



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

**Y Pwyllgor Cyfle Cyfartal  
The Committee on Equality of Opportunity**

**Mawrth, 18 Ionawr 2011  
Tuesday, 18 January 2011**

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

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

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

Mohammad Asghar	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Veronica German	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Dai Lloyd	Plaid Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran Janet Ryder) The Party of Wales (substitute for Janet Ryder)
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

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

Jeff Collins	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr, Cynllunio a Llywodraethu Trafnidiaeth, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Deputy Director, Transport Planning and Governance, Welsh Assembly Government
Grenville Jackson	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr, Y Grŵp Sgiliau, Addysg Uwch a Dysgu Gydol Oes, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Deputy Director, Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning Group, Welsh Assembly Government
Ieuan Wyn Jones	Aelod Cynulliad, Plaid Cymru (Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog a'r Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth) Assembly Member, The Party of Wales (The Deputy First Minister and the Minister for the Economy and Transport)
Sioned Rees	Pennaeth Gwybodaeth Busnes ac Entrepreneuriaeth, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head of Entrepreneurship and Business Information, Welsh Assembly Government
Dave Thomas	Rheolwr Prosiect Rheilffyrdd, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Rail Project Manager, Welsh Assembly Government

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

Catherine Hunt	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Ben Stokes	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service
Robin Wilkinson	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.29 a.m.*  
*The meeting began at 9.29 a.m.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon  
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Ann Jones:** Good morning, everybody, and welcome to the Committee on Equality of Opportunity. I remind Members to switch off their mobile phones, pagers and BlackBerrys as they interfere with the translation and broadcasting equipment. There are headsets provided, on which you can hear a simultaneous translation from Welsh to English on channel 1. Channel 0 can be used for amplification of the proceedings. We are not expecting a fire drill, so, if there is an alarm, we will take our instructions from the ushers, who will guide us out of the building to the assembly point, which is by the Pierhead building.

[2] We have received apologies from Janet Ryder; Dai Lloyd is substituting for her. Welcome, Dai.

9.30 a.m.

**Ymchwiliad i Effaith Polisi Llywodraeth Cymru ar Hygyrchedd Gwasanaethau  
Trafnidiaeth ar gyfer Pobl Anabl yng Nghymru—Tystiolaeth Lafar gan y  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog a'r Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
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Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport**

[3] **Ann Jones:** The Deputy First Minister will be with us for most of today's meeting. Thank you for that. You are joined for this session by Jeff Collins, who is the deputy director for transport planning and governance, and Dave Thomas, who is the rail project manager. You are all very welcome. This is the final evidence session for this inquiry. Thank you for your paper, Deputy First Minister. Can we go straight to questions or do you wish to make an opening statement?

[4] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog a'r Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth (Ieuan Wyn Jones):** Yr wyf i'n hyspys i ymuno gyda chi i ymwneud â'r sesiwn hwn. **The Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport (Ieuan Wyn Jones):** No, I am more than happy to move to questions.

[5] **Ann Jones:** Thank you. In your paper, you state that the Welsh Government seeks to improve the quality and integration of local bus services by promoting quality bus partnership schemes. What specific benefits will quality partnership schemes bring to disabled passengers as part of an overall integrated transport system, and how can you communicate those specific benefits to local authorities?

[6] **The Deputy First Minister:** Thank you for that question, Chair. It is a great pleasure to be here before you in the committee. We are looking forward to the evidence session. As you are aware, the current situation is that buses are unregulated. It is, therefore, difficult for us to specify the sort of buses that could be used that would be more accessible for disabled people. Given that we have no devolved responsibility for the regulations that affect buses, it is very difficult for us to do anything other than give encouragement and so on to local authorities. However, the quality bus partnership contracts would allow the people dealing with the contracts to specify much more clearly and effectively services that would be more accessible for disabled people and to ensure that that is part of the quality partnership agreement.

[7] **Ann Jones:** So, in a way, would local authorities be able to not deal with a company that showed little regard for disabled people? If a bus company had buses with low floors that

were accessible, could you go automatically to them to provide the service or would they still have to go through a tender process?

[8] **The Deputy First Minister:** You would specify in the contract what sort of service you wanted, and only those companies that would qualify to provide that service would be eligible to be considered, as I understand it. Is that right, Jeff?

[9] **Mr Collins:** Yes, you could make it a condition of the service that the local authority was out to acquire. That would be a strength of the quality bus partnership.

[10] **Mohammad Asghar:** Good morning, Minister. My question is on bus travel. Are you aware of the uncertainty in Wales regarding the use of a companion bus pass? What consideration have you given to issuing renewed guidance specifically clarifying the use of companion bus passes in Wales?

[11] **The Deputy First Minister:** We issued fresh guidance to local authorities in April last year. I do not see any reason why we could not share that guidance. It is published guidance. However, we understand the issues with this. Obviously, it is only voluntary guidance that we are able to issue, but we understand that you need a degree of consistency on companion bus passes so that people in all parts of Wales have the same level of service.

[12] **Mohammad Asghar:** What consideration have you given to providing local authorities with one common, accessible, written concessionary bus pass application form to be used throughout Wales?

[13] **The Deputy First Minister:** That is something that we would like to consider, to be honest. If the forms are written in a way that means that there is not a consistent approach across Wales, we would be happy to work with local authorities to get a more standardised form that would enable people with disabilities to have the same responses across Wales, and that is a good point.

[14] **Mohammad Asghar:** What progress has been made against the aim in the national transport plan's equality action plan to look at the implementation of consistent equality training for public transport providers?

[15] **The Deputy First Minister:** Jeff, do you want to take that one?

[16] **Mr Collins:** It is certainly an aspiration and a key theme of the national transport plan. How we measure that is probably the next important step, so within the national transport plan, as part of the process, we have established monitoring and evaluation that will pick up the key themes that we have described to you, including accessible design, access to information, safety and security training, and the bits and pieces alongside that. So, although we have asked for it, and through WelTAG, which is the Welsh transport planning and appraisal guidance that underpins everything that we fund, we have put in equality impact assessments, and it is a requirement to do those, we do not have any direct levers over bus operators. We do, however, have some feedback mechanisms where we can begin to see how training is being implemented.

[17] Secondly, with regard to training, it is clear from the consultation responses that you have shared with us that a lot of the feedback that you are getting from users is saying that bus drivers are not aware or that rail station staff are not aware. We can see that there is obviously an issue here, so what we are looking at is what levers we can flex or enforce that would encourage our public transport providers to either improve their training or demonstrate to us that the training is taking place.

[18] To summarise the answer, it is a key theme of the national transport plan. We have asked for it to be done and we are looking at training as part of monitoring evaluation. It is also a key performance indicator. If there are no further improvements, or if there is a need, we will look at other mechanisms by which we can enhance or improve the training.

[19] Over and above public transport training, we are training our roads engineers in terms of shared space, access to walking and cycling and in terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 regulations. Also, groups such as Sustrans have recently carried out training for our engineers in those fields.

[20] **Ann Jones:** May I just ask you about the monitoring and evaluation of that? How will you do that? When those responsible for the training come to talk to us, they say that they always do equality training and that it is not a problem and they can show us the plan. When you speak to service users, such as those with learning disabilities from Mencap who went around Wales on a bus, you find that they had very different experiences. So, there is obviously a huge gap between the person who should be trained and the person who thinks that they have done the training, or who thinks that their organisation has done the training. When you monitor and evaluate, will you use the experiences of service users to do that, or is the monitoring and evaluation just a tick-box exercise for the company to say, 'We have done it; person A has had six sessions and person B has had four sessions'? Will you use service users' experiences?

[21] **Mr Collins:** That is a very important question because what you are really talking about is outputs or outcomes. It is easy to measure an output that is a training module, but it is about how effective that training module has been. So, we are establishing the public transport users committee and we really need to get feedback from various groups to see how effective the training is. It is easy for us to establish systems where training takes place, but the effectiveness of the training is another thing. We cannot control anything that we do not monitor, so the first thing we are going to do is monitor to see whether the training is taking place. Then, groups like the public transport users committee, which we have established, will be the acid test as to how effective that training has actually been. We need to drill down into the final user of the training—

[22] **Ann Jones:** So, there is going to be some sort of feedback from service users on the evaluation forms.

[23] **Mr Collins:** There will be feedback included in the monitoring and evaluation. We need to know that we are tapping into the right source for that feedback and that we are getting it from the right people.

[24] **Ann Jones:** So, you are not just going to accept that a company has done six sessions on equality training without going out and seeing whether those six sessions have actually worked with the 12 or 14 drivers that the company has.

[25] **Mr Collins:** We need to recognise that, although training has taken place, you need to go to speak to the people who have been trained or the people who should benefit from that training to see if there is any use in it, otherwise—

[26] **Mr Thomas:** May I make a comment on the railways?

[27] **Ann Jones:** Certainly.

[28] **Mr Thomas:** You will recall from the station accessibility inquiry last year and the Deputy First Minister and the Government's response that training is a perennial issue that comes up across public transport. The Deputy First Minister outlined Government

commitments in the response on station accessibility.

9.40 a.m.

[29] The railways are different to buses because we have a direct contract with Arriva. The commitment in the Government response was that, in the next contract, during 2018, we will be including measures and benchmarks with regard to the feelings and responses of people, including disabled people, to the treatment that they get from staff. That is an indirect responsibility of ours, and we have already started work with the Association of Train Operating Companies and Arriva to get a handle on how they should deal with it. They say that they want to be exemplary, but we want to engage with them to get more reassurance about that.

[30] **The Deputy First Minister:** The point that Dave is making is that when the new franchise is being considered, as part of that, there will be this element of requirement in relation to training, which would be a useful addition.

[31] **Ann Jones:** So, if we find that there are gaps in the franchise—

[32] **The Deputy First Minister:** Yes, you will be able to measure the situation.

[33] **Ann Jones:** So, there will be an ability to impose penalties or even to give them a carrot rather than a stick, if that would be more appropriate.

[34] **David Lloyd:** Trof yn awr at faterion hygrychedd ac argaeledd gwybodaeth am drafnidiaeth. Sut mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn monitro Traveline Cymru er mwyn sicrhau bod yr arian y mae'n ei dderbyn yn cael ei ddefnyddio i ddarparu gwasanaeth sy'n gwbl hygrych i ddefnyddwyr anabl ac sy'n darparu gwybodaeth ddigonol sy'n helpu pobl anabl i deithio?

**David Lloyd:** I now turn to matters in relation to accessibility and availability of transport information. How does the Welsh Government monitor Traveline Cymru to ensure that the funding that it receives is used to provide a service that is both fully accessible to disabled users and provides sufficient information to help disabled passengers to travel?

[35] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Yr ydym yn monitro gwaith Traveline yn rheolaidd—nid o ran ei wasanaethau ar gyfer pobl gydag anableddau yn unig, ond y gwasanaeth yn gyffredinol. Fel rhan o hynny, yr ydym yn monitro'r wybodaeth y mae'n ei roi i bobl sydd ag anableddau. Sylweddolwn fod eisiau codi statws Traveline ac ymwybyddiaeth ohono oherwydd mae'n declyn hynod o ddefnyddiol i bobl i gael gwybodaeth ynglŷn â gwasanaethau.

**The Deputy First Minister:** We monitor the work of Traveline regularly—not just its services for disabled users, but its services more generally. As part of that, we monitor the information that it provides to people who have disabilities. We realise that there is a need to raise the status of Traveline and awareness of it because it is a very useful tool for people to access information about services.

[36] **David Lloyd:** Trof at yr angen i gynyddu hyder pobl anabl wrth ddefnyddio trafnidiaeth gyhoeddus. Pa ran y mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi'i chwarae i helpu darparu hyfforddiant teithio i ddefnyddwyr trafnidiaeth anabl? Pa gynlluniau sydd gennych i gynorthwyo a darparu hyfforddiant teithio yn y dyfodol?

**David Lloyd:** I now turn to the need to increase the confidence of disabled people using public transport. What involvement has the Welsh Government had in helping to provide travel training for disabled transport users? What plans do you have to assist with the provision of travel training in the future?

[37] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Credaf i Jeff, mewn ateb blaenorol, gyfeirio at y gwaith gyda Sustrans, sydd wedi llwyddo i gael cytundeb o ran cynlluniau teithio personol. Un peth yw rhoi'r isadeiledd yn ei le er mwyn i bobl fedru defnyddio trafnidiaeth gyhoeddus, ond peth arall yw eu perswadio i ddefnyddio'r gwasanaethau pan maent ar gael. Mae Sustrans wedi gwneud tipyn o waith yn y gorffennol mewn rhannau eraill o'r Deyrnas Gyfunol, wrth weithio gyda grwpiau penodol i drafod eu cynlluniau teithio. Felly, gan fod y contract yna wedi'i osod, yr ydym yn hyderus y bydd Sustrans yn medru rhoi'r hyfforddiant priodol i'r bobl hynny.

**The Deputy First Minister:** I believe that Jeff, in an earlier answer, referred to the work with Sustrans, which has succeeded in getting a contract in relation to personal travel plans. One thing is to put the infrastructure in place so that people can use public transport, but it is another to persuade them to use the services when they are available. Sustrans has done a great deal of work in the past in other parts of the United Kingdom, by working with specific groups to discuss their travel plans. Therefore, given that that contract is now in place, we are confident that Sustrans will be able to provide appropriate training to those people.

[38] Jeff, do you want to explain a little more about the nature of that contract?

[39] **Mr Collins:** I will give you some background to that contract. We have recently developed, tendered and awarded, through competition, a contract framework that is called 'the personalised travel plan', which is going to be rolled out across Wales. It will provide a vehicle by which people will be invited to take part, and once they respond to that invitation, they will get a personalised travel plan. For example, bus drivers will turn up and tell you how to use the system, where your nearest bus stops or railways are, and that type of thing. That process could therefore be a vehicle by which particular vulnerable groups could access direct, focused travel planning assistance. So, there is a means by which we can do that.

[40] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Dylwn i ddweud, yn fwy cyffredinol, bod cynlluniau peilot mewn rhannau eraill o'r Deyrnas Gyfunol wedi dangos y gallwch roi'r isadeiledd i mewn i gael gwell cyfleusterau i deithio ar drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus, ond bod cynlluniau personol sy'n cael eu teilwra ar gyfer unigolion neu grwpiau yn codi'r defnydd yn eithaf sylweddol. Pan ydych yn ceisio perswadio pobl, mewn ardaloedd trefol yn arbennig, i adael eu ceir gartref ac i feicio neu ddefnyddio bysiau neu drenau, yna mae cael cynlluniau teithio personol yn gweithio.

**The Deputy First Minister:** I should say, on a more general note, that pilot schemes in other parts of the United Kingdom have demonstrated that you can put the infrastructure in place to ensure better facilities for travel on public transport, but that personal plans tailored for individuals or groups increase the usage quite considerably. If you are trying to persuade people, particularly in urban areas, to leave their cars at home and to cycle or use buses or trains, then having personal travel plans works well.

[41] **David Lloyd:** Symudwn ymlaen yn awr at faterion sy'n ymwneud â'r cynllun trafnidiaeth cenedlaethol. Yr ydych yn nodi bod cydraddoldeb hygyrchedd i drafnidiaeth yn rhan ganolog o'r cynllun cyflawni ar gyfer y cynllun trafnidiaeth cenedlaethol. Pa effaith ymarferol y bydd y cynllun cyflawni yn ei chael o ran pobl anabl sy'n ceisio defnyddio gwasanaethau trafnidiaeth?

**David Lloyd:** Moving on to matters relating to the national transport plan, you note that equality of access to transport is a central part of the delivery plan for the national transport plan. What practical impact will the delivery plan have for disabled people seeking to use transport services?

[42] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Mae gennym nifer o themâu, a gall Jeff sôn amdanynt efallai yn y man.

**The Deputy First Minister:** We have a number of themes, which Jeff can perhaps talk about shortly.



[43] Cyn inni gael y manylion hynny am y prif themâu, un peth yr hoffwn ei ddweud yw pan oeddem yn cynllunio'r cynllun trafndiaeth cyhoeddus, yr oeddem yn ymwybodol nad rhywbeth ychwanegol i'w wneud ar y diwedd oedd y broses o edrych ar hawliau pobl ag anableddau a hygyrchedd trafndiaeth gyhoeddus iddynt, a bod yn rhaid i hynny fod yn rhan greiddiol o'r ddogfen. Gwnaethom weithio'n ofalus iawn gyda nifer o grwpiau wrth i'r ddogfen honno gael ei llunio er mwyn gwneud hynny'n rhan ganolog o'r cynllun.

Before we hear those details about the major themes, one thing that I would like to say is that, when we were drawing up the public transport plan, we were aware that the process of looking at the rights of people with disabilities and access to public transport for them should not be an add-on at the end, but had to be an integral part of the document. We undertook detailed work with a number of groups as that document was being drawn up to ensure that it was a central part of the plan.

[44] Jeff, would you like to talk about the key themes that we have addressed in the national transport plan in relation to access for people with disabilities?

[45] **Mr Collins:** The national transport plan is a collation of the interventions that we have assessed and will be doing over the next few years. The key issue to understand is that the projects that are collated in the national transport plan have been through WelTAG—the Welsh transport appraisal guide—which I referred to before. It places a requirement on you to undertake an equality impact assessment, a health assessment and those types of things. So, WelTAG drives the outcome of the projects that you will see in the NTP. The NTP looks at greenhouse gas emissions and has a number of key themes, such as international connectivity, safety and security, perceived safety and so on. Those are the things that we hope to deliver through the national transport plan, and the key issue is to measure, on a regular basis, through monitoring and evaluation, how effective that has been against agreed criteria. As we said earlier, the key criteria will be based on accessible design, access to information, perceived and actual safety, and there is one other—there are four key themes. WelTAG says how we should structure the projects, and we then have a collation of projects and we set out which projects we will do over a certain timescale. We will then monitor and determine how effective that has been against the key performance indicators.

[46] On actual outcomes, an example is the Swansea Quadrant, which is being promoted as having an exemplary delivery mechanism. It includes the key theme of transport interchange, which I think that you have recognised as something that will help disabled and vulnerable groups to use the transport system. Park-and-ride facilities and transport interchanges have been key themes and a number of those have opened recently, for example, at Abercynon. So, we have the mechanism by which we hope to deliver these aspirations and monitor them, and we have a mechanism to continue to change that. We have a list of key projects. Dave, I think that you have something that you could say on that.

[47] **Mr Thomas:** With regard to the railways, as Jeff says, equality impact assessment is at the very core of applications to the Wales station improvement programme. We are trying to achieve, with our railway partners, an active and inclusive engagement with disabled people and all people with protected characteristics under the new Act. The primary example would be the current project at Swansea High Street station, where we have materially involved the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Swansea Access for Everyone and Multiple Sclerosis Society Cymru. As a result of that active engagement, the design of the projects has changed between the theory stage and the delivery stage. For example, there was going to be a standard railway disabled toilet, but that is now being improved and altered, and when the project is finished it will be a fully accredited Changing Places toilet, which allows the companion of a disabled person to attend and to help, and makes provision for privacy in the washroom.

9.50 a.m.

[48] Work is ongoing, as I speak, on improved tactile directional pathways between the two entrances that there will be to the new station, and in the taxi area and at the metro stops. There will also be improvements—again, outside the station—to the taxi rank, to assist disabled people to board taxis more easily. These points have come from actual people, from local representative groups, and it is a new process. Five years ago, the railway would have been much more cursory in its attention to the needs of specific people; it is now embedded in all that we do.

[49] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Mae'n siŵr y byddwch yn hapus â'r hyn sy'n digwydd yn Abertawe, Dai. Yn ogystal, mae'r orsaf newydd yng Nghasnewydd wedi ei chynllunio gan ystyried pobl ag anableddau yn benodol. Agorais lifft newydd yng ngorsaf Caerdydd Canolog yn ddiweddar, sy'n galluogi pobl ag anableddau i gyrraedd platfform 0; nid oeddent yn gallu gwneud hynny yn y gorffennol. Yr ydym hefyd wedi gosod twmpathau mewn gorsafedd gwledig; credaf fod y gwasanaeth hwnnw'n bodoli mewn tua dwsin o orsafedd bellach. Felly, mae llawer o waith wedi ei wneud, yn ogystal â'r angen i fonitro.

**The Deputy First Minister:** I am sure that you will be pleased with what is happening in Swansea, Dai. In addition, the new station at Newport has been planned with particular consideration given to people with disabilities. I opened a new lift in Cardiff Central station recently, which allows people with disabilities to reach platform 0; they were not able to do so in the past. We have also put in place humps in rural stations; I believe that that service now exists in about a dozen stations. Therefore, a great deal of work has been done, as well as the need to monitor.

[50] **Mr Collins:** To add to that, we have a key programme, which we call the national station improvement programme plus. That includes a fund of around £40 million that people can bid into against environmental impact assessment requirements. That programme aims to improve the stock of stations in Wales. As has been said, we have the improvements to platform 0 at Cardiff. We are also working with Neath and Port Talbot railway stations. If you are familiar with those stations, you will know that it is possible to cross a level crossing; we hope to install much better access to those stations. So, we have a list of tangible projects. There is the TrawsCambria bus service, which we hope to introduce through Wales. Given that we are directly procuring, or describing, that bus service, we can include those points that we mentioned earlier. The national transport plan includes all of these issues, and I believe that we can demonstrate that we are considering them when we specify and acquire services.

[51] **Mr Thomas:** To add to that, there is an afternoon-long drop-in workshop on the Llandudno interchange project today at Venue Cymru being run by railway partners on our behalf.

[52] **The Deputy First Minister:** That was a comprehensive answer.

[53] **Ann Jones:** Yes, it was. I wish to ask you about the £40 million station improvement programme. Does that include bus and coach stations, or is it primarily focused on railway stations?

[54] **The Deputy First Minister:** That is primarily for railway station improvements. We have other schemes for improving the interchanges. As Jeff has mentioned, those are key to accessibility for people with disabilities; we want to make it easier for everyone to move from one mode to another, but that is even more important for people with disabilities.

[55] **Ann Jones:** So there is a specific pot for other forms of transport, to put the disability

issues right, but the station improvement programme is primarily for rail?

[56] **The Deputy First Minister:** Yes. The importance of the station improvement programme is not just that it will improve accessibility for everyone, but that it will now have to be DDA compliant. That is the key thing about it. I believe that we have discussed in the past some of the problems that we have with our railway stations in Wales, because of their age.

[57] **Ann Jones:** Yes, we have. Joyce has the next questions.

[58] **Joyce Watson:** We have already talked a lot about the national transport plan, and you have also touched on the equality action plan, which contains five actions. You note in paragraph 11 of your evidence that you intend to put in place a more robust framework, which will allow for a greater structure in developing equality of opportunity for all who wish to use the public transport network. To what extent do those plans represent a useful tool for improving access to transport for disabled people?

[59] **The Deputy First Minister:** The equality impact assessment is not a static document, and nor is the national transport plan. As we say in our evidence, the transport equality impact assessment is a dynamic document. It will evolve to encompass more stretching plans and learning from the projects that we undertake. We are currently updating the plan to reflect the progress to date. So, it is an important tool for us, but we do not regard it as a final document, because we want to see how it responds to the needs of the users.

[60] **Joyce Watson:** You have sort of started answering my next question. You say in your evidence that it is evolving, and that is right. However, can you expand upon the more robust framework that you state you intend to implement, to develop equality of opportunity for all who wish to use the public transport network?

[61] **Mr Collins:** We have an aspiration, it is laid out in the plan, and we have to hope that it will deliver what we require. The equality impact assessments are driven through this transport appraisal process, so we need to pause and reflect at regular periods through this monitoring and evaluation phase and ask ourselves whether we have achieved what we set out to do in terms of accessible design and access to information. It will be a continuing process. We have invited our colleagues from the equality and diversity group in the department to refresh the approach in the equality impact assessment and we are looking at a renewed equality impact assessment in the national transport plan. So, we are implementing a more rigorous framework through this process of monitoring and evaluation in which we are asking whether we have improved accessible design, what the measures are, what we were expecting to see, and whether it has happened. If it has not happened, we are asking what we are going to do about it. That is the rigour with which we will be continuing, hopefully, to improve this.

[62] **The Deputy First Minister:** It is fair to say that physical barriers are among the greatest barriers to accessibility, and monitoring the way in which we can address that will be a crucial part of the work that we do.

[63] **Joyce Watson:** The committee has heard that the current regional transport plan guidance does not provide a mechanism for letting transport consortia know if their plan has met or exceeded Welsh Government expectations. What consideration have you given to implementing a mechanism to appraise the extent to which regional transport plans promote disabled access to transport services?

[64] **Mr Collins:** We have introduced the annual progress report, which the regional transport plans will be measured against. WelTAG also applies to the collation of the list of projects that form the regional transport plan. The consortia work with our guidelines to

develop these projects and then they will be measured against these outcomes. So, those outcomes will appear in our measure of the regional transport plans in each area.

[65] **The Deputy First Minister:** As well as having a relationship with regional transport consortia, it is also important that we have a direct relationship with the delivery partners, which will be the local authorities. Although the regional transport plan sets out the priorities for the region, the delivery mechanism will often be an individual local authority or groups of local authorities, so working with them at the delivery end will be equally important.

[66] **David Lloyd:** Mae'r pwyllgor hwn wedi clywed bod y sector trafniadaeth gymunedol yn dioddef prinder o yrwyr sydd wedi'u hyfforddi'n addas a phroblemau wrth gydlynw'r cerbydau sydd ar gael. Beth arall y gall Llywodraeth Cymru ei wneud i helpu yn y meysydd hyn?

**David Lloyd:** The committee has heard that the community transport sector suffers from a shortage of properly trained drivers and has difficulty in co-ordinating the vehicles that are available. What more could the Welsh Government do to assist in these areas?

[67] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Yr wyf yn ymwybodol o'r mater hwnnw. Rhaid inni gofio mai trafniadaeth gymunedol yw'r unig drafniadaeth sydd ar gael i bobl mewn rhai ardaloedd, yn enwedig mewn cymunedau gwledig iawn. Felly, mae cael cefnogaeth iddi yn bwysig. Yr ydym wedi cynnal cefnogaeth i nifer o gynlluniau yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf.

**The Deputy First Minister:** I am aware of that issue. We must remember that community transport is the only transport available to people in some parts, particularly in deep rural communities. Therefore, it is important that it has support. We have maintained support for a number of schemes in recent years.

[68] Jeff, would you like to deal with the issue of whether there is anything more we can do in relation to the training requirements, and the fact that there is a shortage of drivers?

10.00 a.m.

[69] **Mr Collins:** It is certainly something that we are looking at. The first step that we have taken is to support the community transport provision through the local transport services grant and the 10 or 15 per cent top-slice. So, we are looking to maintain our investment in community transport. We are working with the Community Transport Association to understand better the distribution not only of drivers but of physical equipment to ensure that we make better use of those resources. We are continuing to fund community transport and are aware of some of these issues. People are discussing these utopian computer systems, but we are looking at whether there would be any benefit in implementing one of them, because these would be localised responses to transport demand.

[70] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Credaf ei fod yn deg dweud bod nifer y gwasanaethau yr ydym yn gallu eu cyllido yn gymharol fach o'i chymharu â'r angen. Pe byddai'r arian ar gael, byddwn yn dymuno cefnogi mwy o wasanaethau cymunedol ond, fel yr ydych i gyd yn gwybod, mae cyllid yn eithaf prin ar hyn o bryd. Fodd bynnag, yr ydym yn falch ein bod wedi llwyddo rhoi cefnogaeth iddynt ar hyn o bryd.

**The Deputy First Minister:** I also think that it is fair to say that the number of services that we are able to fund is relatively small compared with the need. Were the funding available, we would wish to support more community services but, as you are all aware, funding is in short supply at the moment. However, we are pleased that we have been able to support them at present.

[71] **Ann Jones:** The last question in this session relates to engagement with disability groups. During the course of this inquiry, and our previous inquiry into rail services, several

groups representing disabled people told us that they felt that they had not been engaged in discussions; one group said that it had never been engaged in discussions on the national transport plan. Others have said that the meetings that they went to were poorly attended, which they think was due to the fact that you had not publicised them through the disabled group networks and so on. I was heartened to hear what you said about monitoring and evaluation and how you intend to do that, but what other things could we do to ensure that disabled groups are heard when we look at transport issues?

[72] **The Deputy First Minister:** I think that Swansea is an exemplar; where an actual scheme is being developed, it should be developed in consultation with voluntary organisations representing people with disabilities, because you can then better understand their requirements. Dave mentioned the work that has been done in Swansea, and that is something that I would like to see being rolled out much more. I have received a lot of positive anecdotal feedback on the work that has been done there, and that is the kind of thing that I would like to see being developed, so that proposals under the national stations improvement programme plus, which has been specifically designed to improve station accessibility, are developed in association with disability groups.

[73] **Mr Collins:** It is always difficult to ensure that you have captured everybody in a consultation exercise; there is a need to look at the path of intervention, to identify the vulnerable groups and engage with them. I cannot offer a guaranteed response to that, other than to say that we endeavour to do those things. Naturally, if we are approached by anyone, we will try to include them as and when we can.

[74] **The Deputy First Minister:** One of the things that I did—I think that I mentioned this to the committee when I appeared before you in relation to the accessibility of railway platforms—was to ensure that if an organisation has some ideas as to how we can improve co-operation, we are always ready to listen to them. If you have recommendations in that regard then we would like to consider them carefully.

[75] **Ann Jones:** Thanks very much for that. If Swansea is being held up as the exemplar of something that has worked and has the right solutions, it should be established as best practice, or perhaps written into the guidance as such; it should not be any harder to repeat that work in Holyhead, Rhyl or mid Wales, for example. If the scheme and the way in which you have brought the partners together can be written into the guidance as best practice, that has to be a good thing.

[76] **Mr Thomas:** We are doing that today in Llandudno; targeting 100 per cent of the people that we would like to is something that we keep working on. However, this is now established practice with rail improvements.

[77] **Ann Jones:** That brings us to the end of the session. Deputy First Minister, I thank you and your officials for your attendance. We will now have a five-minute break.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.05 a.m. a 10.12 a.m.  
The meeting adjourned between 10.05 a.m. and 10.12 a.m.*

**Dilyniant i'r Ymchwiliad i Wahaniaethu yn erbyn Pobl Hŷn mewn Cyflogaeth  
(Cyhoeddwyd Tachwedd 2009)—Tystiolaeth Lafar gan y Dirprwy Weinidog a'r  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Follow-up on Inquiry into Older People and Employment Discrimination  
(Published November 2009)—Oral Evidence from the Deputy First Minister and  
Minister for the Economy and Transport**

[78] **Ann Jones:** I remind Members that, if they switched their mobile phones on during the break, they must now be switched off again. The Deputy First Minister is with us for this session as well, but this time with Sioned Rees, who is the head of entrepreneurship and business information, and Grenville Jackson, who is the deputy director of the skills, higher education and lifelong learning group—crikey, that is quite a title. We are doing a follow-up on our inquiry into older people and employment discrimination. You will remember that the committee carried out the inquiry in 2009, and published its findings in November of that year. We now want to try to start our legacy report for the next Assembly term, so this session will inform that legacy report.

[79] Thank you for your paper, Deputy First Minister. Do you have any opening remarks that you want to make?

[80] **The Deputy First Minister:** No, we will move straight into questions.

[81] **Ann Jones:** Okay. What resources have been allocated in the budget for this year and next year to support the policy aim of increasing the capacity of the over 50s to continue to work? Is that budget resource sufficient to enable you to meet your aims?

[82] **The Deputy First Minister:** We have not finally fixed the budget for next year; we are in the process of doing that. We are all aware that that is going to be a challenging budget. There will be a Plenary debate about the draft budget today, and the final budget will be published soon. It is fair to say that we do not have a fixed budget in this area, because we need to react to demand as it happens. We try to ensure that, if that demand arises in relation to people over the age of 50, we are able to meet it. Hitherto, we have not seen any issues arise with regard to meeting that demand.

[83] **Ann Jones:** How important is the recruitment and retention of older people in meeting the 'One Wales' aim of achieving the long-term goal of full employment at a rate of 80 per cent?

[84] **The Deputy First Minister:** It is important, because, to meet that target, we need to be able to provide opportunities for people of whatever age to get back into employment. We understand that there are major challenges. I think that it is fair to say that there are challenges at both ends of the age spectrum. As we said in our evidence during the committee's previous inquiry, there are major challenges for the 18-24 age group, because they were hit hardest by the recession. However, if you become unemployed over the age of 50, it is harder to get back into the workplace. So, we understand that there are major challenges, but, in order to meet that target, we have to meet that challenge.

[85] **David Lloyd:** Ddirprwy Brif Weinidog, yn eich papur, yr ydych yn sôn y bydd y gwasanaeth hunangyflogaeth yn cysylltu â gweithwyr hŷn er mwyn cynyddu eu cyfranogiad mewn hunangyflogaeth. A allwch ehangu ar beth yn union a fwriedir, ac amlinellu sut y bydd hyn yn wahanol i'r cysylltiad mae eich adran wedi ei chael â phobl hŷn yn y gorffennol?

**David Lloyd:** Deputy First Minister, in your paper, you mention that the self-employment service will be engaging with older workers to increase their participation in self-employment. Could you expand on what exactly is planned and outline how this will differ from the engagement that your department has had with older people in the past?

[86] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Hoffwn sôn am y ffordd yr ydym wedi newid ein perthynas gyda busnes o dan raglen adnewyddu'r economi. Yna, gofynnaf i Sioned sôn yn benodol am y gwasanaeth i

**The Deputy First Minister:** I would like to discuss the way in which we have changed our relationship with business through the economic renewal programme. Then, I will ask Sioned to speak specifically about the

bobl hŷn.

[87] Yr ydym yn ymwybodol iawn o'r cyfleoedd i roi cymorth i bobl sydd am ddechrau busnes neu symud i hunangyflogaeth yn rhaglen adnewyddu'r economi, oherwydd er mwyn inni gael economi sy'n ffynnu, mae'n rhaid i ni berswadio mwy o bobl i ddechrau eu busnesau eu hunain. Yr ydym hefyd yn ymwybodol iawn bod y record yn dangos bod pobl sy'n dechrau eu busnesau eu hunain ar ôl 50 yn fwy tebygol o lwyddo, gan bod ganddynt fwy o brofiad. Er hynny, yr ydym yn wynebu nifer o sialensau o ran perswadio pobl i wneud hyn—mae'n haws perswadio pobl sydd efallai yn iau i wneud hynny. Fodd bynnag, os ydych yn llwyddo i berswadio pobl hŷn i fynd i fusnes, mae'r record o lwyddiant yn eithaf da.

[88] Sioned, a allwch egluro ychydig yn fwy am y gwasanaeth penodol y gallwn ei roi?

[89] **Ms Rees:** O ran gwasanaeth cychwyn busnes, yr ydym wedi bod yn gweithio gyda'r cyflenwyr sy'n gweithio gydag unigolion sydd am ddechrau mewn busnes i wneud yn siŵr eu bod yn rhoi gwasanaeth i bawb. Yr ydym yn gweithio drwyddynt, ond yr ydym hefyd, o ran gweithio gyda phobl sydd dros 50 oed, yn gweithio gyda Prime Cymru ar gyfer digwyddiadau. Hoffem hefyd dargedu drwy farchnata i ddenu mwy o bobl dros 50 oed i feddwl am ddechrau busnes yn ogystal â pharhau i weithio yn agos iawn gyda Prime Cymru. Yr ydym hefyd wedi bod yn gweithio gydag Ymddiriedolaeth y Tywysog a'r sector preifat ynglŷn â sut y gallwn ddefnyddio mentora gwirfoddol i helpu o ran dechrau busnes ac i helpu twf busnes hefyd. Mae hyn yn rhywbeth sydd wedi dod allan o raglen adnewyddu'r economi. Mae pobl dros 50 yn rhan allweddol o symud ymlaen â hynny. Felly, byddwn yn edrych i ddatblygu mentora yng Nghymru gyda'r sector preifat a'r sector gwirfoddol. Mae hynny yn ffordd bwysig ymlaen, yn enwedig gyda'r grŵp targed hwn.

[90] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Yr ydym yn rhoi llawer o bwyslais ar y cynllun mentora, oherwydd y ffordd orau i berswadio rhywun i ddechrau busnes yw drwy gynig

service for older people.

We are very aware of the opportunities to provide assistance to people who want to start a business or move into self-employment under the economic renewal programme, because in order for us to have a thriving economy, we must persuade more people to start their own businesses. We are also very aware that the record shows that people who start their own businesses after the age of 50 are more likely to succeed, because they have more experience. Nevertheless, we face a number of challenges in persuading people to do this, because it is easier to persuade younger people to do that. However, if you can persuade older people to go into business, the record of success is pretty good.

Sioned, could you explain a little more about the specific service that we can offer?

**Ms Rees:** With regard to the business start-up service, we have been working with providers who work with individuals who want to start in business to ensure that they provide a service to everyone. We are working through them, but we also, with regard to working with people aged over 50, work with Prime Cymru in relation to events. We would also like to target people through marketing in order to attract more people aged over 50 to think about starting a business as well as continuing to work very closely with Prime Cymru. We have also been working with the Prince's Trust and the private sector on how we can use voluntary mentoring to help in starting a business and help business growth as well. This is something that has come out of the economic renewal programme. People aged over 50 are a key part of moving that forward. Therefore, we will look to develop mentoring in Wales with the private and voluntary sectors. That is an important way forward, especially with this target group.

**The Deputy First Minister:** We put a great deal of emphasis on the mentoring scheme, because the best way to persuade someone to start a business is by offering them the

eu bod yn cael eu mentora gan bobl sydd wedi llwyddo yn y maes hwnnw. Mae hynny'n rhoi llawer iawn mwy o hyder i bobl gymryd y cam.

opportunity to be mentored by someone who has succeeded in that field. That gives people far more confidence to take that step.

[91] **David Lloyd:** Yr ydych yn dweud yn eich papur bod cymorth ychwanegol yn ôl disgrisiwn ar gael gan y gronfa her cynhwysiant i helpu pobl hŷn i oresgyn rhwystrau y gallent fod yn eu hwynebu o ran cychwyn busnes. Felly, beth yw eich asesiad o'r ffaith mai dim ond pump unigolyn dros 50 oed sydd wedi cael cymorth drwy'r gronfa her cynhwysiant ers mis Mehefin 2008?

**David Lloyd:** You state in your paper that additional discretionary support is available from the inclusion challenge fund to help older people to overcome specific barriers that they may face in terms of starting up a business. Therefore, what is your assessment of the fact that only five individuals aged over 50 have received support through the inclusion challenge fund since June 2008?

[92] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Mae hwnnw'n ffigwr cymharol isel ac yn is nag y byddwn yn dymuno iddo fod. Fodd bynnag, dim ond un ffordd o gefnogi pobl yw hwnnw. Mae'r ystadegau yn dangos ein bod, drwy ddulliau eraill, wedi gallu helpu llawer iawn mwy o bobl i fynd i fyd busnes ac i fynd yn ôl i'r farchnad waith drwy gynlluniau megis ReAct a ProAct, sydd wedi bod yn gynlluniau da.

**The Deputy First Minister:** That figure is relatively low and it is lower than I would wish it to be. However, that is only one way of supporting people. The statistics show that, through other methods, we have been able to help many more people to enter into business and to go back to the jobs market through schemes such as ReAct and ProAct, which have been good schemes.

[93] Sioned, a hoffech rhoi sylw ar yr ystadegyn hwnnw?

Sioned, would you like to comment on that statistic?

10.20 a.m.

[94] **Ms Rees:** Mae'r gronfa honno yn cael ei defnyddio mewn achosion arbennig, ac yr ydym wedi ei defnyddio i dalu am waith cyfieithu ac mewn achosion mae pobl eisïau mwy o gefnogaeth wrth iddynt gwrdd â mentoriaid a mynd i'r gweithdai. Yr ydym wedi rhoi cefnogaeth ar gyfer gofalu am blant yr ystod yr amser hwnnw. Felly, mae'n ychwanegol i'r gwasanaeth mewn achosion arbennig. Nid yw'r oedran hwn wedi bod yn un o'r rhai sydd wedi pwyso am hynny. Nid ydym eisïau gweld twr o geisiadau yn dod, am ein bod eisïau i'r gwasanaeth prif ffrwd roi'r gwasanaeth gorau ar gyfer pawb a chynnig gwasanaeth penodol.

**Ms Rees:** That fund is used in exceptional circumstances, and we have used it to pay for translation and in instances in which people want more support as they meet the mentors and attend the workshops. We have provided support for childcare during those periods of time. So, it is an additional service to be used in special cases. This age group has not to date requested this additional support. We do not want to see a whole host of applications streaming in, because we want the mainstream service to provide the best service for all and to provide an inclusive service.

[95] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Yn gyffredinol, mae rhyw 16 y cant o'r bobl sydd yn dod am gymorth dechrau busnes yn y grŵp dros 50 mlwydd oed. Felly, yn amlwg, mae'r niferoedd sydd yn cael help yn fwy na'r pump a gafodd help o dan yr un cynllun hwnnw.

**The Deputy First Minister:** Generally speaking, around 16 per cent of the people who seek business start-up support are in the over-50 age group. So, the number of those who receive help is greater than the five who were helped under that one scheme.



[96] **David Lloyd:** Yn dilyn yn rhannol o hynny a heb anghofio'r cefndir ariannol dyrys, a ydych yn fodlon bod lefel y cymorth ychwanegol yn ôl disgrisiwn sydd ar gael gan eich adran yn ddigon i gael effaith gadarnhaol ar nifer y bobl hŷn sy'n cymryd rhan mewn gweithgareddau cychwyn busnes?

**David Lloyd:** Following on from that, in part, and without forgetting the dire financial backdrop, are you content that the level of additional discretionary support available from your department is sufficient to have a positive impact on the number of older people participating in business start-up activity?

[97] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Mae'r gyllideb yn mynd i fod yn dynn a byddem yn dymuno gweld mwy o arian yn cael ei roi i'r cynlluniau disgrisiwn hyn. Yn gyffredinol, yr ydym yn ceisio ymateb yn ôl y galw yn hytrach na neilltuo arian penodol ar gyfer grŵp penodol. Mae arian ar gael yn y gronfa yn unol â'r galw ac, hyd yma, nid ydym wedi canfod problemau difrifol wrth gynorthwyo pobl â'r cyllid yr ydym wedi ei ddyrannu.

**The Deputy First Minister:** The budget is going to be tight, and we would like to see more funding being provided to these discretionary schemes. Generally speaking, we try to respond according to demand rather than allocating specific funding for a specific group. Funds are available within the fund to respond to demand and, to date, we have encountered no serious problems in providing support for people under the budget that we have allocated.

[98] **Ann Jones:** Is that fund linked to any other Government programmes? Would you look at starting a business in those areas where finding jobs is challenging? You have a strategic regeneration area across north Wales; would your inclusion fund primarily look at that area? The Heads of the Valleys is another such area. Would you look at that or do you take applications from throughout Wales?

[99] **Ms Rees:** With regard to the support that we provide through the start-up service, we also provide support under the Taste of Enterprise scheme, which currently operates in two strategic regeneration areas, namely the Heads of the Valleys and Môn a Menai. That works with people who face barriers to provide a safer environment for them to test trade. So, that is in addition to what we provide through mainstream support. Some of the stories about people who have faced major barriers in their personal lives who come through Taste of Enterprise are inspiring. We work closely there with available UK Governments schemes and also on the skills agenda. We are currently working with the Department for Work and Pensions on the enterprise allowance scheme, which will be rolled out over the year and which will provide start-up support for those who have been unemployed for three months. We are ensuring that we integrate our services effectively on the ground to make the greatest difference. So, we provide tailored support in some strategic regeneration areas.

[100] **Joyce Watson:** Following on from where you started, when we talk about self-employed people, the majority—I will make the case for Mid and West Wales—are to be found in Powys, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. That is a fact. Another fact is that Ceredigion is the lowest-waged economy and I think that Powys comes next, while, bizarrely, Pembrokeshire comes top; I do not know how that happened. Given all those facts and that we know that being self-employed in those areas is often the only game in town, because it is that or nothing, is it your intention in the future, if you do not do it already, to target the areas that information tells you clearly need targeting, even though they might not necessarily be in a regeneration area?

[101] **The Deputy First Minister:** It is difficult to be prescriptive in that sense, because we have tried to respond to demand. If the demand from a particular area is fairly high, the demand on the fund would also be high in that area. You are quite right; you have made an interesting point in that, in certain areas of Wales, if you have lost your job, the easiest way back into employment is probably to look at self-employment. I recognise that, because what

you say holds true for most of rural Wales, although there may be differences in percentages. The funds and, perhaps more importantly, the services that we have available, will be available according to the demand that is made on them. If the demand in a particular area is high, it will obviously secure a higher share of that support.

[102] I recognise that funding is important, but it is often the support that you can give in various other ways that is pretty crucial, such as start-up taster sessions, mentoring schemes, which I think are crucial, and other ways of supporting people through ensuring that they have appropriate business plans, for example, and that they are ready when they go to the bank and know how to request support for them. Therefore, looking at the support services is pretty crucial. However, it depends on the demand.

[103] **Ms Rees:** With regard to the start-up rates, the figures for Wales were very interesting because the rural counties do very well. When you look at the start-up figures, you will see that they do not include the figures below the VAT threshold or people who do not pay PAYE, so they are for quite substantial start-ups. When we look at the start-up rates in Pembrokeshire and Monmouthshire and the rural counties, we see that they are above the Welsh average. It is also surprising that Cardiff is not the driver that London is with regard to start-up rates. London has higher start-up rates and a very high start-up churn, and we do not see that in Cardiff. It is an interesting set of figures, and we are currently looking at this, because we continually evaluate the services that we offer and how we can improve the services that we offer. In the light of 'Economic Renewal', we are looking at the start-up offer, the figures and what that means for future services and the development of future services.

[104] **The Deputy First Minister:** It is also important to recognise that continuing support is pretty important. Not all start-ups will succeed. That is true of any walk of life. Getting advice and support at the stage at which the business needs to develop is also pretty crucial because if we are going to add value into the Welsh economy, we want to see sustainable businesses. Therefore, advice at the start-up stage is crucial, but it is also crucial later on in the development of the business.

[105] **Veronica German:** I now move on to recommendation 2, about policy development and ensuring that it looks specifically at the challenges facing older people, and encouraging the same across the public and private sectors. I believe that officials have been asked to undertake a cross-portfolio review of the impact of the Department for Work and Pensions reforms. Are you ready to share any of the findings of the review?

[106] **The Deputy First Minister:** It is a little early. We have done a lot of work. We have had an interim report, which shows that the impact could be quite substantial on various aspects of Government policy, primarily in my department and in the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills. Perhaps Grenville would like to say something about the stage that we have reached. Let us be honest, some of the DWP programmes are still being announced, so we are not quite sure how it will roll out finally. However, there is quite a substantial piece of work being done within Government to understand the full implications, not just in terms of support for people who want to become self-employed, but for people who are out of work, and what will be available for them and how it will be tailored. It is key that we do not just understand what the DWP is doing, but how that impacts on what we are currently doing, and how effective that will be in future, bearing in mind—and I think that we have to accept this—that there may be a different approach to helping people who are out of work at both ends of the M4.

[107] Grenville, would you like to mention how far we have got and how far we might think that we need to go before we can give a proper assessment?

10.30 a.m.

[108] **Mr Jackson:** Members will be aware that the announcements by the Department for Work and Pensions can be thought of in terms of benefit changes and employment changes. Taken together, as the Minister said, they affect all portfolios across the Assembly Government. In relation to the focus on older workers, the key areas that we have been looking at have been the proposed changes to invalidity benefit and disability living allowance, as there is a greater incidence of claimants in the 50-plus age group, and the proposal is that those in receipt of those benefits will go through some form of testing to see whether they can rejoin the labour force. If so, they will move off invalidity benefit and employment support allowance on to jobseeker's allowance, so there is an issue there for us in looking at the numbers and what that will mean both for the health service and the skills, training and advice services. Similarly, the proposed changes to disability living allowance could affect quite a few people who are in the 50 to 64 prime work age. Through my Minister, we are endeavouring to obtain from the Department for Work and Pensions the numbers that it is using to model the impact of its programmes, so that we can then work out what that might mean generally for people in Wales, and particularly for Welsh Assembly Government services. Some of the DWP proposals talk of mandation from a non-devolved service to a devolved service, so that is obviously important for Welsh Ministers.

[109] **The Deputy First Minister:** Not to put too fine a point on it, there may be things that you want to do with which we, as a Government, disagree. Therefore, ensuring that there is a proper understanding about where resources should go will be crucial.

[110] **Veronica German:** Building on what you were saying, the thinking behind this is to put many long-term jobless people back into work. Schemes are supposed to be put in place to help them to do that. Do you have any plans for what you can do here in Wales to help those people who have not had a job for many years? There should be an individualised programme for these people, as I understand it from the plans that are being put in place. What extra help can you offer, or what plans do you have here to help that along, as it were?

[111] **The Deputy First Minister:** In the economic renewal plan we identify barriers to employment that we need to look at, and, in my view, mandation will not help. Take issues such a lack of basic skills, for example—if you lack those skills, then it does not matter what sort of job offer you get, it will be difficult for you to hold it down. So, actually addressing the issue of basic skills will be vital for the Government. We have had numerous meetings about how we do that, have we not, Grenville? The other barriers are such things as childcare facilities. Unless people have access to adequate childcare facilities, how do you ensure that people who have been asked to take a job can hold down the job? We need to look at those sorts of barriers, and we are addressing that in many of our schemes.

[112] **Mr Jackson:** Just to pick up on the new DWP programme, called the work programme, the philosophy behind it is that it will offer a much more individualised approach than the current regime. The committee will remember from earlier evidence that the New Deal for the over-50s has been merged into Flexible New Deal, and that will all be taken over to the new work programme now. The DWP, in its invitation to tender for the work programme, is not currently proposing any differentiated approach for different types of unemployed people. The logic is that it has an individualised approach for which the work programme providers will be incentivised. Having said that, the information that has been published by DWP leaves the door open. It says that there may be—it uses the words 'may be'—differentiated approaches for different groups of workers. We are already seeing some of that in terms of people under the age of 24 with regard to when they can enter into the work programme. So, there is a little bit of movement around that.

[113] I would like to divide the Assembly Government's approach into three aspects. One

is how we can help people in work to develop their skills so that, should they lose their job, they are in the best position to find another job quickly. As the Minister said, our emphasis on basic skills is essential in that regard. We know that the majority of people who are over 50 lack basic essential skills. It is about how we work with them, particularly through the trade union movement, the Wales union learning fund and a much expanded basic skills pledge programme to try to tackle basic skills in the workplace. That is an area with a strong emphasis. A key area for the Assembly Government is trying to assist people at the point where they know they may be losing their job through programmes such as ReAct. If we can intervene at that early stage, the chance of them getting back into work is much better.

[114] The work programme will come in for those people who have been unemployed for more than nine months, say, but there is also a significant group of people that will be beyond the work programme that will still be on invalidity benefit, namely the economically inactive. That is where we also see opportunities for Assembly Government interventions. The use of the European social fund is very important in that regard. For that group of people, it is about helping to prepare them to come into the work programme regime, almost. So, our emphasis is, in a sense, on looking at provision prior to the work programme and, almost, beyond the work programme.

[115] **Veronica German:** That is helpful. The economic renewal programme does not make specific reference to supporting older people into employment or self-employment. What is your assessment of the impact that the changes announced in the economic renewal programme will have on older people?

[116] **The Deputy First Minister:** We have not specifically referred to age in the economic renewal programme because it is a fund available to all. Money will be available within that to fund projects involving older people. The ERP is a much more focused business approach. There is a lot more that can be done for everyone under the ERP. We are investing in infrastructure, and the hope is that every business in Wales will have access to next generation broadband by 2015, so that is a good start in that you are able to have good technology. We are also planning other infrastructure improvements that will help people of all ages.

10.40 a.m.

[117] In relation to start-ups, Sioned has mentioned the kind of support that we could give there. If they want to start businesses in the key sectors, there is support that we could give there. We also forget that there may be assistance at local authority level through the local investment fund, which is now limited to £10,000. So, there is an opportunity for people who want to start their own business to access the local investment fund at the local authority level. I think that that it is now being delivered at local authority level, which means that there is an opportunity to get some assistance there as well. We work with Prime Cymru, which is one of the Prince's Charities, and which is dedicated to specifically targeting the over-50s.

[118] **Veronica German:** Do you think that the programme does not particularly affect the over-50s, but neither does it have less of an effect? Do you think that it has the same effect on all age groups?

[119] **The Deputy First Minister:** Sioned probably has some of the statistics on that, but it is fair to say that it may take a little more persuasion for someone who is over 50 to start a business than it would take for a younger person, although the success rate is higher. That is the case and, therefore, we need to understand that in the way that we tailor our support.

[120] **Ms Rees:** It is interesting to consider the work that we have done on what the barriers are to self-employment. Access to finance is the key one, but the second one is knowledge

and skills. However, that is more of an issue for younger people, and people who are coming through our graduate programmes. The older age group value that a lot more because they already have a lot of that knowledge and those skills. The third barrier is a fear of losing benefits among certain groups with which we work. So, there are different barriers and issues that we need to consider. We are looking for our provider network—the providers that provide the service on our behalf—to consider those barriers as well, in order to provide that inclusive service. We want to embed that within an inclusive service so that it is not something that is done to tick a box or as an add-on. We measure the demography issues with regard to delivering the service and identify emerging potential barriers within certain age groups or within certain under-represented groups. However, we want it to be embedded within an inclusive service, rather than be something that is seen as separate.

[121] **Mr Jackson:** Skills is one of the key aims of the economic renewal programme and, while the skills programmes are not age-specific, it is interesting to look at ProAct, which was aimed at helping companies retain people during the recession, and, more recently, Skills Growth Wales, which the Deputy Minister for Science, Innovation and Skills introduced to assist firms coming out of recession. People over the age of 50 account for around one in four of the people who are being assisted and that ties in with the share of the labour force. What that is saying is that employers are putting value on retaining people over 50 because of the skills that they already have and because they are changing their attitude to over-50s. They are seeing that it is worth to continue to invest in these people and their skills. We are tracking that. Skills Growth Wales is a fundamental part of the economic renewal programme. The evidence sent in from employers says that they are investing in people over 50.

[122] **Ann Jones:** Thank you. We need to move on. Time is against us and we need brief questions and answers, please, so that we can reach the end.

[123] **Mohammad Asghar:** According to the economic renewal programme document, the programme's monitoring and evaluation framework was due to be published in the autumn of 2010. When do you anticipate that the framework will now be published?

[124] **The Deputy First Minister:** It was due to be published last year, as you say, but, unfortunately, it has been delayed. We will still be publishing the half-yearly report at the end of January. We are still consulting with some stakeholders on the monitoring and evaluation framework because we think that it is going to be a key part of the economic renewal programme. We do not expect that it will be too long, but there has been a delay, and we apologise for that.

[125] **Mohammad Asghar:** Are you able to give the committee an idea of your intended approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the future impact of the economic renewal programme on older people, and their participation in employment or self-employment?

[126] **The Deputy First Minister:** We will want to do that. Economic renewal is such a fundamental change to the way that we support business that it is crucial that we have proper monitoring and evaluation. We will be doing that for older people as well. We can track some of the evidence in relation to the number of older people who are securing training and who are accessing our start-up support. It is important that we not only evaluate the number of people using the service, but also how many of those have successfully set up in business; it is important to track that success too.

[127] **Mohammad Asghar:** I believe that you have partly answered my final question. Could you update the committee on any work that the Welsh Assembly Government has undertaken to review and evaluate the strategy for older people in Wales?

[128] **The Deputy First Minister:** That is the prime responsibility of the Minister for

Social Justice and Local Government, so he would have to answer on that. However, I believe that it is true to say that all departments will need to take a share in the evaluation of that strategy; we will be doing so from our end, and I am sure that Grenville's team will also be doing so from the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.

[129] **Joyce Watson:** I have a simple question. Are you able to outline the Welsh Assembly Government's current thinking as to whether a new strategy for older people in Wales should be developed?

[130] **The Deputy First Minister:** I am not in a position to give you a definitive answer on that, because that would be outside my portfolio. However, I am quite sure that I can let you have a written response on that after I have consulted my colleague.

[131] **Ann Jones:** That is fine.

[132] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you, I accept that. The update section in your paper, under recommendation 5, suggests that further work is required to collate a response across all Welsh Assembly Government departments. However, are you able to update the committee on the monitoring and evaluation work that is being done by your department in relation to relevant programmes in the strategy for older people?

[133] **The Deputy First Minister:** I am not in a position to do that, unless there is something that you would like to say, Sioned.

[134] **Ms Rees:** We will be providing a response on that when we are requested to do so. However, we will also be looking at the single equality scheme, and at the implications of the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, we are looking at this in an integrated way with regard to its impact. The work programme will also have an impact on our services across the board, as well as on the services that are provided by DCELLS. So, we will be providing a response on that, but it needs to be in the context of the single equality scheme and the changes that have come about following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010.

[135] **The Deputy First Minister:** Is there anything that you would like to say from the DCELLS perspective?

[136] **Mr Jackson:** We have covered that partly in our written evidence. Due to the requirement in law that education and training must be provided to under-19s, and must be reasonable for post-19s, we have to monitor this. As we have set out in our approach to the single equalities framework, we are considering the impacts of our various programmes. Through our own data collection systems, which collect data from colleges and work-based learning providers, we are able to get age-specific data, which we keep under review.

[137] That data indicates that the volume of activity by people over the age of 50 is pretty much as you would have expected it to be for their share of the workforce. In some cases, such as basic skills, there is a higher penetration of the over-50s, but in other cases, such as apprenticeships, even though people over 50 do undertake apprenticeships, their share is probably relatively less. That is about individuals and employers assessing the return that they will get from undertaking a three or four-year apprenticeship programme. So, the take-up tends to be different; an older worker will tend to access more part-time training or training that is short in duration than a younger person would. So, we are doing that across our programmes.

[138] **Ann Jones:** I thank you all for attending today. That was the last question, unless Members would like to ask some further brief questions. I see that there are none. I thank you for staying for both sessions, Deputy First Minister, and I thank both sets of officials for the

evidence that they have given.

10.50 a.m.

**Cynnig Trefniadol  
Procedural Motion**

[139] **Ann Jones:** I move that

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

[140] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.  
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.50 a.m.  
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.50 a.m.*