numbers of people taking on the courses as well, which is incredibly sad, because it's a great job.

[197] **Mr Davies:** We need great people involved, and I do worry we're not attracting the best people at the moment.

[198] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Final question from Hefin.

[199] **Hefin David:** It's pleasing to see that, with regard to professional development, you've answered some of the questions that Professor Donaldson wasn't able to answer, but you've also highlighted that, perhaps, our concerns about the gaps are real and they do exist. Just moving on to a more philosophical question: isn't the logical conclusion to all of this free schools?

[200] **Mr Davies:** 'No' is the straight answer.

[201] **Hefin David:** I'm glad you said that.

[202] **Mr Davies:** I don't think so. You're looking at fundamental change to what happens within the classroom. Are we saying, then, in that statement that all of our schools are failing at the moment? I think Estyn would disagree

with you and I think most headteachers would disagree with you. The passion is there to teach and the model that we have we know works. We can send out students who will take on the rest of the world quite readily. What we need, however, is this in place now, as quickly as possible and to a high quality.

11:15

[203] **Hefin David:** It's with relief that I've written down your categorical 'no' there. Luke, I assume—

[204] **Mr Mansfield:** Yes, absolutely. I echo that completely.

[205] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you very much. That concludes our session. Can I, on behalf of the committee, thank you both for coming? We very much appreciate you taking time out of the school day to come and talk to us, and I'm sure Members found your remarks very informative. You will get a written record of the discussion for you to check for accuracy following the meeting. But thank you, again, for coming. The committee will now break until 11.25 a.m.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 11:16 ac 11:28.*

*The meeting adjourned between 11:16 and 11:28.*

### **Ymchwiliad i Wasanaethau Eirioli Statudol: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 1 Inquiry into Statutory Advocacy Provision: Evidence Session 1**

[206] **Lynne Neagle:** Can I welcome everybody back to the committee for our first evidence session on statutory advocacy provision? I'm really pleased to welcome Christopher Dunn from Voices from Care, Jackie Murphy from Tros Gynnal Plant, Sean O'Neill from Children in Wales, and Emma Phipps-Magill from NYAS Cymru. Thank you all for coming this morning. We're looking forward to hearing what you've got to say. If you're happy, we'll go straight into questions.

[207] If I can just start by asking you why statutory advocacy services are important, and what risks are there for children when it's not provided.

[208] **Mr O'Neill:** Thank you, Chair. If I can just open proceedings this morning. So, thank you for the invitation very much to contribute to the evidence session this morning, and also for identifying statutory advocacy

provision as one of the early inquiries for this Assembly term. So, we're delighted about that.

[209] If I can just say a little bit about advocacy before I hand over to colleagues to illustrate more points from on the ground. Advocacy is very much about speaking up for children and young people, and it plays an important role for those children and young people who face a number of barriers in terms of getting their wishes and feelings heard, and their voices, and getting things stopped, started or changed without independent support. So, an independent advocate will very much listen to the voice of the child and young person, support the child to navigate their way through decision-making processes, represent them to get their views and wishes heard, challenge decisions on their behalf and make sure that they have their rights and statutory entitlements met. Of course, it's very much about focusing on the wishes and feelings of children, which is very much differentiated from other models as well.

[210] So, for me, advocacy's fundamentally about children's rights. We've made great strides in Wales over a number of years in terms of taking forward the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Advocacy is a key cornerstone for a number of eligible groups within that, particularly looked-after children, children in need, and children on the child protection system. But also advocacy's fundamentally about keeping children safe and safeguarding. I think history is littered with inquiries and investigations of child abuse inquiries and examples where children weren't heard in the past, where they were not believed or they didn't have anybody independent and separate to turn to. We can go back to the Waterhouse report, 'Lost in Care', which called for very much the establishment of advocacy services in Wales, and now there's statutory duties on local authorities to provide advocacy for a number of eligible groups through the children's Act, which is now restated through the social services Act. So, I'll hand over—. Two of the services are here today that provide advocacy services on the ground, NYAS Cymru and Tros Gynnal Plant, and they can illustrate some of those points from the ground.

11:30

[211] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Jackie.

[212] **Ms Murphy:** I think for me—. I've been at this a long time—people who know me know that I've been at this for over 16 years now—so I've been on a

long journey with this, and, for me, advocacy is ultimately about safeguarding. I'll give you a couple of scenarios—not cases, but scenarios of things that we've seen regularly over the last 16 years.

[213] The little boy who is placed in a private home or a home in Powys, and his advocate, who's followed him around various placements, comes to see him because he's rung up and said, 'Will you come and see me? I'm frightened, I don't like it here'. So, she gets there and goes on a very long—a lot of these homes are very remote—winding path. She gets there, the staff are sitting outside, she says to them, 'I've come to see John,' they go, 'Oh, he's not here; he's run away,' she says, 'Well, why aren't you looking for him?' 'Oh, he can't get very far; we're in the middle of nowhere'. That gives you the sense of the vulnerability of that young person.

[214] To the young person who rings up on a Friday to say, 'Oh, I was assaulted by a member of staff: she punched me in the eye and she's hurt my shoulder. I told the officer in charge, but they haven't done anything and she's back on duty today and I'm afraid', so the advocate goes out, will make a child protection referral, and will help settle that child somewhere else.

[215] We see, then, the little girls who ring up or speak to their advocate and say, very innocently, 'Oh, one of the members of staff; he likes me and he's asked me to meet him in the playground after work. I'm not to tell anybody else'. Those are the kinds of things that we see in terms of protection and safeguarding of children in the looked-after system.

[216] Emma will talk to you about, then, sometimes, the differences it can make in positive outcomes. Then Chris is going to talk, then, that Voices often will pick up people after their care experience and give an example of how that can make a difference as well.

[217] **Ms Phipps-Magill:** Thank you, Jackie. I'd just like to sort of highlight and to reaffirm what Jackie was saying in regard to safeguarding. It is there for safeguarding for children and young people—advocacy is a safety net—but it's also about allowing them to have some voice, to be listened to, and to get something stopped, started and changed. I think, in regard to protection, we can also consider the long-term well-being and the difference that advocacy can make to children and young people.

[218] For example, a young person in school—dad in prison, desperately asking for contact with dad, one way or another wanted to see dad; this man

was a big figure and a big influence in this young person's life. Unfortunately, the behaviour within school, the behaviour at home, broke down family relationships. Social services had to become involved, you had parenting support put in place, you had education looking at alternative provisions, a lot of finances, a lot of things implemented and put in place to support this young person. But all they wanted was contact with dad. Now, we had a referral to the advocacy service and were able to work with that young person and the family to be able to navigate the probation service, the prison service, to be able to look at contact, to break down those barriers. Successfully, we were able to support that young person and get them contact with their dad on Christmas Eve. What a massive impact that had on that young person's life. So, what I can say to you now is, three, four years down the line, that young person's actually doing eight GCSEs, is doing extremely well. So, it's not just about that protection. It's about that well-being, it's about that investment early on so young people can reach their aspirations and do very, very well.

[219] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Christopher.

[220] **Mr Dunn:** For me, it's kind of what young people have said in the past, it's the 'what if?' question. They feel that an advocate could have helped ease those feelings of being alone, or particularly those frustrations that they had at the time with some of the systems that they were going through.

[221] Just a quick example I want to give is of a young person—and for me it highlights the importance of having advocacy across the whole ages and having an active offer of advocacy across the whole ages and, sometimes, particularly even when things are going well, because things might not necessarily go too well in the future. This is what happened with this young person: when he was in care, everything was great, he was in a really stable foster placement, and, for him, where it all fell down was when he left and the fact that he struggled with that independence. He didn't feel he had anyone he could talk to. He'd struggled with paying the bills and the general life experience. That feeling of not having someone to talk to—he kind of then felt that his voice was worthless and it just really knocked his confidence. At Voices, we have many meetings and things like that, and they were talking once about advocacy, and it really struck him how much of a difference it would have made to his life, actually, if he'd known about advocacy at the time—when he was in care, particularly, but, equally, when he had left care as well. If he'd known what it was—he'd heard of the word 'advocacy', but had no idea of the practicalities of what it actually means and



how it can support you. When he heard the impact, like that story then, that it has on a young person's life, he had that 'what if?': what could I have been now? Where could I have been now? Would I have been successful in my independent living?

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

[223] **Ms Murphy:** Can I just sum that up, really? I think for me, again—as I say, I've been at this for over 15/16 years, in that time—I think, back in 2002, we estimate, with the charities bringing money in, there was over £2 million going into advocacy services in Wales. We know now that there is probably just under £1 million and we know that there are a lot more young people in need of the service. So, that's the main issue for me, really, is those in-between years—that lost generation who were lost in care while we were trying to sort something out. So, we've been at it, like Sean said, for a long time, and this is why it's really, really important that this committee and this administration try and crack this once and for all, so that there are no more lost children in care.

[224] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Michelle.

[225] **Michelle Brown:** Thank you, Chair. Can I just come on to—? The rate of progress has been very, very slow. What do you think the factors are in the lack of progress with bringing advocacy services to the fore, because they're such essential services for the children in care? Where's the problem been?

[226] **Mr O'Neill:** I think that, if we focus on where we are at the current moment, it is around the national approach for statutory advocacy, as the committee will well be aware. In summer 2014, the Minister asked local government and ADSS to bring forward a model for statutory advocacy provision across Wales, and that report was then delivered in November last year. A task group was set up, there was a project manager in place, funded by Welsh Government then, to take that forward, and they identified four key components within that case that fundamentally have to be developed and delivered as a package. That also links in with the active offer, which was the recommendation of the children's commissioner, because there was a clear—in the work that the previous children's commissioner did, lots of young people didn't know about their entitlement to advocacy and didn't know that these services were available and what support advocacy could provide. It's just been illustrated very clearly in terms of how it protects children and improves their general well-being outcomes, as well. So, we are very

concerned about where we are today in terms of the delay in the implementation plan, as we understand it.

[227] So, as we said, the report was completed in November. We're now into, almost, the first anniversary of that report. We understand there was delay because there needed to be consultation, because there were financial applications for local authorities in terms of delivering that, but we're not clear, when we sit here today, whether there is complete sign-up to all the strands of that business case, whether there's clear agreement across each of the local authorities and each of the six regions that have been tasked with taking this forward—whether there is clear agreement to that. And there are impacts on the delay in terms of the commissioning model, so, clearly, we sit here today frustrated, as I have sat at this committee before frustrated in terms of the pace of progress, despite all the good work and all the resources, time and money that have gone into this to date.

[228] **Michelle Brown:** Do you think—?

[229] **Ms Murphy:** Can I just say, as well—you asked the question about why there's been a lack of progress over the last, I suppose, 15 years. For me, I think it's because there's been so much investment, and we haven't seen the change on the ground, because we keep changing tack. So, we started off with this kind of committee and this approach, didn't we, and then that wasn't followed through, so then it changed, and we had the ministerial expert group on advocacy, and then we had kind of a plan with that. And, like Emma will tell you, on the ground, I think local authorities have been really struggling with leadership and a really clear kind of direction. I think it's the keeping changing tack, which I why I'm concerned that we don't do that. We have an opportunity now, with this proposal, and providing the implementation plan provides all those checks and balances that we feel are necessary to make it work, it'll be important that we don't change tack and we pursue this.

[230] **Ms Phipps-Magill:** I think, just building on what Jackie was just saying, we need the implementation. We do have commissioners within the local authorities who are quite eager to put things in place, who are asking questions and looking to us, really, as providers, saying, 'What is happening?', and we're unable to give them answers. We're in situations as providers where services are about to end and local authorities are saying, 'Do we extend? Can we extend? Where is the guidance here?' In regard to extend, with most of our contracts, we're able to extend for two years, but

actually we're at that point as well. That's been done. So, it's about that implementation, and I think quite immediately, really, and that good communication between local authorities on what is the vision on how we're going to take this forward, and this is what we expect of you.

[231] **Michelle Brown:** So, is it more a case of not so much resistance from local authorities, just confusion among local authorities and a lack of communication?

[232] **Ms Phipps-Magill:** I think—

[233] **Ms Murphy:** It's a whole mixture of things, but I think that's one of the components.

[234] **Ms Phipps-Magill:** Yes. I think we are working well with the local authorities, which are keen to take these things forward, but they are looking for that direction and they're looking for that guidance as to how they do that.

[235] **Michelle Brown:** Okay. And just one final thing: can I ask you what the demand is like for advocacy services, and do you have the supply to meet that demand?

[236] **Ms Murphy:** No, at the moment it is very much underfunded, but the demand is there and we are struggling to meet the demand, and I do believe that there are a lot of young people who are not hearing about advocacy, and that's where the active offer would come in; they would all be introduced to it at a very early stage in their careers in care, and then they would know about it, and then they would be able to access it as and when they needed to, as they went through.

[237] **Ms Phipps-Magill:** And I think it always concerns me, personally, that a young person will only be told about advocacy at a point that they would be seen in crisis. That is not a choice. An early introduction to the service to know that it is a safety net is so important.

[238] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you. I've got quite a few Members who want to come in on the issue of the delays with the national model. I've got Darren first.

[239] **Darren Millar:** So, there's been a woeful lack of leadership, hasn't

there, from the Welsh Government, on advocacy. We know that there's been the right intention, as it were, from the Welsh Government: there is the establishment of the group, we know that that group made clear its recommendations 12 months ago, and yet we've seen little action since. So, as far as you're concerned, you seem to give the impression that local authorities want some strong leadership from the centre in order to be able to get on with delivering a new national model that is truly independent. Do you agree with me that the buck stops with Ministers here in Cardiff Bay and that, really, they need a rocket up their backside in order to get on and deliver this national approach that you're all asking for?

[240] **Mr O'Neill:** I think, for me, there are two different levels there. I think what Emma was referring to is at commissioning level, and I think it's the commissioners within the local authorities who are asking questions of providers. I think, in terms of that leadership, it was very clear back in the summer of 2014 that Ministers asked local government to bring forward a plan of action. That plan was done in consultation with a number of providers and with the children's commissioner and a number of organisations around the table. Now that case for change has been tabled, it's there, it needs to be implemented. We're not clear what the delay is, and why it's taken a year until we've seen the implementation plan. I understand from the response to the committee's Chair from the Cabinet Secretary that we should see—well, the Ministers will see—the implementation plan later this month. Now, we're not clear how strong that implementation plan will be, whether it will be fit for purpose and whether it will be taking forward each of the key components—the four key components—and the business and the active offer as part of a package, because it can't be a pick and mix; it has to be the full package. So, that's where we are today. So, there has been a delay. We've been involved—some of us has been involved—in developing the business case, but there's been a delay in terms of that implementation and taking that forward. So, what sort of state the implementation plan will be in when its delivered we'll have to see when it comes forward.

11:45

[241] **Darren Millar:** But you made it quite clear, Emma, that some advocacy providers are coming to the end of their service level agreements with the local authorities that they're providing advocacy services for. The deadlines, the dates are rapidly approaching. No doubt you've got excellent advocates that are concerned about their future in terms of their employment. Unless

we get some rapid decisions from the Government and more rapid implementation—. You know, just looking through the briefings for today's meetings, I can see that there have been a number of reports from this committee's predecessors on advocacy over the years. There have been a number of reports and follow-up actions from the children's commissioner's office. And yet, it appears to be like wading through treacle trying to get any progress on this subject, in spite of warm words from Ministers. So, doesn't the buck stop with Ministers? They need rapidly now to get on with implementation, try to phase in a timetable for implementation—I don't know, either for the start of the new financial year, if there's time, or to extend existing contracts beyond the start of the new financial year in order to bed things down part way through the next financial year, so that people can have access to the advocacy that they need.

[242] **Lynne Neagle:** Before you answer that, can I just draw your attention to the fact that the Cabinet Secretary's paper maintains that the delays are down to local government—that it's for decision making at local government level. So, maybe you could pick that up as well when you answer Darren.

[243] **Darren Millar:** Yes. I mean, it does seem to be, though, with respect, Chair, that the message that we seem to be getting from the panellists is that local government wants to get on with this, but there's guidance lacking from central Government, from the Welsh Government, in terms of driving implementation forward.

[244] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes, I wanted to give the panel the opportunity to respond directly to the Cabinet Secretary's paper. Go on, then.

[245] **Mr O'Neill:** I think there is frustration, as Emma has illustrated, at that commissioning level. Those commissioning the advocacy services, there's frustration at that level. Now, this is more of a strategic level. The Ministers have asked local government with ADSS to bring forward a plan for delivery on this. The plan hasn't been put forward. We don't know what the plan is like. So, there have been lots of, kind of—. You know, we're very frustrated in terms of the delay. I mentioned very early on the 'Lost in Care' report from Waterhouse back in 2000. Sixteen years later, this committee has had three inquiries. The children's commissioner has conducted four inquiries. It's almost 14 years since 'Telling Concerns' came out under the first commissioner. So, there's a great deal of frustration that there have been huge delays, and there has been a whole host of different groups set up by Welsh Government over the last few years. But we are where we are. We've

got the national approach to statutory advocacy set up. We've got a business case, which was tabled in November last year. We just want to see what the business case looks like and we want it implemented rapidly. And we want it implemented by the timescales that were agreed in the business case, which was by March next year.

[246] **Darren Millar:** Just one final question, and it's on the commissioning arrangements. Obviously, it may not always be in the interests of local authorities to have good advocacy in their areas, because very often that advocacy may make their life more difficult as local authorities with responsibility for some of the individuals in their care. Do you think that the commissioning models ought to change so that there's a national commissioning body, rather than individual local authorities making their own arrangements?

[247] **Ms Murphy:** Can I just answer that, then? In this approach, again, there's been a lot of work invested in it by local authorities and providers. Children and young people have also had the chance to be consulted on it. Local authorities and Welsh Government were involved in that task and finish working group. We have tried to overcome that by a range and level tool, and it's a range and level tool that actually calculates how much local authorities should be spending in relation to the number of young people in their eligible groups within their catchment, and other factors as well like rurality and things. And I think that if they implement that, that will give really good fair funding and fair commissioning, as you're going to get even under a national service. So, I think what we would like is to see this plan put forward. We believe it will deliver good commissioning guidance and a national framework of outcomes, and, for the first time, what we'll be able to do as well is to be able to start collecting the statistics on these children, because, in the past, we have considered it to be commercially sensitive information.

[248] So, after all this time, we can't tell you how many young people are accessing or have accessed advocacy, or what the issues are, and that would be really important, I think, for Government to see that if one issue is coming out all the time, then you'd be able to have a strategic answer to that, rather than a number of individual children going through the same hamster wheel all the time, trying to resolve it. So, to answer your question, I think the national approach should be able to deliver a very robust commissioning tool, if it's implemented in the way that we hope it is.

[249] **Darren Millar:** Can I just clarify this issue of commercial confidentiality?

[250] **Lynne Neagle:** Darren, very quickly, because I got other Members who want to come in.

[251] **Darren Millar:** Who was saying that it's commercially sensitive information to share?

[252] **Ms Murphy:** In the past, you're in a contracting situation, you're running a service, you know, and the information that you have is then owned by the local authorities and there's been no sharing of this in the past. What we're hoping for, out of this new model, is that ability then to start collating the kinds of issues that children and young people are coming up with. You know, we come and give evidence, and we can give you anecdotal evidence on the kinds of cases we're seeing and the kinds of issues with contact, or is it placement, or are there as many safeguarding child protection concerns out there as we think there are? But, we would be able to start to compile a proper national overview of statistics, of names, genders, ages. It would have such good information, just to do future planning in Wales, on our children.

[253] **Ms Phipps-Magill:** To shape services, Jackie.

[254] **Ms Murphy:** Yes, to shape services.

[255] **Ms Phipps-Magill:** And to shape and develop services for the young people and children who are accessing them. You know, that information is so vital for across Wales.

[256] **Ms Murphy:** Yes, so, how many people are in foster care? How many people are out of placement in their own locality? Those kinds of stats would be really useful.

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

[258] **Julie Morgan:** It's obviously very frustrating that there's been no progress, and I think we all appreciate how difficult this is, and it's hard to pin down why. I did want to ask some more questions about local authorities, because there have been some public statements that have said they felt local authorities were maybe not fully engaged with the process and were

reluctant. And so, I just wondered if you could tell us of any examples where local authorities have been fully engaged with the process and where there actually has been progress made, rather than, sort of, you know, damn local authorities generally? But, you know, is there anything you could tell us about that?

[259] **Ms Murphy:** There are some local authorities that are following very closely this model and are trying to prepare themselves so that, if the national approach is implemented, they are already in a place where they can just adopt it. So, for example, the north Wales contracts. The six contracts went to tender—I think it would probably be about 12 months ago, or probably a bit longer—and, should this be implemented, they are in a good position then to adopt the model; they don't have to go to tender again and they're ready for it. And there are some, then, that have gone to contract and have tried to implement bits of it, and they might have to go back out to tender. So, there is some definitely good progress there. And, I think, as Emma says, there are a lot of local authorities that are just waiting for a decision and guidance on what they are commissioning.

[260] **Julie Morgan:** Right. So, you would say it's not true that local authorities are sort of reluctant to implement; it's more a matter of the process.

[261] **Ms Murphy:** Yes. I think it's that there's a lack of leadership on the model, and there are concerns about funding as well, I think, Julie, and I think they need to be given clear guidance on the funding, which, again, with the national approach, there is a clear cost calculator, if you like; it's a range and level tool that tells them how much they should be—. And, if this approach goes forward, that is one of the things we'll be asking—that it's fully funded to that range and level tool based on the number of young people that are eligible for the service from 2014 to 2015, because it's based on the population. So, I think, if we'd started, it would have been calculated on the 2014 population, and now we're looking at it being calculated on 2015, really.

[262] **Julie Morgan:** So, you're saying the framework is there; we just need to move.

[263] **Ms Murphy:** Yes. And, again, it is there and I think we do need to move on this, but, then again, if it isn't going to—. If we have early indications that it's not going to work, then, possibly, move to a national service.



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

[265] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Well, you've started teasing out some of the financial issues that I was going to be asking about, really, and I'm just wondering to what extent it is the financial considerations that are proving to be a barrier here in terms of local authorities not moving in the direction that you'd like to see them moving in terms of a national approach, or is that too simplistic?

[266] **Ms Murphy:** I don't know. I just don't think I have the answer to that question for the local authorities, I suppose, really.

[267] **Mr O'Neill:** But I suppose the business case did identify a shortfall in funding, so there's additional funding needed to implement the national approach. So, there's additional funding needed—

[268] **Ms Murphy:** In some areas.

[269] **Mr O'Neill:** In some areas. There's additional funding needed for the active offer. There's been a request for funding to help with the implementation of this from Ministers, and that was stipulated in the business case. And we understand that, after the business case was tabled in November last year, there was a need at that point for ADSS to go back to local authorities to raise with them that there were cost implications for them and for them to make a decision on that basis. So, finance, it appears, has been a big factor.

[270] **Llyr Gruffydd:** And are you confident that that is going to be addressed, because my understanding is that the Government has told ADSS that new money will be forthcoming?

[271] **Ms Murphy:** I've seen so many false horizons and I've been told the cavalry is coming on so many occasions, I'm as confident as I can be. Like I said, if the plan is implemented in its entirety, in its integrity, and that cost calculator is used, I have confidence in this model. And that's why I said, if it isn't, then we need to be very quickly mindful of moving to an alternative, like a national service.

[272] **Mr O'Neill:** There are some parts of the business case that haven't been fleshed out yet, and that's in terms of the governance arrangements. So, if we do have a robust implementation plan tabled at the end of this

month, what will be the governance arrangements to make sure that is implemented as intended? So, are there named national leads across each of the regions across Wales? Is there a named lead person that's going to lead on this, because it does need somebody to drive it forward? We've got lots of implementation plans, but we need them implemented. So, I think we need to then look beyond the end of this month. So, once we've seen the implementation plan, we can begin to ask those questions in terms of how it's going to be governed and who's going to monitor the arrangements and scrutinise the arrangements to make sure that it delivers as it was intended during that course of work.

[273] **Ms Phipps-Magill:** And not just when it has been delivered, but after, to make sure that we're measuring the impact of that and that it still is fit for purpose and is being funded the full allocation, because we all know those figures and the population of children known to social services can move. So, this constantly needs to be—.

[274] **Ms Murphy:** And, also, as part of the governance as well, it does need to be linked to the national safeguarding board.

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

[276] **John Griffiths:** I just wonder about your involvement, the providers of the advocacy services, in the process, both with Welsh Government and local authorities, because, obviously, there doesn't seem to be that effective a communication channel, from the discussions that we're having in terms of the uncertainty as to what's going to happen and when it's going to happen. I think you said, Sean, that you were involved in the business case and helping to get that drawn up, but, in terms of the delivery plan, presumably not much involvement at that level.

[277] **Mr O'Neill:** Yes, just to clarify, I, as part of Children in Wales, was positively involved in the business case with colleagues from Tros Gynnal, so we had a representative from our children and young people's advocacy providers group on that group, on the task and finish group. But, that task and finish group came to an end a year ago, when that business case was tabled. So, since that group has come to an end, there hasn't been that kind of forum to take the work forward.

[278] **John Griffiths:** So, has that left a real gap, do you think, in terms of necessary communication and knowing what's happening and what work is

going on?

[279] **Mr O'Neill:** Absolutely.

[280] **Ms Phipps–Magill:** It's left a gap for drive, and it's needed to be able to drive that forward and to ensure that progress is made in a timely way.

[281] **Lynne Neagle:** Oscar.

[282] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the panel. My question relates to stress-free advice provision. In December 2013, the chair of MEGA, the ministerial expert group on advocacy, said—and the quote is—and I'll read the quote now:

[283] 'There are examples of good practice but the overwhelming impression is one of a post code lottery...and is based on "finger in the wind" calculations rather than any more scientific estimation of need'.

[284] In your opinion, where do we stand in November 2016 on this statement?

[285] **Ms Murphy:** I think that that's still the case, and that's why it's important and why a lot of work was done by the task and finish group around this range and level tool cost calculator. You put the figures in—how many young people are eligible for the service in your local authority area. It's done per head, and there are other factors in there as well. You put the numbers in, and then it comes up with the figure—'This is how much you should be spending on advocacy.' That will change the commissioning in that they won't be able to say, 'Right, well, we've got this much money available—what services can you provide for that?' It's 'This is how much money we need to be spending. Can you provide us a quality service for that?'—'Yes, we can'.

12:00

[286] In the past, regional commissioning has been used as well as a mechanism for driving down cost. This new range and level tool will stop that happening—it'll be set. The commissioning will be on the quality of the service, not on how cheaply you can provide it. Does that answer your question?

[287] **Mohammad Asghar:** Partly, yes.

[288] **Ms Phipps–Magill:** I think that embedding the active offer within that actually eradicates that postcode lottery, because every child or young person would be informed of advocacy, and not just when they come into care, but at key points of their time in care or their involvement with social services. So, it's really giving that choice to them.

[289] **Mr Dunn:** I think what young people tell us is the fact that they just want that consistency. They hear of some fantastic schemes and services from young people in one part of Wales. They're not, maybe, sure that they have that in their own region, or they don't have that in their region. They just want that consistency of support.

[290] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Julie, did you want to ask about Meic?

[291] **Julie Morgan:** Yes. I wonder how effective you felt Meic was. I know that they are concerned about the fact that there isn't any reference to Meic in the national approach. I wondered if you could comment on that.

[292] **Mr O'Neill:** Yes, we obviously welcomed the committee's report back in 2008, in which one of the recommendations was that there should be a helpline for children and young people to support that kind of development, because there was, back in 2008, a gap in terms of knowledge, which we hope that the active offer will support, and also that Meic will help access to statutory advocacy provision and other advocacy provision. You're absolutely right: it's not in the business case—as far as I'm aware, it wasn't part of the framework for discussion, which is why it wasn't in there. I think that was a missed opportunity at that point. I think the potential of Meic hasn't been fully explored in the context of not just the national approach for statutory advocacy, but the wider context that we're in now under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, in terms of the golden thread of advocacy under Part 10.

[293] So, Meic could fit in in a number of different layers, in terms of assessment, in terms of supporting safeguarding and in terms of all of the different strands of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It is another piece of work that's been left dangling after the business case was tabled last year, and it's another piece of work that urgently needs to be looked at, in terms of how Meic fits into the broader landscape of advocacy, as set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, but also

how it fits in with the national approach to statutory advocacy. I think in the absence of an advisory group, or some kind of stakeholder group, which there isn't at the moment, there are lots of pieces of work—including Meic, including Government arrangements and including monitoring and implementation of the plan—that are still left dangling or there are still questions to be had over that.

[294] **Julie Morgan:** Right. So, the opportunity that's offered by Meic being there has been neglected, not just in the advocacy context.

[295] **Mr O'Neill:** I think there's huge potential for the Meic service. We're into the second contract—a number of us, as organisations, were involved in setting up the Meic service, working with and supporting ProMo–Cymru with that. I think there's huge potential. We've got Meic for another couple of years, but it seems to be sitting in isolation from all of these other pieces of legislation and pieces of work that are going on, and it hasn't been considered in the way that we would hope it would be considered and should have been considered by now.

[296] **Julie Morgan:** There's been no reason given for that, as far as you know.

[297] **Mr O'Neill:** Not as far as I'm aware.

[298] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. One of the things that Tros Gynnal Plant highlighted in your written evidence is the fact that there's still got to be a consultation on the new national standards and outcomes framework, which, presumably, is going to delay things even more. Have you got any comments on the fact that that consultation hasn't happened yet and what impact that's going to have?

[299] **Ms Murphy:** As you said, Lynne, it's just delaying things more, but it does need to happen quite quickly. I think it can be done quite quickly as well, and it's a key piece of work that, hopefully, we can—well, the Welsh Government can get on with straight away, really.

[300] **Mr O'Neill:** I also think that the national outcomes and standards framework—we were involved in the consultation phase for the early strand of that, and the task and finish group and the business case reviewed that. We haven't seen the current draft, because, obviously, that's part of the business case going forward, but it does need to go into statutory legislation

because, as we know, Part 10 is unfinished at the moment. There was a parallel piece of work, which was the national approach to statutory advocacy. We had all the work that we were involved in supporting Welsh Government as part of the technical groups around advocacy. Those two pieces of work need to come together so that we have robust legislation, which the national outcomes and standards framework sits within, and all the other strands of the national approach then can sit within that. Because it does need to be statutory, otherwise we'll have more voluntary guidance that disappears after a few years.

[301] **Ms Phipps–Magill:** I think we're already experiencing that within the local authorities where we are getting requests for advocacy support that is outside children's services, but under Part 10. Those arrangements are being agreed through spot purchase, which is not something that we would like to encourage, because there is concern, then, about who is accessing that, who is making the decision that advocacy would be the support for that person, and, again, a spot purchase arrangement is something that can be gate kept, really.

[302] **Ms Murphy:** And what we find is that it comes very, very late in the day, so it's when it has reached crisis point, local authorities will think, 'Oh, we'd better get an advocate in for this, because it's spot purchase, and if this is not covered by our contract—'. You're firefighting—you're not actually making a real difference.

[303] **Mr O'Neill:** But there's a huge impact potential with Part 10 of the social services Act. And the Act, across that—what's been deemed the golden thread of advocacy—there's huge potential for it to be more accessible for other groups that don't sit within those eligible—. I think, again, that's something that needs to be explored and needs to be urgently looked at, but we're still waiting for the implementation plan and national approach.

[304] **Ms Murphy:** I think there's no reason why they can't go along side by side. I don't think we have to wait for one before we do the other; we can do them both in tandem and then slot it in.

[305] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Are there any other questions from Members? [*Interruption.*] Briefly.

[306] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair. I wonder if— [*Inaudible.*]—the roll-out of your advocacy system. I think most of the

communities where I serve are totally unaware of your presence. So, how do you actually promote yourselves for awareness? Children won't, but at least parents should and they should pass on to the children that it's for the children's benefit. So, how do you roll out your presence in the communities?

[307] **Ms Murphy:** In the past, going back to the early days, there was a lot more promotion of advocacy, because there was the capacity there to pick up those services. We do promote as much as we can, but you're right, part of this new process, going forward, will allow a lot more promotion. In the past, you'd have to say, 'Well, it's a postcode lottery: if you're this young person in this local authority, you can have this service, but if you're this young person in this local authority, you have a different service.' What this will give us is that real opportunity to say, 'No matter where you live in Wales, you are entitled. If you're in looked-after care, you're in child protection or you're a child in need, you're entitled to an advocacy service and you can access it and this is how you do it.' I think we will be able to create a lot more awareness then, and not be so limited by the things that have constrained us in the past.

[308] **Ms Phipps-Magill:** I think we need to recognise the independence of advocacy and how important that is. We therefore don't have reasonable information about children and young people who can access our service; we very much look to the local authorities to be able to promote that and to take that ownership in telling children and young people about the advocacy service and how to access it, because we couldn't go knocking doors and asking, 'Are you entitled?' because of our confidential service that we offer and the independency, which is really important.

[309] **Mohammad Asghar:** My point really is not the local concern, but my point is to schools and areas like that where children can be made aware of it, rather than the—

[310] **Ms Phipps-Magill:** I personally think that, sometimes, there's a reluctance. I know myself, as a service manager of services within local areas, I don't want to set children and young people up to fail. I feel that if I go out to a school, I will develop work with advocacy and local safeguarding leads within the school and designated teachers et cetera, because they share the same information with regard to who is entitled to that service. I wouldn't want to go into a school and talk to parents and children and young people when I'm walking away from a need that can't be fulfilled.

[311] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you very much. That concludes our session. Can I thank you on behalf of the committee for coming today and for sharing your views with us on this very important subject? I think we all hear your frustrations loud and clear, and will take that forward. So, thank you very much for coming. You'll have a transcript of the proceedings to check for accuracy. Sorry, I nearly forgot. Thank you.

12:10

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

[312] **Lynne Neagle:** Item 5, then, is papers to note. The first is a letter from the children's commissioner: additional information following the meeting on the 6 October. Then paper 3 is a letter from the Chair of the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee regarding the Diamond review. Paper 4 is the letter from the committee Chair to the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language regarding the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services. Then, finally—no, not finally, there's the letter from the Minister to us about CWVYS and—

[313] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Sorry, could I declare an interest as one of the honorary presidents of the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services? But I just want to make the point that, whilst the Minister has replied to our letter, he hasn't actually addressed some of the explicit questions that we raised in the letter. So, I was just wondering if we could write again, and ask the Minister to actually answer some of the questions that were asked—or all of the questions, actually, not some of the questions that were asked.

[314] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes, very happy to do that. Everybody? Yes. Okay. Then, finally, there's a letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children: additional information following our meeting on 2 November. Okay, is everybody happy to note those?

[315] **Julie Morgan:** Is that the Play Wales letter?

[316] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes. Play Wales was one of the things we asked about.

[317] **Julie Morgan:** Yes. That's fine.

12:18



**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42(ix) i Benderfynu Gwahardd y  
Cyhoedd o weddill y Cyfarfod ac yn ystod Eitem 1 o'r Cyfarfod ar 24  
Tachwedd**

**Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to Resolve to Exclude the  
Public from the remainder of the Meeting and for Item 1 of the  
Meeting on 24 November**

*Cynnig:*

*Motion:*

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to  
gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y exclude the public from the  
cyfarfod ac yn ystod eitem 1 o'r remainder of the meeting and for  
cyfarfod ar 24 Tachwedd yn unol â item 1 of the meeting on 24  
Rheol Sefydlog 17.42(ix).*

*November in accordance with  
Standing Order 17.42(ix).*

*Cynigiwyd y cynnig.*

*Motion moved.*

[318] **Lynne Neagle:** Item 6, then, is the motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of this meeting, and for the first item at next week's meeting, which is when we're having the update on child and adolescent mental health services. Are Members content? Okay, thank you.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.*

*Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 12:12.*

*The public part of the meeting ended at 12:12.*