



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

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

**Dydd Mawrth, 3 Chwefror 2009  
Tuesday, 3 February 2009**

**Cynnwys**  
**Contents**

- 3 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon  
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions
- 4 Holi'r Prif Weinidog am sut y rhoddir Blaenoriaeth i Gyfle Cyfartal yn Agenda  
'Cymru'n Un'  
Scrutiny of the First Minister on how Equality of Opportunities is Prioritised within the  
'One Wales' Agenda
- 16 Ymchwiliad i Wasanaethau Addasu a Chynnal a Chadw Cartrefi ar gyfer Pobl Hŷn yng  
Nghymru  
Inquiry into Home Maintenance and Adaptations Services for Older People in Wales
- 26 Cynnig Trefniadol  
Procedural Motion

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**

Lorraine Barrett	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Joyce Watson) Labour (substitute for Joyce Watson)
Eleanor Burnham	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Nick Ramsay	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Janet Ryder	Plaid Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran Bethan Jenkins) The Party of Wales (substitute for Bethan Jenkins)

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

Heulwen Blackmore	Pennaeth Cydraddoldebau a Hawliau Dynol, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head of Equalities and Human Rights, Welsh Assembly Government
Stephen Chamberlain	Pennaeth Cyflawni—Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol Head of Delivery—Equality and Human Rights
Ruth Crowder	Swyddog Polisi Cymru, Coleg y Therapyddion Galwedigaethol Policy Officer for Wales, College of Occupational Therapists
Helene Mars	Therapydd Galwedigaethol (Tai), Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili Occupational Therapist (Housing), Caerphilly County Borough Council
Rhodri Morgan	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Prif Weinidog) Assembly Member, Labour (the First Minister)
Christine Synan	Rheolwr y Gwasanaeth Therapi Galwedigaethol, Adran Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Caerdydd Occupational Therapy Service Manager, Cardiff Social Services Department

**Swyddogion Gwasanaeth Seneddol y Cynulliad yn bresennol**  
**Assembly Parliamentary Service officials in attendance**

Rita Phillips	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Denise Rogers	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service
Bethan Webber	Clerc Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.18 a.m.*  
*The meeting began at 9.18 a.m.*

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

[1] **Ann Jones:** Good morning, everyone; welcome to the Committee on Equality of Opportunity meeting. I remind everyone around the table that mobile phones, pagers and

BlackBerrys must be switched off. If you wish to listen to the translation of the proceedings, switch to channel 1 on the headsets; channel 0 will increase the volume of the proceedings if you have hearing difficulties.

[2] We are not expecting a fire alarm test so, if we hear an alarm, we will take our instructions from the ushers, or you can follow me, because I will be the first person out of the building.

[3] I have received an apology from Joyce Watson this morning, and we are glad to see that Lorraine Barrett is substituting on her behalf. Welcome back to the committee, Lorraine. Janet Ryder is substituting on behalf of Bethan Jenkins this morning, but I think that she becomes a full committee member this afternoon. Welcome to the committee, Janet.

[4] I place on record my thanks, and that of the committee, to Bethan for her work. Bethan has asked to be kept informed about some of the inquiries, and I am sure that we will do that. We are grateful to Bethan for that.

9.19 a.m.

**Holi'r Prif Weinidog am sut y rhoddir Blaenoriaeth i Gyfle Cyfartal yn Agenda  
'Cymru'n Un'  
Scrutiny of the First Minister on how Equality of Opportunities is Prioritised  
within the 'One Wales' Agenda**

[5] **Ann Jones:** We welcome the First Minister to our meeting this morning. We have received a paper from you, First Minister, for which we are grateful. We have some questions, but do you wish to give an overview of the 'One Wales' agenda for a few minutes first?

9.20 a.m.

[6] **The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan):** Thank you for the welcome this morning. I very much welcome this opportunity to answer your questions. I have been determined, from the outset of my time as First Minister, nine years ago next week, that devolution would be outward looking, not inward looking, and that it would not involve Wales turning in on itself. That is a kind of house style that I have tried to lead with, in order that we see Wales emerging through devolution as a country that reflects all of its languages, cultures, faiths and diversity, internally, and in the way in which it looks out at the world.

[7] I think that everybody accepts this, but people will accept it in different ways because, as I have always said, Wales is a very interesting country to look after, in the sense of being First Minister. As we saw with the Welsh language legislative competence Order, we have one of Europe's oldest languages to look after, while, on the other hand, you could argue that Wales was the first truly cosmopolitan country in the world; you can see that from the way in which the industrial revolution affected the country and the huge diversity of cultures that emerged, particularly in the seaports of Cardiff, Barry, Newport and, to some extent, Swansea and elsewhere in Wales. I often think that it partially reflects my own constituency, in the sense that you can think that it is a very long way from Riverside, one of the most multi-ethnic parts of Wales at the south end, to Gwaelod-y-garth at the north end, which is the last Welsh-speaking village in the Cardiff area—Pentyrch and Creigiau are slightly less so. In that five or six mile-span, there are these two parts of Wales—and you could go even further as Lorraine Barrett is here and say that it is a very long way indeed from Tiger bay to Gwaelod-y-garth, or at least it would have been in the early years of the last century, when Gwaelod-y-garth would have been totally Welsh-speaking and Tiger bay would have had 50 or so different cultures.

[8] When you think that, in this area, there is the oldest living language over here and the oldest surviving mosque in the UK over there, you must remember that both are part of the Wales that we look after. My constituency attitude is that, if you forget about looking after the oldest language in Europe, going to back to yesterday's publication of the LCO, you are not doing your job, and if you forget that you have the oldest surviving mosque in the UK—which many people would automatically assume was in London, when it is in Cardiff—you would also not be doing your job, because you are not recognising the diversity. However, you must somehow bring those two together, which is really what devolution has been all about in the way that I have tried to go about it.

[9] One formative experience of the early days of devolution—of course the Assembly was formed 10 years ago in May—was 9/11, which was in 2001. We formed the Faith Communities Forum shortly after that, and when the then Archbishop of Wales, Rowan Williams, who had expressed his pleasure and satisfaction about being the founder member of that forum before he received his promotion the following year to Canterbury, said that, until we formed the forum in the aftermath of 9/11, the strange thing was that he did not know the telephone numbers of the people who led the other faiths in Cardiff. I think he even included the Archbishop of Cardiff, the leader of the Roman Catholic church in that, as well as the leaders of the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu communities. Nobody had anyone else's telephone numbers, but bringing the Faith Communities Forum together for the first time, in response to an external disaster, at least meant that everybody knew each other's telephone numbers so that, when, later on, we had this awful shaming event of two very obscure publications in Wales, a student newspaper and a church newspaper, publishing the cartoons that caused huge offence in the Muslim community, there was not an eruption of race hate or distrust between the faiths in Wales. It could immediately be solved by using the telephone numbers on the telephone tree that we had established through the Faith Communities Forum.

[10] I am just giving you a few examples of my perspective as First Minister on diversity and equality over the nearly-nine years that I have been doing the job.

[11] **Ann Jones:** Thank you for that, Rhodri. Is your Assembly Government on target to delivery its equality-related commitments in the 'One Wales' document and your associated delivery plan? How are you measuring that success?

[12] **The First Minister:** We certainly try to measure that in a reasonably systematic way. Whether we are knocked sideways by the recession is another issue; I hope that that will not happen, but of course that is in the lap of the gods because we do not know how long the recession will last. Yes, we try to look at this. We have a Cabinet report pretty regularly on how far we are getting on with the job of implementing the commitments. If you just look at the 28 commitments in the 'A Fair and Just Society' section of the 'One Wales' document, I think that 10 are well on course to being implemented and work is progressing well on the other 18.

[13] **Ann Jones:** Do your Ministers face any challenges in terms of the ability to meet the statutory duty to promote equality under the Government of Wales Act 2006?

[14] **The First Minister:** I touched on that in my previous answer. I think that it is a bit of an unknown, to be honest. Yes, we try and want to retain momentum, but we do not know precisely how long the downturn will last, or how savage it will be. I would not want to express any complacency about that. I think that we must try to do that and we are trying to find short-term answers to ensure that Wales has as soft a landing as possible or that the recession is as short and shallow as possible in Wales, and that its impact on society and vulnerable groups in society is minimised. I would not like to be complacent about it.

[15] **Eleanor Burnham:** A allwch chi roi tystiolaeth ar sut mae eich Llywodraeth wedi cydlynu'r gwahanol strategaethau i hybu cyfleoedd cyfartal?

**Eleanor Burnham:** Can you provide evidence on how your Government has co-ordinated the various strategies to promote equality of opportunity?

[16] **Y Prif Weinidog:** O dan y ddeddfwriaeth bresennol, mae rheidrwydd arnom i gyhoeddi sut yr ydym yn camu ymlaen o ran cydraddoldeb a mentrau cydraddoldeb gwahanol. Arferid ystyried cydraddoldeb fel pwnc ag iddo dri neu bedwar o is-bynciau gwahanol. Yn awr, mae pawb wedi symud tuag at gael un cynllun cydraddoldeb, ac yr ydym yn hapus iawn gyda'r symudiad hwn. Dyna yw ein steil ni yn awr hefyd oherwydd mae hyn wedi digwydd o ran y cyrff a sefydlwyd o dan ddeddfwriaeth y DU. Yr ydym yn hapus iawn gyda hynny; credaf ei bod o les i'r holl faes yng Nghymru. Yr ydym yn dilyn yr holl syniad o gael un cynllun cydraddoldeb yn y DU ac yn fewnol hefyd.

**The First Minister:** Under current legislation, we are required to publish how we are progressing in terms of equality and the various equality schemes. Equality used to be considered as an issue that had three or four different sub-sections. Now, everyone has moved towards having a single equality scheme, and we are very happy with this move. That is our style now because this has happened in terms of the organisations established under UK legislation. We are very pleased with that; I think that it will benefit the whole issue in Wales. We are abiding by the whole idea of having one equality scheme in the UK, and internally as well.

[17] **Eleanor Burnham:** Diolch yn fawr. A gredwch chi fod digon o gydlynu integredig o fewn eich Llywodraeth? Mae'n amser diddorol, fel y dywedasoch, ac mae llawer o bobl wedi nodi'n ddiweddar y ffaith bod dylanwad merched yn sicrhau effeithlonrwydd ac effeithiolrwydd oherwydd bod merched yn tybio, fel sy'n wir yn y pwyllgor hwn, fod agweddau ar gydraddoldeb mewn bywyd sy'n cyd-fynd â chyfiawnder cymdeithasol, ac ati. Mae'n amser cyffrous yng Nghymru oherwydd yr ydym ni ar flaen y gad, efallai. Os ydych yn cytuno â hynny, a gredwch fod y cyfnod presennol, oherwydd y *credit crunch*, yn amser da i feddwl am gydweithio a chydlynu pethau er mwyn sicrhau gwell gwerth am arian, gan y byddai'n bosibl integreiddio pethau i sicrhau ein bod yn cael gwell gwerth am arian a chyfiawnder cymdeithasol?

**Eleanor Burnham:** Thank you very much. Do you believe that there is adequate integrated co-ordination within your Government? It is an interesting time, as you mentioned, and many people have noted recently the fact that women's influence ensures efficiency and effectiveness because women believe, as is true of this committee, that there are aspects of equality in life that relate to social justice, and so on. It is an exciting time in Wales because we are perhaps in the vanguard. If you agree with that, do you not think that this current time, because of the credit crunch, is an appropriate period to think about co-operation and co-ordination to ensure better value for money, because it is possible to integrate things in order to ensure that we achieve better value for money and social justice?

[18] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Credaf fy mod yn derbyn sail eich cwestiwn yn gyfan gwbl. Yn sicr, bydd y wasgfa ar arian cyhoeddus yn cynyddu dros y blynyddoedd ac yn y tymor sydd i ddod, felly yr ydych yn gorfod meddwl am ffordd o godi lefel y gwerth am arian a gewch o'r bunt Gymreig. Hefyd, yn gysylltiedig â'r broses honno, mae cyfle i feddwl ar draws y ffiniau traddodiadol rhwng yr adrannau, y meysydd neu'r is-feysydd gwahanol sy'n dod o dan ymbarél

**The First Minister:** I think that I accept the premise of your question entirely. Certainly, the pressure on public expenditure will increase in the short term and over the next few years, and so you have to think of ways to improve the value for money that you get for the Welsh pound. Also, linked to that process, there is an opportunity to think across the traditional boundaries between the different departments, areas or sub-sections that come under the equality umbrella, for

cydraddoldeb, er enghraifft. Credaf ei bod yn weddus dros ben cael un corff dros gydraddoldeb, fel sydd gan y DU, sydd ag un swyddfa yng Nghymru sy'n delio â chydaddoldeb o dan un ymbarél. Credaf fod hynny o les i bawb yng Nghymru oherwydd bod clamp o swyddfa yn awr yn hytrach na thair swyddfa fach.

9.30 a.m.

[19] Yn fewnol, mae pwysau arnom i brif ffrydio cydraddoldeb. Hynny yw, nid ydych am gollir arbenigedd sydd gennych o ran cael pobl fel Heulwen ac eraill yn ei hisadran sydd yn edrych ar ôl cydraddoldeb fel un pwnc, ond hefyd nid ydych am i bawb arall feddwl eu bod yn gallu gadael cydraddoldeb i Heulwen a'i chriw bach hi, oherwydd ni fyddai hynny yn gweithio fel strategaeth. Felly, yr ydych yn gorfod cael corff gydag arbenigedd fel sydd gan Heulwen a'i chriw, ond mae hefyd angen i bawb feddwl ei bod yn ddyletswydd arnynt hefyd i brif ffrydio cydraddoldeb er mwyn torri ar draws y ffiniau traddodiadol rhwng adrannau. Bydd apwyntiadau diweddar cyfarwyddwyr cyffredinol i ofalu am themâu yn hytrach nag adrannau o fudd wrth inni geisio torri ar draws y ffiniau traddodiadol—y seilos y mae pob Llywodraeth yn hanes y byd wedi gweithio drwydynt gan anwybyddu'r perygl o anghofio pynciau eraill. Yr wyf yn gobeithio y bydd yr apwyntiadau diweddar ar frig y gwasanaeth sifil yn gweithio yn erbyn y duedd draddodiadol o weithio mewn adrannau.

[20] **Eleanor Burnham:** Credaf eich bod wedi ateb fy ail gwestiwn. Yr oeddwn yn mynd i ofyn am fodel effeithiol, ond yr ydych wedi sôn am hynny. A yw hyn yn anodd i'w wneud yng Nghymru, oherwydd yr ydych ar flaen y gad, ac weithiau gall fod yn anodd i drafod y materion hyn gyda San Steffan, gan fod gan San Steffan agwedd a model traddodiadol? A ydych yn cael trafferth symud San Steffan ymlaen i edrych ar y pwnc fel yr ydym yn ceisio edrych arno?

[21] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Po fwyaf y corff llywodraethol, po fwyaf y perygl o weithio mewn adrannau ar wahân. Hynny yw, mae'n llawer rhwyddach i ni a'r Alban apwyntio cyfarwyddwr cyffredinol ar raddfa uchel yn y

example. I think that it is most appropriate to have a single equality organisation, as is the case in the UK, which has one office in Wales that deals with equality under one umbrella. I think that benefits everyone in Wales because there is now one large office rather than three smaller offices.

Internally, there is pressure on us to mainstream equality. That is, you do not want to lose the expertise that you have in terms of having people such as Heulwen and others in her division who look after equality as a single issue, but you do not want everyone else to think that they can leave equality to Heulwen and her small team, because that would not work as a strategy. So, you need to have an organisation with expertise such as the team headed by Heulwen, but everyone also needs to think that it is their duty to mainstream equality in order to transcend the traditional boundaries between departments. The recent appointments of directors general to be responsible for themes rather than departments will be of benefit in terms of cutting across traditional boundaries—the silos that every Government in the history of the world have worked through with the consequential risk of not considering other subjects. I hope that these recent appointments at the top of the civil service will work against the traditional tendency to work in silos.

**Eleanor Burnham:** I think that you have answered my second question. I was going to ask about an effective model, but you have referred to that. Is this difficult to do in Wales, because you are in the vanguard, and it can sometimes be difficult to discuss these matters with Westminster as it has a traditional attitude and model? Do you have difficulty in pushing Westminster forward to look at the subject as we are attempting to do?

**The First Minister:** The bigger the governmental body, the bigger the risk of working in silos. That is, it much easier for us and Scotland to appoint a director general at a senior grade in the civil service to be

gwasanaeth sifil nad ydynt yn gofalu am adrannau penodol ond sydd yn edrych ar draws ffiniau. Nid wyf yn gallu meddwl am unrhyw ffordd y gallai hynny fod yn fodel ymarferol i'r gwasanaeth sifil yn Llundain, felly mae'r ffaith fod Cymru'n wlad fach yn rhoi cyfle i ni wneud pethau mewn ffordd newydd—mae rhai manteision i fod yn wlad fach.

responsible not for specific departments but for looking across boundaries. I cannot think of any way in which that would be a practical model for the civil service in London, therefore, being a small country affords us the opportunity of doing things in a new way—there are some advantages to being a small country.

[22] **Janet Ryder:** First Minister, I was very interested in what you said about the inter-faith forum in your introduction, and the work that you have done there. In your paper, you talk about the inter-faith forum being established:

[23] 'to promote understanding across cultures and faiths and further develop and disseminate good practice models in Welsh public bodies'.

[24] You say that the inter-faith forum has led to the creation of strong networks of people, and that it has made connections between groups of people. However, there is a slight difference between creating those networks and the links between groups, and affecting policies and seeing how that impacts on policies. At what stage will we be able to say that the inter-faith group is affecting policies, that we are bringing forward policies that are equal and accessible to everyone, that we are creating a society where there are no perceived barriers when appointments are made or when people are invited to job interviews, to ensure that everyone in this multicultural society in which we live has fair access?

[25] **The First Minister:** You can see some successful examples in the appointments to the all-Wales convention because there was a determined effort to bring the different faith communities into the process. You could not pre-determine the convention membership because people applied under Nolan-type principles, with the exception of the appointments made by the individual political parties. With regard to the other places on the convention, we tried to make determined efforts to spread it around so that people did not feel excluded. There was no model as there is with the traditional appointments to royal commissions by the Westminster Government, which is that the members must all be 53-year-old white Anglo-Saxon Protestants in professional occupations, and preferably members of the Reform Club, and so on. You might as well go down to the Reform Club and get a bishop and a don from Oxford or Cambridge universities. We said that we were not having any of that traditional stuff, and I think that we have succeeded, but it takes effort. You must persuade people that this could be for them, despite their not being 53 years old, male, white, in a professional occupation, and a member of whatever is the Welsh equivalent of the Reform Club. The effort that we have made has paid off.

[26] In other examples, I would not know which the right answer was. You could say that if you achieve an equal society, there will be less pressure, for example, from Muslims in Wales to have Muslim schools part-funded by the state, as there has been in England. You cannot deny people that right, because the Catholics have it and Jews, in theory, could have it. There are still Jewish schools in England, although there are none in Wales, and so they could say, 'Whatever the Catholics are having, we want the same'. However, the pressure to do that could be reduced if everyone felt equal, but, on the other hand, it is also a matter of having rights equal to those of the Catholic faith. Therefore, you cannot deny people the right, but, in a way, the principle of equality would mean that there is less pressure. As far as I know—and perhaps Lorraine could confirm this from her experience in her constituency—there is only one Muslim school in Wales, but it is not voluntary aided, and it is an entirely private venture. Therefore, it cuts both ways. Do not ask me to anticipate the future on that, because I cannot.



[27] **Janet Ryder:** There is a perceived gap—or perhaps there really is a gap—between the rhetoric spoken about inclusion and what is happening in reality. Are you satisfied that we have overcome that gap in how the Assembly works and in the legislation that it passes that has an impact on communities? If not, what do we still have to do?

[28] **The First Minister:** I am sure that there is a gap, but you have to constantly work at it. For example, when you get an international flare-up, which is perhaps perceived differently in Wales, as with the case recently with Gaza, there will be attempts to raise funds—and I do not want to bring the BBC into this, as I am not talking about the BBC, but about local fundraising efforts. You can imagine a group of Muslim students, for example, wanting to raise funds for Gaza and asking for official backing to do that. As with the BBC, you might find that the head of the institution says, ‘No, that is a bit political’, and someone else says, ‘Yes, but you would see it differently if you were a Muslim’. What you are doing is providing humanitarian aid and therefore you want to raise funds. That has to be dealt with when it arises, because you cannot anticipate a flare-up of that nature, as in Gaza, and you cannot anticipate the consequences of the flare-up in Welsh society. However, I like to think, from recent experience, that we dealt with the issue before it became a flare-up.

[29] **Janet Ryder:** To look beyond the realm of using the inter-faith networks and the various community networks that have evolved to overcome the tensions that arise in communities, how can we try to create an inclusive community where everyone who puts in an application for a job will be judged on their merits, regardless of their physical, social or political background? Will the laws that we pass here ensure that we create that society? Have we reached that point yet?

[30] **The First Minister:** I do not agree with you that that is the problem; it is persuading people that they should apply to be judged on their merits that is the difficult bit, and the perception that certain openings are not for them. That is the real difficulty. You probably would be judged on your merits if you applied, but the belief that you would not be prevents you from doing so. The critical point is encouraging people to have a go at it on the basis that they will not be judged for reasons of any difference, whether that is disability, race, colour, creed, or sexual orientation. The perception that you should not apply is the key issue.

[31] **Janet Ryder:** What role does the Government have in developing that self-belief in people?

[32] **The First Minister:** Persuasion, perception and, sometimes, positive action—although not necessarily by Governments; it may not be at the Government level, but at the political level.

[33] **Ann Jones:** I am being generous this morning. Eleanor, go on.

9.40 a.m.

[34] **Eleanor Burnham:** The media play an important part in creating this tension in our society. Do you think that the Government has a bigger role to play in overcoming some of the prejudice that the media feed? You have only to look at all the protests that there were yesterday, for instance, to see that. It is very sad that there are suddenly tensions among so many workers because their perception is that we have people from abroad coming in to take their jobs. That is their view, and I wonder what you feel about that. Do you think that you, in Government, have a difficult role to play in persuading the media that they should not inflame any of this?

[35] **The First Minister:** I think that that is the line that would be taken by the full-time, senior trade union officers. They are extremely concerned that a dispute of this nature could

turn into a xenophobic dispute against foreign workers, and they are anxious that that does not develop in that direction. We have already seen British National Party recruiting vans being driven there with these gigantic posters on the back of them, because it has twigged that it might be able to get 50 new members out of this, and so it thinks that it can try to persuade people that a trade dispute can be redefined in BNP terms. Nothing would cause more panic for Derek Simpson and co. at the senior levels of Unite than the thought of a trade dispute becoming a recruiting possibility for the BNP. I have spoken to only one worker directly involved in the dispute, and it was about the situation in Wales. The implication was clear that there are different groups at work on large construction sites of this kind in Wales, but they are not different ethnic groups, as they are all Europeans—Poles and the Portuguese, for example. They tend to do specific jobs: the Poles do lagging and the Portuguese do site clean-up and so forth. As a result, there is an interconnection, but not a huge amount of it, which is sad in one way, because it means that workers from different national backgrounds are not working on the same jobs and, therefore, learning about each other. However, they do meet each other, and you could see it as a form of promoting race relations between different countries in Europe, although it would not fall into the traditional definition of ‘race relations’, obviously. They have been pretty good.

[36] **Eleanor Burnham:** May I come back on that?

[37] **Ann Jones:** Please be brief, Eleanor, as we have to move on.

[38] **Eleanor Burnham:** Are you having discussions with the media? Do you believe that that is part of the Government’s role?

[39] **The First Minister:** It is a mug’s game, to be honest. The treatment that the media gave the proposed legislative competence Order on the Welsh language yesterday was about trying to whip up trouble by invariably referring to it as the ‘controversial LCO’. That was to create the controversy that would justify the use of that terminology from the start. They have not waited for the controversy and then reported it; they have used that word to stir it up. Likewise with this dispute in Lindsey, you do not know what direction it is going to go in, but I would deprecate its being redefined in BNP terms, as xenophobia.

[40] **Ann Jones:** We will move on to Lorraine.

[41] **Lorraine Barrett:** My question is on policy implementation on the ground and touches on the point that Janet was making. I will not take you up on your offer to make a comment about schools in my constituency. I understand the inter-faith forum and why it was set up, but, when Janet was speaking, she touched on communities outside the faith groups, and I was thinking about how to reach out to them. My question covers the majority of our population, if you like. By understanding the make-up of our population, as you say in your paper, we can get a real grasp on its needs, given that we want people to access opportunities, such as education, training, employment, public services and so on. However, reaching out to everyone is a huge task. So, how does the Assembly Government intend to track the impact of the equality dimension on different groups of people, whether they are cultural in nature, or secular or whatever? Are all your policies equality-proofed?

[42] **The First Minister:** Perhaps Heulwen could come in on the detail of that, but, as I understand it, we have a very good working relationship with equality groups in Wales. There are 18 groups and organisations working on the single equality strand, and that involves about 25 focus groups around Wales, and undertaking a huge amount of citizen panel questionnaire work. Heulwen, do you want to add anything to that?

[43] **Ms Blackmore:** Yes, we have done a lot of work. Many workers were going on about community engagement anyway, but last year we recruited a member of staff dedicated

to improving and expanding our community engagement. We have made inroads into many communities as part of our single equality scheme, and we are sustaining those networks. On equality-proofing, we started some years ago with help from the then Commission for Racial Equality, looking at how we might equality-proof issues from a race perspective, and we developed, with its input, an equality impact assessment model. Steve is leading on that, and it will enable us to impact-assess all policy strategies that the Welsh Assembly Government produces. We pilot-tested it over quite a long period, about 12 months, and we are about to go live as we launch our single equality scheme. We will audit the impact of the scheme on stakeholders once it has been in place for two years. So, we have put a few levers in place.

[44] **Lorraine Barrett:** Is there sufficient evidence available to Welsh Ministers to evaluate the impact of these policies on the ground?

[45] **The First Minister:** That is almost like asking me to answer a negative—would I know if there was not? I would like to think that there is sufficient evidence, but, if there is not, I would not know that, so it would be up to other people. Do we get lots of complaints that we are failing in this regard from the people with whom Members, rather than Ministers, are in contact? Do they say, ‘You should have consulted us earlier on this housing scheme or on that health board being set up or whatever’?

[46] **Ms Blackmore:** There will always be some people whom we have missed, and all I can say is that we are really trying our best to tap in to all our audiences and communities.

[47] On evidence, we have a good evidence base and good research methods, but we have also developed an equalities evidence project to identify any gaps in evidence across all portfolios. That project will be launched in south Wales on 10 March and in north Wales on 24 March. That equalities evidence will not be just for the Assembly’s use; it will also be shared with all public bodies.

[48] **The First Minister:** About a month or perhaps six weeks ago, I visited Pontyclun Primary School, which is a very large primary school. As it is within the area of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, the Valleys Race Equality Council sent two officers there to hold an equalities day. As Pontyclun is not an area that is in any way similar to, say, Tiger bay or Riverside, it was quite a big exercise for the school. Apart from a few doctors’ children, the school has minimal black and ethnic minority representation, so it was quite a big cultural adventure for the children in the school, and I thought that it had done very well and that the Valleys Race Equality Council had also contributed well. The kinds of things that occur almost naturally in your constituency or mine require a big effort when they take place in somewhere like Pontyclun, even though it is probably only 10 miles away. Nevertheless, the topic is unfamiliar and so it is probably a completely different world. Therefore, it is a big issue to try to get the message across. They were almost starting from scratch, but they were doing a very good job.

[49] **Lorraine Barrett:** I think that we have covered my other question, Chair; Janet touched on it, on the gap between policy intent and commitment and implementation. I think that Heulwen gave us some examples of that.

[50] **Ann Jones:** May I follow up on that and ask you about the community cohesion strategy that Brian Gibbons launched on 12 January, which is currently out for consultation? When you have looked at the consultation responses and the Minister has come to a decision, how will we ensure that there is no duplication of policies and programmes, given that duplication often means a gap somewhere else in service provision? How will the Government ensure that all the policies dovetail so that there are no gaps in provision and no duplication?

9.50 a.m.

[51] **The First Minister:** I think that that was a pretty good model. We had a steering group that reached out to all the relevant groups that you could think of, such as the UK Border Agency, which is working at the coalface of this, the Home Office, our Faith Communities Forum, the new tripartite Equality and Human Rights Commission, Cardiff University and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association and so on. Our officials were heavily involved in trying to ensure that that steering group gave the right advice, to ensure that it was not just our perception of what community cohesion should be. It was modulated heavily by what other people would think a community cohesion strategy should be. Heulwen was directly involved in that; would you like to add to that?

[52] **Ms Blackmore:** I was a member of the steering group, headed by Emyr Roberts, the head of the social justice and local government department. It was well attended; we co-opted people to ensure that we tapped into all sources of intelligence. As part of developing internally to ensure that everything was joined up, we met with all the different relevant departments before the strategy consultation document was produced. Part of that work was to ensure that there was no duplication and that we tapped into all available opportunities.

[53] **Ann Jones:** Are you confident that there will not be duplication?

[54] **Ms Blackmore:** We tried hard not to have duplication.

[55] **Ann Jones:** Nick, do you want to look at mainstreaming and resources under section E of the briefing? Do you want to talk about the funding?

[56] **Nick Ramsay:** Good morning, First Minister. On mainstreaming and resources, does your Government have any plans to provide an analysis of overall spending on promoting equality? How much money does the Assembly Government spend on funding for equality organisations?

[57] **The First Minister:** The funds allocated directly are £883,000. That is the money available for next year. On how that answers the demand for that kind of expenditure, bids will obviously be invited to spend money in March from the £883,000 that will be available when the new financial year starts. Whether it meets the demand is difficult to tell, because that is when you get to this issue about what is a specialist and mainstreaming agenda. I like to think that a huge amount of other expenditure will also include a component of this. If you mainstream successfully, you will not be aware exactly of the separate allocation of funds, so the £883,000 is for the separate allocation of things that are intended to develop expertise and niche areas that are not covered by the general mainstreaming of the subject matter. Do you want to add anything to that, Heulwen? I think that it is almost impossible to measure if you mainstream successfully.

[58] **Ms Blackmore:** It is difficult. We have done work over the years with our colleagues in the financial planning department to try to work through this. They have developed one model. It is challenging, because of the mainstreaming and because so much money is spent. You might look at Communities First and all those different areas, which will fund equality bodies and equality issues. However, they have done one model and I think that a paper went to Cabinet, which was based around children and the UN committee on the rights of the child. That is at fairly initial stages. They were able to pinpoint funding spent on children and equalities through that particular model. However, that is as far as we have managed to go. No other UK Government has been able to do this successfully, so we are probably leading on this.

[59] **The First Minister:** In other words, in order to impress this committee, you could put a lot of borderline areas of expenditure in and say, 'We have spent £20 million on equality promotion and so on', but they would be fake figures, because you would say, 'Okay, what is the Genesis strategy for promoting good childcare practice in the Valleys, originally Rhondda Cynon Taf, and then spreading out through Wales?'. Is that good childcare or is it there to promote women's equality or single-parent equality, for example? That is a borderline case, so you could include it if you wanted to build up a big total to impress people, or you could leave it out and say, 'You cannot really say that because it is not 100 per cent on the subject'.

[60] **Nick Ramsay:** It sounds like a catch-22 situation in that the more you mainstream effectively, the harder it is to measure it. On the back of that and in terms of 'One Wales' and the equality themes identified, I understand what you say about the difficulty of getting an overall analysis, so do you think that the promotion of equality fund has been effective in terms of the 'One Wales' commitments?

[61] **The First Minister:** As a driver of good practice, having a strong commitment to recognising diversity as part of equality and the specific areas of inequality has been extremely useful to us all as Ministers in terms of checklisting what we are doing. As an example, yesterday, we published the Welsh language LCO, and the legal structure of the so-called 'ban on bans' in terms of the right to speak Welsh is based on the 'One Wales' commitment under the UN human rights convention. That is the style of the law. They read the human rights convention and asked, 'What could we do in order to establish the right to not be banned from speaking Welsh?'. That is not about a compulsion to speak Welsh but about a ban on bans with regard to speaking Welsh. I like to think that people use the fact that there is a 'One Wales' commitment under the UN human rights convention so that when a legal opportunity comes along, they can say, 'We are committed to it so use it'.

[62] **Ann Jones:** Eleanor, do you want to ask about engaging citizens?

[63] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes. You have already explained how you are engaging citizens, and the convention and its curry probably went down very well—I was not there to eat the curry, but I am sure that it was very tasty and I thought that it was very engaging and quirky. However, ultimately, equality of opportunity should surely be based on the eradication of poverty, as much as anything. How is your Government able to effect this on the basis that most of the taxation and welfare benefits come from London? Do you think that we will have to wait for full devolution and tax-varying powers before we can genuinely think about eradicating poverty?

[64] **The First Minister:** The fact that benefits are a responsibility of central Government is of enormous benefit to Wales, because you must remember the rather stark fact that we have 5 per cent of the UK population, we generate 4 per cent of the wealth and we have 6 per cent of the need, because we have additional pensioners who have retired to Wales from other areas, as well as our own retirees. We may not be well off, but we are remarkable survivors—our actuarial longevity is very good, despite the fact that we seem to be iller than other parts of the UK. We breed them tough in Wales, shall we say. Scotland has the opposite situation as its actuarial longevity is relatively short but its wealth levels are relatively high.

[65] **Eleanor Burnham:** It must be all that Scotch.

[66] **The First Minister:** We should not be saying things like that.

[67] **Ann Jones:** No, we should not; not as an equality committee.

[68] **The First Minister:** There may be congenital factors rather than environmental factors. Those are the bare statistics: we have 6 per cent of the need in terms of benefit and

health expenditure, 5 per cent of the population and 4 per cent of the wealth. So, you can see the problem. I think that it is very important that pensions and welfare benefits are paid from a central docket, because there is no way that we could maintain the same level of benefits if we found a way of separating off the generation of income and the payment of benefits in Wales.

[69] On the issue of the curry and the convention, it is not a matter of Government dictating to the convention; it is developing this itself. It will hold 22 public engagement meetings and they are not to a standard pattern. In Neath Port Talbot, it decided to have a curry evening in the Sandfields trade union and labour club and, in Bridgend, it had half a dozen wallpaper tables in the McArthurGlen factory outlet shopping centre and was trying to engage people in a totally different way—it might have offered people a free coffee, but it certainly was not offering curry—by calling over shoppers who were at their leisure. It engaged with around 200 people, who filled in questionnaires and so on. All the meetings will have a different style to try to reach out to the non-anorak people of Wales who are not interested in constitutional issues but may become engaged in them if you approach them in the right way, although who knows what the right way is.

[70] **Ann Jones:** I want to ask you about future legislative competence Orders and Measures. You are committed to introducing legislation on a carers strategy. Are you considering using your legislative powers to tackle any other distinct dimensions of equality of opportunity, or is there any prioritised action for specific groups? What would you think were this committee to take forward a Measure or an LCO on an issue?

10.00 a.m.

[71] **The First Minister:** There is a whole list of Measures that may require a legislative competence Order for you to have the power to pass them, and some of them have an implication for the equalities issue. Affordable housing is an issue that we have brought forward, and that will enable us to deal with a range of housing areas. It is most relevant to less well-off communities in general, which would include those that do not have equality in access to housing.

[72] A statutory obligation on local authorities to promote culture and encourage partnership to deliver high-quality cultural experiences is immediately going to raise the issue of ‘What do you mean by culture, and are you exploring cultural diversity in your meaning of culture?’.

[73] Likewise with further education institutions, there is the power to implement foundation degrees. It is a harsh reality that, the further down the social and economic scale you go, the more people look on the ability to go to university as being not for them, or if it is for them, it is certainly not by way of going away to university, which was a sort of middle-class rite of passage, in the traditional manner of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. It will very much be, ‘Where can I get a university degree that will leave me with the lowest student loan obligation at the end of it?’, and foundation degrees are a very good way in, because you can do them in two or three years before you decide whether to do the full degree somewhere else. So, making a full commitment at 18 or 19 may not be the right way forward.

[74] Foundation degrees have, in the past, been found to be a good way of expanding access to higher education. As I was saying to Janet, it is whether you think it is for you that is the key thing, and not whether you will be allowed in or not. It is about believing that it is a possible thing for you, and foundation degrees are normally seen as a very good way in for people whose parents and grandparents never went to university. Have I missed out any others?

[75] **Ms Blackmore:** The other part of the question was related to the equality Bill and opportunities that might be forthcoming from that. I mentioned to another committee that we will have an opportunity to include specific duties for Wales as part of the equality Bill. It has not been introduced yet, so we are still negotiating, but there will be a raft of possibilities for us to do something different. We are fairly confident that there will be something on equal pay, and we think that there will be something about ethnic minority employment. We will be consulting on the content of any specific duty in Wales, but it will be from May onwards that we will be able to do that, because I doubt that the Bill will be introduced before then.

[76] **Ann Jones:** I think that this is the last question from Janet.

[77] **Janet Ryder:** With regard to any new powers that might be transferred, there is no obviously open means of detecting what new powers might be transmitted to any Minister in the Assembly Government. At the moment, as the structures stand, if they come through legislation made in Westminster, they are not necessarily flagged up at scrutiny committees, so the committees do not necessarily know that they can scrutinise their Minister on those powers, and they are not flagged up for the Subordinate Legislation Committee either, because we are currently engaged in a review of this matter, and this is one of the major areas. At what point will you inform this committee of any new extension of powers so that we can then start to invite various Ministers in to explore how those powers might be used?

[78] **The First Minister:** That is a very deep and complex issue, and I am not sure that it is for this committee or the Subordinate Legislation Committee to look at it—I am not an expert on the Assembly's committee structure. We try to avail ourselves of opportunities, which we pick up through good official contacts between our officials and Westminster officials who are preparing bids for the Queen's Speech slots, and we try to encourage them in the direction of preparing their Bills in such a way that transfers of powers to us may be achieved via that route, because we need to know where we will need an LCO. If we do not need an LCO, then there is no point in having an LCO if you know that there is a Bill coming down the track that will, in six months' time, transfer the same power to us anyway through an England and Wales measure promoted in the Queen's Speech. That is a very complex process, because, usually, there are about 75 Bills being promoted by Westminster departments of which only 25 actually appear in the Queen's Speech. So, sometimes, we will have put a lot of effort into one of the 50 that do not appear in the Queen's Speech, because we thought that it would involve a nice transfer to us, but if it does not make the cut when the Queen's Speech is announced, it does not make the cut, and we might go down the LCO route instead. However, that is about good official contacts. I do not know whether or not you could have an Assembly scrutiny involvement in that process, and whether or not it would be a matter for this committee. That is not a matter for me.

[79] **Janet Ryder:** The scrutiny is important for members of the public, as it allows them to know what is happening. However, not having that scrutiny makes it very difficult to track the powers of Ministers. Powers seem to be transferred in a number of different ways, but they are not always signalled to Assembly Members or Plenary. Therefore, it is very difficult to track this ever-changing devolution scene.

[80] **The First Minister:** We would welcome a report on that from the relevant legislation committee. I assume that you are not talking about this committee.

[81] **Ann Jones:** Thank you for coming to committee, Rhodri. I am sorry that we have run out of time, because we could have gone on for longer. We hope that you will return in the future.

[82] **The First Minister:** I hope so too, and I am very grateful for this session.

[83] **Ann Jones:** Thank you very much. I propose that we have a five-minute break for committee members to fetch a cup of tea, and, in the meantime, we will try to sort out the heating in this room.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.06 a.m. a 10.13 a.m.  
The meeting adjourned between 10.06 a.m. and 10.13 a.m.*

**Ymchwiliad i Wasanaethau Addasu a Chynnal a Chadw Cartrefi ar gyfer Pobl  
Hŷn yng Nghymru  
Inquiry into Home Maintenance and Adaptations Services for Older People in  
Wales**

[84] **Ann Jones:** I welcome everyone back to the committee. We now move on to item 3, during which we will receive evidence from the College of Occupational Therapists on our ongoing inquiry into home maintenance and adaptations services for older people in Wales. With us are Ruth Crowder, the College of Occupational Therapists' policy officer for Wales, Helene Mars, occupational therapist from Caerphilly County Borough Council, and Christine Synan, occupational therapy service manager from Cardiff social services department. You are all welcome. I apologise that it is a bit nippy in here; we are trying to rectify that and we offer you a warm welcome and look forward to hearing what you have to say. Could you briefly introduce your paper, and then we will go to questions from Members?

[85] **Ms Crowder:** Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to the committee. Around 40 per cent of referrals to adult social services for people with physical impairments, of whom older people are by far the largest group, come to occupational therapists and yet we make up only 1 per cent of the workforce. Our aim is to maximise people's ability to engage in activities as independently as possible. That reduces dependence, the need for complex and costly care packages, and admissions to hospital or residential care.

[86] Occupational therapists working in reablement programmes can improve people's function and independence before simply providing a care package. We have identified four main points that we would like to make. The first is on the complexity of processes for adaptations. Each different tenure in each local authority has a variable system. For owner-occupiers, the disabled facilities grant requires a means test to fund the balance above the grant level. For other tenures, that is paid for by a variety of routes. The responsibility for maintenance of installations and equipment can depend on the tenure and funding route of the adaptation. Some housing association tenants may incur an extra financial burden where their housing association passes on costs in relation to insurance maintenance or repair in the form of increased rents. We are aware of situations where tenants have refused to have an adaptation because of the additional rent quoted, or were not made aware of the potential costs and then faced a financial burden afterwards. Authorities need to expand the fast-tracking of those adaptations most frequently needed by older people. There are a number of models across Wales, and these need to be rolled out to ensure better provision across the whole country. Chris's service has a fast-tracking model in place which has speeded up installation of adaptations.

[87] My second point is on the use of occupational therapy skills. Releasing occupational therapy expertise for complex situations where there is most need for our skills will enable services to develop the preventative, rehabilitative and advisory services that are needed to support our growing ageing population. The College of Occupational Therapists recommends that services use their qualified and unqualified personnel to ensure that the most appropriate person delivers services. Many people with straightforward needs do not need an assessment by a qualified occupational therapist. The college has worked with housing associations to develop and promote this guidance on minor adaptations without delay. This is to encourage



registered social landlords to undertake small works or adaptations without assessment from an occupational therapist, but there has been slow uptake of this approach across Wales. Helene is one of a small number of OTs across Wales employed in local authority housing departments or housing associations, and that role enables her to advise on the best use of adapted void properties. We would like to see more occupational therapists in roles like this.

[88] The third area is performance management, which needs to extend to all types of adaptation processes and tenures. Robust data and national performance indicators should raise the quality of service provided to service users. Performance indicators must be put in place for registered social landlords and public sector housing, in the same way as they were introduced for the disabled facilities grant. The data for those performance indicators must be consistently and accurately gathered, and be comparable across Wales. Where properties are subject to stock transfer, business plans must be scrutinised and performance monitored to ensure that sufficient funding is available for future adaptations. The physical adaptation grant cannot be used for adaptations in these situations.

[89] Fourthly, clear, accurate information is essential. The complexity of the system can mean that providing accurate, meaningful information to service users is difficult until you are some way into the assessment of the individual's situation. Registered social landlords need to provide information to their tenants about their rights in relation to alternative funding routes, maintenance and repair responsibility, and potential rent increases. The use of progress chasers can release occupational therapists' time and empower families in the process by providing accurate, targeted information via the progress chaser as the process continues.

[90] In conclusion, we are committed to supporting timely and high-quality adaptations that enable older people to live safely in an accessible environment. This can be inhibited by finance and management systems, underinvestment in OT services, and inadequate performance management. The quality and age of Welsh homes, balanced with our ageing population, increases the demand for adaptation. A more coherent approach to its delivery will enable people to live more fulfilled lives and make best use of public money. The recommendations of the Disability Rights Commission document, 'Meeting the future housing challenge in England and Wales', offers good solutions, and good-quality inclusive design principles should be used in all new buildings. Continued improvement of the Welsh quality housing standard, and the use of standards for wheelchair housing, would help to move housing design forward in Wales.

[91] **Ann Jones:** Would Chris or Helene like to add anything to that? I see not.

[92] I will start by asking whether you have any specific examples of the difficulties that older people who require adaptations to their home face while waiting for the occupational therapy assessment, or reassessment? Are there any examples of people from the black and minority ethnic community, the deaf or blind, older people, Gypsy/Travellers, people in same-sex relationships, or even just men and women being treated differently in how the scheme is administered?

10.20 a.m.

[93] **Ms Crowder:** The whole process is complex, and people find it complicated to work out where they fit without knowledge of their own tenure and particular situation and, of course, with the disabled facilities grant, they have to go through the process of means testing. Chris, I think that you can offer us some examples of the issues for BME and other groups.

[94] **Ms Synan:** Yes. Different local authorities have different populations; in Cardiff, for example, we have a diverse population. We are well aware of the need to engage with different communities, listen to what they say, ask for their comments and invite them to

attend focus groups. It is important that we allow people the right sort of communication and that it be in the language or format of their choice if they have a sensory impairment. Given that the whole process is complex, communication with the service user is absolutely vital. Occupational therapists are the first people in, and they have to do a lot of the explaining right at the start of the process. Throughout the whole process, from the recommendation stage through implementation in the grants department, service users have various levels of written communication and opportunities to discuss matters with dedicated workers. For example, in Cardiff, we have a liaison officer who explains slowly and clearly to older people and those with special needs. That is what we try to implement in Cardiff.

[95] **Eleanor Burnham:** A certain case comes to mind, and it is probably one of the most horrendous. It concerns an older person whom I know, and if you were to meet her, you would not think that there was much wrong with her. I rang the social services for the particular authority where she lives to check on the intriguing nature of its prioritisation of criteria for initial assessment. I used words such as ‘intriguing’ and ‘interesting’ so that I could engage with it in the most professional manner, instead of asking ‘What is this you-know-what all about?’. The issue was that this lady wanted to move from her own home into housing association accommodation. This woman is probably in her 80s, she has just had a hip replacement, she has a problem with her eyesight, she has a heart problem, and she has psoriasis, but, if you were to meet her on the street, you would not know; she is a sprightly and positive woman. However, she is now at the end of her tether.

[96] How can we overcome these issues? The initial assessment was ‘triaged’, for want of a better word, so badly that they had not actually asked all the questions, although she is probably a bit deaf as well. There are all these problems, which I know about as I used to be a homecare manager in my early career, and I am also well aware of all these things as I know what it is like to have elderly parents. On the telephone, however, when talking to an older person, you cannot really gather all the information. Even when we go to see a doctor, for example, we always forget things and do not tell the whole story. How can we train people and make them more aware of the importance of the initial assessment? How do you get beyond that stage? This woman has probably been waiting properly for about five months, but, as you said, the process is complex. She wants to go into housing association accommodation, so is it the housing association or the OT—

[97] **Ann Jones:** Eleanor, please move on, as you have taken a while to get to your question.

[98] **Eleanor Burnham:** I am rambling, I know, but I am trying to encompass everything that you have said so far. I am trying to get over the first hurdle, and I am trying to make it appear as complex as it is. How can we cut the you-know-what?

[99] **Ann Jones:** Basically, how can complex cases be dealt with sooner?

[100] **Ms Synan:** Although I cannot comment on that particular case, I can comment on processes in general. In Cardiff, we follow the unified assessment process, which is an in-depth way of completing the initial contact with a client. We run our own access service from within our service, so we have occupational therapists on hand and dedicated contact officers. We also have facilities within our department to allow communication over the telephone with those who are deaf or hearing impaired. Those contact officers are trained to provide the advice that is needed at the point, and to signpost people to other services that might be able to respond with quick-fix measures, where appropriate, while they are waiting for the more complex in-depth occupational therapy assessment. So, following the unified assessment process takes people to very specific areas of questioning to gather that information, and we are able to prioritise from that contact assessment.

- [101] **Eleanor Burnham:** I do not want you to—
- [102] **Ann Jones:** Hang on for just two ticks, Eleanor. Have you finished, Chris?
- [103] **Ms Synan:** I have indeed.
- [104] **Ann Jones:** Okay, Eleanor, but be very brief.
- [105] **Eleanor Burnham:** Are you rolling out this good practice across Wales? That is what I want to know, in a nutshell.
- [106] **Ms Crowder:** These are the issues that we wish to raise. I know that Helene wants to come in on this.
- [107] **Ms Mars:** This is where the advantage of having occupational therapists within the housing comes into effect. You speak of the lady who wishes to move. An OT would look purely at the housing issues and assess that person to establish whether any adaptations were necessary in the new property. The OT would then take that lady through the move and begin to make any adaptations that were needed, or find a property where those adaptations had already been completed.
- [108] **Eleanor Burnham:** Absolutely, yes, because—
- [109] **Ann Jones:** No, Eleanor. Come on. I think that we understand the problem: there are complex needs. However, other people want to come in. Lorraine wants to come in on this, and Janet is also waiting.
- [110] **Lorraine Barrett:** To pick up on Christine's point about prioritising, how are you prioritising? There are quick-fix solutions such as fitting a ramp or a grab rail, but there are more complex priorities, which are more important. Although a ramp may enable one person to go out, a double amputee would still be in the living room with a commode because he could not access anywhere else in the house. That is very serious and urgent, but there is a much bigger job to be done. We all know of examples of people who have not had a bath or shower for three years, because they are waiting for that big job that needs doing. To me, that would be the priority, but it is much easier to do the quick fixes. How do you prioritise those needs?
- [111] **Ms Crowder:** We want to see a much greater skill mix in the occupational therapy service within local authority housing departments and housing associations. So, where you have support staff, or as we refer to them, 'trusted assessors', they will have the confidence to get on with the minor things. If a maintenance officer from our housing association goes to a house to carry out a piece of maintenance and sees that the person needs a grab rail, that person will not need to be referred to an occupational therapist. If we had that skill mix, supporting those people to get on and do the simple work, it would free up specialist occupational therapy time for the more complex assessments. To come back to what you said before about rolling out, that is why we are concerned that this is not rolling out across Wales. We need to see much more learning between local authorities so that the good practice that we see in some is rolled out across others, as well as to housing associations. Until we get the right person to see the service user at the right time, we will not make the best use of resource and we will not get to people sufficiently quickly.
- [112] **Ms Synan:** To add to that quickly, if I may, we are seeing very good partnership arrangements between local authorities and agencies such as Care and Repair Cymru. We now have occupational therapists within agencies such as Care and Repair and working for housing associations. We see this as an area of good practice that we wish to see rolled out

across Wales.

[113] **Janet Ryder:** On that point, if you look at the information that has been given to committee members, you see that the disparity in delivery between authorities, not just of the disabled facility grants but also of small repairs, is huge. Some county councils have made a huge and drastic improvement within a year. I think that I can predict your answer to this question, but what assessment have you made of why they have done that? Learning from that, what do we need to do in the Assembly? Should we make recommendations to specific Ministers to set regulations? Should we look at it as a pan-Wales issue and say that anyone in Wales should have equal access to this service, and therefore Ministers will have to make regulations and guidance available to local authorities and expect that guidance to be followed? If we do that, what implications would there be for your profession, in the ability to recruit occupational therapists to fulfil what would presumably be an increasing number of roles?

10.30 a.m.

[114] **Ms Crowder:** Right.

[115] **Ms Synan:** There were several questions there.

[116] **Ann Jones:** You will have to roll your sleeves up. [*Laughter.*]

[117] **Ms Crowder:** I will start, and Chris will have to pick up the bits that I forget. Some local authorities have been looking very creatively at their situation and at the alternatives and opportunities for change. I hope that this is not the predictable bit of my answer, but placing occupational therapists in senior posts is one issue. We are not saying that to try to get a promotion but because, until you are at the table at which operational and strategic decisions are made, the reality from an occupational therapy perspective is not sufficiently being brought to those decisions. If you have occupational therapists who are in a position to change services, employ support staff, bring about change and develop partnerships, you will then start to see change and make a big difference.

[118] The other issue is to do with learning across local authorities. Any guidance or regulation that promotes that kind of working would be of huge advantage. I am sure that Chris and Helene will raise the issue of our all-Wales group in a moment. We think that performance indicators are important. The disabled facilities grant process has improved markedly since we have had the performance indicator. It is still not perfect, and there is still a lot of variability in how the data are gathered, but we have no performance indicators for social housing or local authority housing. So, when there is someone in a housing association with a need, or when a stock transfer is made, there is insufficient scrutiny at the moment to ensure that funding is made available, ensuring that there is enough money to make adaptations to that housing when people move in, or that an OT is in post to make the assessment that the accommodation is right. So, we think that senior OTs need to be engaged in decisions about service delivery, we need performance indicators, and we need some learning across all local authorities.

[119] Before I hand over to Chris and Helene, I want to say a word on the implications for recruitment. We have around a 7 per cent vacancy rate at the moment among OTs across Wales. Local authorities are saying that they expect that to halve, and those are always snapshot figures. Our main message would be that it is not so much about vacancies as a lack of establishment. We carry out 40 per cent of the adult social services referrals, yet we represent only 1 per cent of the workforce, including our support staff. If we upped that figure and improved the balance, we could engage in reablement processes, do preventative work, and start working more effectively with people. If the services are valued, and the outcome is

recognised, there are huge cost-benefits to engaging in this kind of work. Once the quality-of-life issues are sorted for people, and once we ensure that they have appropriate accommodation and access to public buildings in the community around them, they start to live meaningful lives.

[120] **Janet Ryder:** If we lived in a society in which authorities prioritised the employment of occupational therapists at a significant level and through all the grades to ensure that this work was prioritised—because, whether it is a major or a minor adaptation, I agree that it is absolutely vital to the person who needs it, and so it needs to be carried out as quickly as possible—do you have enough people in training now who could come through and fulfil that expectation? Is there anything that this committee needs to do to look at the training available, or to monitor the number of people going into training, so that, if we saw an increase in the number of places available, people would be coming through to fill them?

[121] **Ms Crowder:** To date—and Nick, Ann and Lorraine will know this from the workforce planning review from last year—workforce planning for occupational therapists has taken into account only secondary NHS needs. The NHS was asked what it needed, but the location of other occupational therapy posts was not looked at. So, the local authority need for graduate OTs was never looked at. This year, as a result of the review by the Health and Social Services Committee, the Care Council for Wales asked local authorities about their needs and discovered that it was around 12 new graduates for next year. I know that that does not sound like much, but, when you commission around 80 occupational therapy places overall, 12 is quite a significant number. I understand that those numbers have been added into the recommendation, so the top level of the figures has increased; the bottom number has not come up and I believe that those numbers are currently with the Minister for Health and Social Services for decision on how many occupational therapy places should be commissioned. We do not know that outcome yet. It is the first year that it has happened and we do not know whether we will have any increase.

[122] **Janet Ryder:** Do we need to ask the Deputy Minister for Housing to have a look at this, as it is a definitely a housing issue?

[123] **Ms Crowder:** That would be lovely. We have moved from asking secondary NHS care to now asking local authority social services. Only some of those may have included housing, because there are few housing occupational therapists in Wales—we think that around five are employed in dedicated posts. No-one is asking the third sector and, yet, many occupational therapists work in the third sector. We have obviously had a huge increase over the last two years, with occupational therapists going to Pathways to Work and return to work posts. Therefore, we work in a wide range of settings and yet our workforce planning is done only on the statutory sector. We need to see a widening of that.

[124] We have had a large increase of occupational therapists in the past. We had an up and down pattern of workforce planning, so we had a large increase in training places. Some time ago, there was an opportunity for establishment to be widely increased, with a lot of graduates coming from a large cohort. Many of those occupational therapists who were unable to get posts in the statutory sector have gone to the voluntary sector. They are still working in occupational-therapy-type roles but they would have been available if the establishment had been there for them to fill.

[125] **Ann Jones:** Perhaps we will write to the Deputy Minister for Housing and ask for her views on that; we could then incorporate that in our report, if that is acceptable.

[126] **Ms Crowder:** That would be lovely. Thank you.

[127] **Ann Jones:** Did you have a supplementary question, Eleanor?

[128] **Eleanor Burnham:** I had an experience in Denbighshire recently, during a visit to a Care and Repair organisation, where someone had to contact social services and talk to the housing association and the whole group. Your streamlining is a wise move, is it not? I was told that Care and Repair's wonderfully co-ordinated work actually saves them money. They did not tell me how much it cost, but they reckoned that they are saving the £400 per day, per person that it costs for an elderly person to remain in hospital; there is that dreadful term—bedblocking. I will ask a very controversial question: if we had more women in these senior strategic roles, do you think that they would be more aware of some of these very basic issues around health and social care, which should be slightly more streamlined?

[129] **Ms Crowder:** I think that we need to ensure that our services are placing the service user right at the centre, and that we are thinking about what we are trying to achieve and where we are trying to go. If service leads had a very clear vision of what this service should look like, we could start to identify the clear outcomes in performance. The gender of the people in those posts should not matter.

[130] **Nick Ramsay:** 'Putting the citizen at the centre' is a wonderful phrase. How many times do we use it? I frequently use it in this committee. In terms of the point that you made earlier about the number of occupational therapists needed, did you say that your estimate was 12 occupational therapists?

[131] **Ms Crowder:** That is what the Care Council for Wales identified as being needed by local authorities in Wales in terms of new graduates next year.

[132] **Nick Ramsay:** Is that just for the local authorities?

[133] **Ms Crowder:** Yes. I understood that that was just for the social services.

[134] **Nick Ramsay:** So, that does not include the voluntary sector.

[135] **Ms Crowder:** No.

[136] **Nick Ramsay:** Okay. That is fine.

[137] **Ann Jones:** Eleanor mentioned Care and Repair. The director of Care and Repair Cymru, when she was here giving evidence, told us that the organisation uses private occupational therapists and that they recommend to some of the older people that they see that they can take them along to be assessed. Some older people want to do that and they are prepared, if necessary, to finance that. What are the advantages or disadvantages of hiring private occupational therapists in order to speed up an assessment process?

10.40 a.m.

[138] **Ms Mars:** The advantage of having a private occupational therapist in situations where elderly people who live in their own homes may not wish to go through the complexity of the disabled facilities grant process. The private occupational therapist is well placed to advise those people on the best possible solutions and the most appropriate equipment or type of adaptation. If you are going to be looking to private occupational therapists for referral to the local authority for further funding, you are risking creating a two-tier system again, and the elderly person who can afford a private OT could, potentially, be queue jumping. So, from that point of view, there should be a fine line between the private and the local authority OT.

[139] **Ms Synan:** I would far rather persuade Care and Repair agencies to employ occupational therapists directly, as I have done in Cardiff, than encourage them to go down

the route of private OTs.

[140] **Ann Jones:** That was the point that I wanted you to come out with. Eleanor?

[141] **Eleanor Burnham:** That is an interesting point. My understanding is that the people who go for the disabled facilities grant are people who live in their own homes. So, they are disadvantaged in many respects, and are perhaps waiting in a longer queue than those who live in housing association accommodation.

[142] **Ms Crowder:** There is such variability that, even within one local authority, the different tenures will have variability, and when you look at the same tenure across different authorities, it is variable.

[143] **Eleanor Burnham:** So, you could build a business case around the fact that you are going to save housing associations money if they employ more occupational therapists.

[144] **Ms Crowder:** Yes.

[145] **Eleanor Burnham:** That is brilliant.

[146] **Ann Jones:** Does anyone else have any questions? I see that there are no more questions, so we will move on. We have covered the need for occupational therapists in housing; I can almost write the recommendation on that without having to go any further.

[147] **Eleanor Burnham:** When we had Care and Repair before us, it was quite frightening to see its chart of the waiting lists; the chart was tabulated in months and some of the waiting times were absolutely horrendous—for example, as long as five years. It was scary. The lovely lady who I mentioned earlier was hoping to have an adaptation done so that she could wash herself; she had psoriasis—because of her hip, she could not get into the bath and so on—but she has had to wait five months. However, that is nothing compared with some people who were waiting for five years.

[148] **Ms Crowder:** You will see that some local authorities will have no waiting lists at all, because they have been creative.

[149] **Eleanor Burnham:** However, as Janet rightly pointed out, some authorities will suddenly manage to reduce their waiting lists in a hurry.

[150] **Ms Synan:** I would like to comment on that. Local authorities should be asked some pertinent questions, such as do they make significant use of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, which allows them to put fast-track procedures in place, so that, for example, they could fit a straight stair lift within 35 days, as opposed to the much more bureaucratic and complex DFG system? I would also ask my local authority whether it forms good partnership agreements with agencies such as Care and Repair, and what sort of investment it has made in its occupational therapy establishment over the past 15 years to match the increasing volume of older people that are coming to our services for assessment.

[151] **Janet Ryder:** Would it be possible to encompass those questions in a letter to local authority leaders?

[152] **Ann Jones:** There is nothing to prevent us from writing to every local authority to ask for that information, as evidence for our report.

[153] **Janet Ryder:** Do we need to incorporate housing associations in this, Chair?

[154] **Ann Jones:** Yes, I think so.

[155] **Eleanor Burnham:** Perhaps we could have a little handbook with those pertinent points included in it.

[156] **Ann Jones:** That might be a recommendation that comes out of this report, Eleanor; however, I do not know who would do that.

[157] Moving on to performance management, you mention that there are no performance indicators on these issues, but to what extent has the introduction of PIs for the delivery of the disabled facilities grant improved the service provided? Local authorities will always say that including another PI is bureaucratic and costly. You mentioned the introduction of a PI to a range of agencies involved; how do you think that that could improve the service?

[158] **Ms Mars:** I think that having a PI enables the authority to look at itself and how it is performing against other authorities in Wales, which provides the incentive to improve. Our concern is that there are no PIs at the moment for registered social landlords or stock transfer cases. We are aware that, when the physical adaptation grant was introduced, the volume of applicants overwhelmed a lot of the RSLs, and there was quite a long period between the recommendation and the actual provision of the adaptation. We feel that, just as a PI encourages the local authority to improve itself, it would hopefully have the same effect on an RSL. It would also enable them to link with the local authority and compare themselves with it, creating some kind of equality between the different sources.

[159] **Eleanor Burnham:** Is there any merit in trying to persuade the Minister, when we make recommendations, to look at business cases involving taking money from the health budget as much as from social care? I think that they should be more dove-tailed. That happens in certain partnerships, but having spoken to the group in Denbighshire, it seems to me that there is a case for taking money creatively from other budgets that might be accessible now. A business case could show how to save hospitals £400 by removing an elderly patient who should not be there, and could be back in the community with a few small, cost-effective adaptations to their home. Would that be a good recommendation?

[160] **Ms Crowder:** We would certainly like to see increased integration. I would use Carmarthen as an example, where the health and social care occupational therapy services are run by a single manager, which creates good opportunities. Hopefully, when the NHS reorganisation moves through to completion, we should see more improvement in joint-working between community and primary care services and social services delivery. Much more use could be made of flexibilities in joint budgets than is done at the moment, and joint occupational therapy posts are also beneficial. I believe that you have had written evidence from the Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust, which uses technical staff to install minor adaptations for the people being discharged from hospital. I do not know whether the others have any particular examples that they would like to mention.

[161] **Eleanor Burnham:** The other point that I wanted to ask about relates to this phrase, 'fit for purpose'. Surely housing associations should be required to provide a minimum basic adaptation, and you would know, from your personal expertise and experience, what an older person might need. With your strategic input, that should already be defined and in situ.

[162] **Mr Crowder:** This is where improving the Welsh housing quality standard and ensuring that we use good design standards would make an enormous difference. The Northern Ireland Executive, for example, employs an occupational therapist in its housing department, and that person has made an enormous difference. They have mapped the homes of every wheelchair user, and they know the locations of the adaptations. That is exactly the



kind of work that Helene does.

[163] **Ms Synan:** We were recently able to provide information on the work in Northern Ireland to the Deputy Minister for Housing. It is very impressive work.

[164] **Janet Ryder:** My question is on that particular point. You talk in the paper about making an assessment of housing stock available to authorities through social housing associations, showing where adaptations have been made, and what kind of adaptations they were. That kind of common register would be useful if someone presents with housing needs, but also with extra needs. Presumably, such a register would have to be county-by-county. How far are we away from creating such a register, and how do we make that happen?

10.50 a.m.

[165] **Ms Mars:** This was one of the recommendations that Chris Jones made in his review of the disabled facility grant. A lot of the authorities are now going down the route of a formal housing register, and not necessarily confined to the county. I believe that Monmouthshire, Torfaen and Newport are looking to combine their registers, both across the local authorities and the housing associations and RSLs. Cardiff has an accessible homes register, and we are working on a register in Caerphilly, and hoping to link in with the registered social landlords in time. It is good practice and means that we are making best use of the available stock, from the point of view of properties that have been adapted as well as from the point of view of properties that are suitable without adaptation—you look at the main structure of the property as opposed to what may have been put into it. For example, an elderly lady may have had a stairlift installed because the toilet is upstairs, but the access to the property may not be good. We would not deprive that lady of access to the toilet because she could not get in and out of the house easily, but that property would not therefore necessarily constitute a property suitable for a disabled person to move into. So it is important to look at the structure of the property as well as the adaptation. However, the housing registers, which make good use of properties, are taking off all over Wales now.

[166] **Janet Ryder:** To what extent can that be, or should that be, extended to the private market? For example, should estate agents be encouraged to add a note to the sale notice for a house to say that it has had certain adaptations?

[167] **Ms Mars:** That would be helpful and may happen in time. It is a case of taking one step at a time. First, the local authorities will produce their registers, then the registered social landlords will be brought in, and the next step would be encouraging estate agents to provide that information. It is more difficult with private ownership, because you are getting into issues of data protection. It is difficult to put people in touch with others without crossing that line on data protection.

[168] **Ms Crowder:** One of the recommendations in the Disability Rights Commission document, 'Meeting the future housing challenge in England and Wales' is to work with estate agents and think about how they can promote housing that is more accessible. When people are thinking about moving when they are older, they need advice on how appropriate the property is that they are planning to buy. They should not buy a property for a beautiful sea view if there are 25 steps up to the door, the doorways are narrow and space for turning is narrow. Some of the work that has been done in Northern Ireland is a nice example, because they have used their housing executive occupational therapist to carry out a proper research project, working with service users to find out, for example, what kind of space they really need to be able to turn around if they are in a wheelchair. Those standards are really useful, and to see those rolled out and used when people are designing homes is really important. Another area that occupational therapists work on is the design right at the start, so that we do not continue to provide housing that still has to be adapted.

[169] The Welsh housing quality standard identified the need for a downstairs toilet, but you cannot get into the majority of those with a Zimmer frame or two sticks and shut the door and have privacy. We need to be moving that standard on all the time.

[170] **Eleanor Burnham:** Should this not be included in the education and training of architects?

[171] **Ms Crowder:** Absolutely, yes.

[172] **Ann Jones:** I think that we could go on with these recommendations, but unless there are any more questions from Members, I am going to draw the session to a close. Thank you very much. You have given us a great deal to think about. Perhaps we can write to you if we feel that there is anything that we need further clarification on.

[173] **Ms Crowder:** Yes, any time.

[174] **Ann Jones:** I am sure that you will look forward to reading the report and that we will make some recommendations on this. Thank you very much.

10.53 a.m.

### **Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion**

[175] **Ann Jones:** I propose that

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

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

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.  
Motion carried.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.54 a.m.  
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.54 a.m.*