



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

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

**Dydd Mawrth, 1 Chwefror 2011  
Tuesday, 1 February 2011**

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

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

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

Mohammad Asghar	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Janet Ryder	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

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

Lorraine Barrett	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (Comisiynydd y Cynulliad Cynaliadwy) Assembly Member, Labour (the Commissioner for the Sustainable Assembly)
Claire Clancy	Prif Weithredwr a Chlerc y Cynulliad Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly
Jocelyn Davies	Aelod Cynulliad, Plaid Cymru (y Dirprwy Weinidog dros Dai ac Adfywio) Assembly Member, the Party of Wales (the Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration)
Huw McLean	Rheolwr Adfywio ac Adnewyddu Tai, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Housing Regeneration and Renewal Manager, Welsh Assembly Government
Holly Pembridge	Rheolwr Cydraddoldeb, Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru Equality Manager, National Assembly for Wales
Alyn Williams	Pennaeth y Gangen Dai a Chymunedau, y Gyfarwyddiaeth Dai, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head of Housing and Communities Branch, Housing Directorate, Welsh Assembly Government

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

Sarah Hatherley	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service
Catherine Hunt	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser

*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 will just run through the usual housekeeping rules. Will Members around the table please switch off their mobile phones, BlackBerrys, pagers and any other electronic equipment? I remind you that translation facilities are available. Channel 1 on the headsets is for the translation, and channel 0 can be used for amplification. We are not expecting the fire alarm to operate, so, if it does, we will take our instructions from the ushers. At this point, I usually say that you can follow me out because I will be one of the first out of the building. We have had apologies this morning from Veronica German and we are not expecting a substitute. I am sure that Joyce will join us later.

9.30 a.m.

### **Adroddiad Blynyddol Cydraddoldeb 2010 Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru National Assembly for Wales Annual Equality Report 2010**

[2] **Ann Jones:** It is a pleasure to welcome Claire Clancy, the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly; Holly Pembroke, the equality manager for the Assembly; and Lorraine Barrett, the Commissioner for the Sustainable Assembly. You are all very welcome. Does anybody have an opening statement? I see that you do, Lorraine. We will move to questions after that.

[3] **Lorraine Barrett:** Thanks very much, Chair. There are a few points that I would like to go over and then we will be happy to take questions. Thank you for inviting us again. I was asking Claire earlier how long it had been since the last one, and she said it had been a year. I thought, 'Oh gosh; it doesn't seem like a year'. This will be my last report as Commissioner, because I will not be standing for re-election.

[4] You have had the report and, no doubt, you will be going through the points that it contains. I would just like to touch on a couple of the items that I feel that we have progressed well over 2010. First, I would like to put on record my thanks to two members of staff in particular who left the Assembly last year. They are Christine Morgan and Denise Rogers, both of whom, I think you will agree, worked tirelessly to embed equality throughout the Assembly during their time here.

[5] You will probably have questions about the Step Up Cymru scheme. That has been one of the highlights, because we really engaged with people right across Wales and across the equality spectrum. There was the Equality and Diversity Month in June. That was an opportunity for everyone—staff, Assembly Members and Assembly Members' staff—to get involved in various events celebrating equality and diversity. Work was done on the promotion of our accessible information policy and toolkit for staff; those were promoted during the Equality and Diversity Month. Something that was a bit special to me, if I can put it like that, was the reopening of the Pierhead building as a resource for everyone. It has been a huge success. It was redeveloped with the assistance of a disability access group. I hope that we got it right. As I said, it is a huge success.

[6] Something else to be proud of is our place in the UK Stonewall workplace equality index. We are moving up. In 2010, we achieved forty-seventh place across the UK. We are aiming to move up the ladder each year. We had a report, 'Scaling the Wall', following the previous International Day of Disabled People, which is always a successful event. We invite people into the Assembly to share their experiences with us, and so that we can learn from them too. We have been generally working with partners right across the board to celebrate

and recognise specific equality events. Whether it is the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans History Month or a celebration of women in democracy, there is a whole host of issues.

[7] Obviously, she has a team of people behind her doing this, but I would like to pay tribute to Claire Clancy for heading up our achieving the Investors in People gold standard, which was a fantastic achievement. I want to thank Claire and her team. I particularly want to thank Holly, who heads up the equality team. She is totally committed to her remit, and she does it very well indeed. I think that I will leave it at that and we will be happy to take questions. Thank you.

[8] **Ann Jones:** Thanks very much. It is good to have that round-up rather than our trying to remember what we have done. There are some good success stories, and perhaps we are leading the way in some areas as well. I will start the questioning by asking about the equality scheme and the action plan. The scheme was scheduled to end in November 2011. Why has it been decided to extend the scheme until April 2012, and what will the implications of that be?

[9] **Mrs Clancy:** I will begin and Holly can fill in the detail. We have the new Equality Act 2010. Holly and the team have begun work across the organisation to make sure that we implement the Equality Act 2010 in full. The thinking was that we are required under that Act to have the new form of equality scheme in place by April 2012, and that we ought to work to that deadline in order to get a fully worked up compliance scheme in place. Also, as we will have a new Commission after the election, we thought that it would be wise to give the Commission time to settle into its role and to be able to influence the direction of the equality scheme. It just gives time to do the job properly and within the legislative requirements, which is the basic point.

[10] **Ms Pembridge:** It also gives us more time to review the existing scheme. As Claire mentioned, it also gives the Commission more time to bed down and to check the temperature gauge on the equality agenda in the Assembly. This time around we will have a focus on equality objectives as per the Equality Act. Therefore, it just gives us more time to do that. I thought that it would be sensible to extend it in line with the Equality Act requirements.

[11] **Ann Jones:** Okay. That is fine. Thank you very much. I now call on Oscar.

[12] **Mohammad Asghar:** Good morning to the Commission team for equality. My first question will be on Step Up Cymru. In the report, you state that the Step Up Cymru mentoring scheme was a great success. What have been the benefits of the scheme for the organisation and the participants involved? Do you intend to run another or a similar scheme in the future?

[13] **Lorraine Barrett:** Perhaps I can say a few opening words and then perhaps Claire or Holly can come in with some detail. It was quite an ambitious scheme. It built on the Operation Black Vote scheme, where we felt that we wanted to encompass everyone that we possibly could across Wales. Involving local government was also really important. The feedback that we had during the presentation evening at the culmination of the whole scheme and then from Members and mentees has given us a fuller picture. I think that we can always improve on these things. At the end of the day, it is down to individuals—the mentors and the mentees—in terms of how they work together. I must mention the amount of work that went into it. A huge resource was needed to implement Step Up Cymru. On a personal level, I would like to see it happening again, but we have to be realistic as to how often we can do it. I will just put my personal view now by saying that once every Assembly term may be enough to give staff the opportunity to really fine-tune it, or every other term as an absolute minimum, because it is resource-intensive.

[14] **Ann Jones:** By ‘Assembly term’, do you mean four years?

[15] **Lorraine Barrett:** Yes. That is just because of the time that it takes to implement it, for the scheme to run, and then to assess what people got out of it and how you can fine-tune it for the next time.

[16] **Ann Jones:** Janet has a supplementary question.

[17] **Janet Ryder:** You said that it has taken a lot of resources to support it, it was obviously a thing that needed to happen—it was very well done—and Operation Black Vote was recognised for its achievements. However, we have had those two schemes, and I understand that Step Up Cymru extended beyond the Assembly and encouraged people to come forward as candidates for local government as well, but we still have not seen those candidates coming forward. As Lorraine said, that will ultimately be up to an individual's choice, but what more do we need to do to fundamentally shift the balance of councillors and the balance of elected people in Wales away from being old men in grey suits?

[18] **Lorraine Barrett:** I have a view on all of this. I do not feel that it is for public money to be used to find candidates for political parties. I see the scheme as an opportunity to open up civic society and the experience of being part of a political body—I say 'political' with a small 'p' as far as the Assembly is concerned—so that people have the experience of what it is like to be an elected member. However, I believe that there is more to it than someone just thinking, 'I would like to become a councillor, or an Assembly Member, from this experience'. For me, it is just the start of a journey. Some of the people who were involved with the scheme started to think that they would like to work for an Assembly Member, or work in a council. We all have a part to play in this; political parties need to look at themselves and consider how they select candidates.

9.40 a.m.

[19] I like to think that the scheme helped many people—however many took part in it—to build their confidence. For example, my mentee saw a side of my job that she had never imagined, and it gave her the confidence to stand up at that final event and deliver a speech, which she had never done before. That is the first step on her journey; it does not mean that she would feel able to put herself forward as a councillor, or an Assembly Member, but it is the start of the journey. I never considered that the purpose of that scheme was to search for candidates. It is too soon after Step Up Cymru and Operation Black Vote to answer Janet's point, although I know that some people have gone on to become candidates. However, that was never the prime thinking behind it for me. That was my personal view. I do not know whether Holly has any further thoughts on that.

[20] **Ms Pembridge:** We learned some lessons from Step Up Cymru. Much of the feedback that I have had from mentees—the ones who shadowed local councillors and Assembly Members—noted that they did not have access to basic information about democracy in order to make informed decisions, or to become more active citizens. It is as basic as knowing the difference between the Welsh Government, the Assembly, local councils and local authorities, and how they can get involved. It was important to them that they knew where to access information and who to influence.

[21] We are going to do some extra evaluation in April, because we would like to check, exactly a year after the scheme finished, how far people have come. We have had some outcomes in the sense that some mentees have felt more able to become more active citizens, and have set up community groups. For example, one of our mentees became the chair of a voluntary group, and one is standing as a candidate at the Assembly elections. It is about addressing perceptions, and Lorraine has already mentioned confidence. A few of the mentees were surprised that Assembly Members were also carers, or had family lives, and they were

interested in how they balanced their work commitments. Therefore, it is about widening people's perceptions about the role of a councillor, or what is involved in being an Assembly Member. That is where Step Up Cymru came in. We also gave the mentees basic training about the democratic processes in Wales, and we worked with partners across Wales on that.

[22] Regarding the benefits of Step Up Cymru for the people involved, some Members have told me that they had learned a lot about the barriers that some people in their constituencies face. For us, it was beneficial to work as partners with the Welsh Local Government Association and the Welsh Government. We pooled expertise as well as resources and estates, so we tried to make savings as well. Therefore, on the whole, it was a useful experiment, to see how we can come together and work for the better good.

[23] **Mrs Clancy:** I would like to make a few quick points. An evaluation report is available online. Janet's point is a really important one. It shows that we need to ensure that all the work that we do, across the organisation, is properly integrated. There is a clear link between Step Up Cymru and the work that our communications and education teams do to raise awareness of the Assembly's role and work, and the relationship between the different parts of democracy in Wales. The approach to Vote 2011 is a good example of how the teams have worked together to ensure that people across Wales, whatever their position, have access to the information that they need to understand what they are able to engage in.

[24] Regarding whether we will do it again, that decision will be taken by the next Assembly Commission. I believe that it has immense value and there have been clear benefits, but it is resource-intensive and we know that we are operating in a very tight budget situation. I am sure that we will come on to talk about that.

[25] One of the consequences is that we have a slightly smaller equalities team without Chris Morgan, so taking on a job like this in the short and medium term could be demanding, and we are going to have to think very carefully about that. Lorraine's suggestion that, if we do it again, we should do it once in an Assembly period, do it properly and invest the effort in it, is a very sound suggestion.

[26] **Ann Jones:** Very briefly, Janet—we must move on as we are halfway through the session and we are only on question 2.

[27] **Janet Ryder:** I know that this was a major piece of work, and Lorraine is quite right to say that encouraging people to stand as candidates is down to the political parties, and every single one of them is failing to attract that gender balance of candidates to come forward in Wales. That can be seen in our council chambers and, presumably, it will be seen in the Chamber during the next Assembly. However, the more that you have talked about this piece of work, the more that you are describing an adult citizenship scheme. So, what avenues did you explore for working in partnership with one of the higher education institutions, further education institutions or the schools themselves, which are running the baccalaureate and very similar schemes to this? On the geographical spread, where did the candidates come from?

[28] **Lorraine Barrett:** I do not know whether Holly has that information. This was a step further forward from Operation Black Vote, and if it happens again, the organisations that you talked about could become partners, which seems a natural progression for such a scheme. Holly can briefly give us an idea.

[29] **Ms Pembridge:** The rationale for this scheme was based on bringing together steering groups from the interest groups that covered the people that we were targeting with the scheme, but that is something that we could take forward. The citizenship element was something that we tried to promote in the community ambassador ideal—we used the

Operation Black Vote idea for that concept, because it worked so well in the previous scheme that we ran in the Assembly. However, that is something that I can take back to report to the partnership.

[30] **Lorraine Barrett:** Is the information about the geographical spread of candidates in the report?

[31] **Ms Pembridge:** I do not think that it is, but we could provide a note.

[32] **Ann Jones:** Thank you very much.

[33] **Mohammad Asghar:** My second question is about the Assembly Commission workforce. How do you intend to address the gaps that remain in the data on staff monitoring, especially when the system currently in use relies on staff self-reporting their characteristics and status?

[34] **Lorraine Barrett:** Claire, could you lead on this?

[35] **Mrs Clancy:** It is difficult. Holly has been talking to the HR team, which is going to send out monthly requests or reminders to all staff to complete the data. Holly reckons that we should wear them down until they provide the information. That is fair enough, but I think that it is also the right of an individual member of staff not to disclose this information if they do not want to. So, there is a balance to be struck. It is important that we have as accurate and complete data as possible, and we are required to monitor against those data, which is incredibly difficult if they are incomplete. On the other hand, I do not think that anyone would want us to force individuals who are reluctant to share the information to do so.

[36] **Mohammad Asghar:** Along the same lines, you state in your paper that a staff survey and training needs analysis has been undertaken to identify issues around the equality agenda. What were the results of the staff survey and did it highlight any areas of concern that you intend to address over the coming year?

9.50 a.m.

[37] **Mrs Clancy:** The work is very recent. Holly and the team are doing the analysis at the moment, and the report will be published within the next few months. An initial review of the results shows them to be largely positive. One of the downsides, perhaps, is not having either external benchmarks or trends to compare with, so some of the results look extremely positive, but you do not know whether other organisations would do even better. So, there is no room for complacency. In areas where the data are less good—and there are one or two—then obviously we will be, first of all, trying to drill down to understand what is amiss in those areas, and fixing them. However, as I say, this work is in progress, and you will have the report within the next few weeks.

[38] **Janet Ryder:** Just looking at the redundancies that the Assembly Government is unfortunately facing, this committee has always taken an interest in achieving a balanced workforce, so I have a couple of questions on that. As applications for voluntary redundancy come in, how do you maintain a good balance of skills across the workforce and of equalities across different sectors? I put the same question to the unions last week at the Finance Committee, and part of their answer was that, with the absorption into the Assembly Government of organisations like the Welsh Development Agency, the workforce balance is now out of kilter. The unions were of the opinion that it will take some time to regain any balance in the workforce, so I just wanted to know what consideration was being given to that, and how you intend to move that forward.



[39] **Lorraine Barrett:** I will ask Claire to answer that. One thing that I would say is that there is no comparison between workforce numbers here in the National Assembly for Wales and those in the Welsh Assembly Government.

[40] **Janet Ryder:** Could I just clarify, then, for my own mind: departments like the WDA have come into the Assembly Government; do they not fall under your monitoring scheme at all?

[41] **Lorraine Barrett:** No. We are just the Assembly Commission.

[42] **Janet Ryder:** Okay; just ignore that question.

[43] **Lorraine Barrett:** It is a good example.

[44] **Janet Ryder:** Could you answer for me, please, how you will retain that balance with the redundancies?

[45] **Lorraine Barrett:** Perhaps Claire could answer that, because I know that it was a challenge, and Claire and her team found it difficult for all sorts of reasons. Could you give us an update on that, Claire?

[46] **Mrs Clancy:** When we were considering applications for voluntary redundancy, we had a scoring scheme based on certain criteria. One of the two main criteria was business need, so we asked, 'Is this an area of work where we can spare the person?', and that was graded in the scoring scheme. The other main criterion was cost.

[47] I do not believe that, at the point where we were selecting people for voluntary redundancy, we looked at the equality mix. However, the outcome of the scheme that we operated was a fairly even mix: in terms of age, 25 people went in total, with a spread across the age groups. We can give you the data if you like. There were 13 men and 12 women. So, fortuitously—and I would not want to claim that it was anything other than that—the mix was fairly even. A majority of the people who applied were selected for voluntary redundancy; I cannot remember the exact numbers, but 30-plus people asked to go, and 25 did go, so we did not reject a large number of applications. The main criteria were business need, primarily, and then cost.

[48] Looking at the statistics for the staff mix that we have within the Assembly Commission in terms of equalities, I do not think that it is out of kilter at all. Those data are available, too.

[49] **Janet Ryder:** Thank you for that answer. Perhaps it is an issue to do with Assembly Government staff, as we have looked very closely at Assembly Commission staff.

[50] **Ann Jones:** Do you want to carry on? We will have a think about what you just said.

[51] **Janet Ryder:** Another issue that this committee has always taken seriously is that of the equal pay reviews that local government should be carrying out. I understand that you have carried out your own pay review. Can you tell me whether that review has thrown up any areas of concern from a gender equality perspective and, if so, what action do you intend to take?

[52] **Lorraine Barrett:** Claire, can you start with that question? Holly might have some information on that as well.

[53] **Mrs Clancy:** Our review has thrown up a number of differences, but they are

differences that are readily explained, and so they are not areas of concern. I am speaking from memory, but I believe that there is a retention allowance for people with translation and editing skills, which skews the earnings in favour of females given the number of women in that area. So, there is a 7 per cent difference in favour of women in that area. There is a similar difference in favour of men in our two executive bands, but that is due to different positions on the pay scales. So, the women recruited more recently have not yet worked their way up the pay scales. However, the pay scales are equality proof; in other words, they are short, so you get to the top of them relatively quickly. So, that situation will right itself over the next two to three years.

[54] **Janet Ryder:** Has your report shown up any areas of work in which women predominate? Has it shown that women will perhaps opt for one type of work as opposed to another?

[55] **Mrs Clancy:** Yes, we see that in some areas, but it also works the other way around as well. For instance, as highlighted in past discussions, the security branch has many male members of staff; it has experienced difficulties in recruiting women. There are also a high number of women working as translators and editors. Are there any other areas where there is a big difference?

[56] **Ms Pembridge:** There are also a number of translation home workers who happen to be women.

[57] **Janet Ryder:** That is interesting. I now move on to work placements, and I know that you have done a lot to offer work placements to people from under-represented groups. Will that continue to be a priority? I know that the elected Members cannot answer this question, but can the officers say whether that will continue to be a priority for the Commission over the coming year? Have any particular issues been thrown up? Are there any groups that are hard to contact or support?

[58] **Lorraine Barrett:** I think that Holly could say something on that.

[59] **Ms Pembridge:** We have two work placements. One is an outreach secondment for a member of the black minority ethnic community, which is situated in our HR department. That placement was advertised with a number of organisations across Wales and has been very successful. The other placement is in the Members' research service for a person with mental ill-health issues. That is a supported work placement with a job coach in place, and it has also been going very well. We have received great feedback about that placement, and the difference with that placement is that we needed to have a job coach in order for it to work. This placement is for six months, but we hope to extend that in order to give the individual more time to get a curriculum vitae together. The feedback received from the person and his family is that the placement has improved his social skills and has increased his desire to apply for paid employment, which is really good. I would like to think that we could continue those outreach secondments as a matter of priority, given that recruitment levels are not as high as they have been in the past.

[60] **Janet Ryder:** All committees usually attempt to reach groups in society to get information, evidence and feedback on committee reports. Are there any groups that the Assembly Commission has found particularly difficult to contact? How are you addressing those situations?

10.00 a.m.

[61] **Ms Pembridge:** Traditionally, some black minority ethnic communities are difficult to contact because of language differences. Maybe we need to look at how we use social

media in community languages. Also, due to the nature of Wales's geography, we need to ensure that we include all of Wales, and the social media are a great way of getting through to people in different geographical areas. We are constantly updating our contacts with the outreach team—we work very closely with the team, and the Assembly bus has gone around Wales. That is helping to reach the communities that we have not had a chance to contact so far. We are still building up our contacts. I am not sure if we are missing anyone out, but if we are, if you could let us know, we would be happy to make contacts. Our outreach officers are always happy to go out to give presentations and to bring people in to the Assembly.

[62] **Janet Ryder:** Apart from reaching contacts in different geographical areas, which the bus is helping with, is it helping to extend the number of different and diverse groups such as ethnic minority or disability groups?

[63] **Ms Pembridge:** Feedback from our outreach team suggests that it is getting more contact with youth groups and smaller access groups that are not part of the wider lobby groups. We have been trying to contact individuals and our disabled users forum has a number of individuals who are not necessarily part of a wider umbrella group, but who nonetheless want to participate. I hope that I have answered your question.

[64] **Janet Ryder:** Have any of those contacts altered the way in which you make contact or communicate with groups?

[65] **Ms Pembridge:** I think so, in the sense that we are more likely to use the internet, e-mail, e-mail fora, Twitter and Facebook in the kind of work that we do. For the Vote 2011 campaign, we have published a British Sign Language video and an easy-read guide, and we used our network contacts. I can give you one example; when we produced the BSL video, we sent it to one of our contacts in the deaf community, who then forwarded the video to friends on Facebook. So, that video went out beyond what we would be able to reach.

[66] **Janet Ryder:** That takes me on to the last question, which is about the material that you have produced for the referendum. Is that okay, Chair?

[67] **Ann Jones:** Yes, fine. Sorry, I am confused; I thought that Joyce was asking that question. Anyway, if one of you asks it, we will move on, because we are nearly out of time.

[68] **Janet Ryder:** Your resources have been distributed widely, because you actually sent them out, and you have made an attempt with the referendum to produce material in a number of different ways. How many requests have you had for that information?

[69] **Ms Pembridge:** I will have to get back to you with that information, because it would come through to the publications team rather than me. Personally, I have had two requests for the BSL video.

[70] **Janet Ryder:** So people are requesting the information.

[71] **Ms Pembridge:** Yes. I will ask the publications team for the exact figures for requests if that is helpful.

[72] **Ann Jones:** We have three short questions left. Joyce will ask them. I know that we are running out of time, but rather than write to you, we will ask you now.

[73] **Joyce Watson:** My questions are on supporting Assembly Members and their staff. How effective has the Assembly Commission been in supporting Assembly Members with particular needs? I would like to pay personal tribute; when I first came to the Assembly I had problems with various items of equipment, which were dealt with efficiently and effectively. I

also have a staff member who has had particular seating problems, which have also been dealt with efficiently and satisfactorily. I would like to put that on record. My question, however, is about the wider issue.

[74] **Ms Pembridge:** I would like the equality team to be more proactive in asking Assembly Members whether there are any issues that we can help with. You mentioned that our occupational health adviser is first on the scene with any ergonomic issues.

[75] In terms of supporting Assembly Members in their capacity as employers and service providers, I am working with the legal team and the Members' business support team to produce some guidance on Members' responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. We are finalising that process at the moment. If we have incoming Members in the new Assembly with particular requirements, I will probably engage with outside experts and have proper ergonomic assessments done.

[76] **Lorraine Barrett:** On that point, one member of the support staff from each political group is trained-up as an assessor for that group—I believe that the system is still running and it is a really good one. There is an opportunity in the fourth Assembly to look at ways of engaging with Members and their staff on a quarterly basis, and to ask what their needs are. It is crucial to get that right from the beginning, is it not? As problems arise, they need to be picked up and dealt with.

[77] **Ann Jones:** Joyce, would you like to continue?

[78] **Joyce Watson:** I think that the witnesses have covered my questions.

[79] **Ann Jones:** Joyce is happy, so we are all happy. I would like to thank everyone. Lorraine, I know that this is your last appearance as an Assembly Commissioner before this committee, so thank you for all your years of coming to tell us what the Assembly Commission is doing. That round-up was very useful for us in terms of knowing that we are moving on. I also thank Claire and Holly. We look forward to having a Committee on Equality of Opportunity in the fourth Assembly, to which we will be inviting people to tell us about what they are doing and about the progress that is being made.

[80] **Lorraine Barrett:** Thank you, Chair. I thank everyone for their teamwork over the last 12 years during which we have all been engaged in equality issues. It has been a pleasure getting to the point where we are now, which is much better than the situation in 1999.

[81] **Ann Jones:** It is, indeed. Thank you.

10.08 a.m.

**Dilyniant i'r Ymchwiliad i Wasanaethau Addasu a Chynnal a Chadw Cartrefi i  
Bobl Hŷn yng Nghymru (cyhoeddwyd Gorffennaf 2009)—Tystiolaeth Lafar gan  
y Dirprwy Weinidog dros Dai ac Adfywio**  
**Follow-up on Inquiry into Home Maintenance and Housing Adaptations Services  
for Older People in Wales (published July 2009)—Oral Evidence from the  
Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration**

[82] **Ann Jones:** We welcome Jocelyn Davies, the Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration. She is accompanied by Alyn Williams, head of housing and communities, and Huw McLean, who is a policy manager for regeneration. You are all welcome. Thank you for your papers, Deputy Minister. Do you have an opening statement to make?

[83] **The Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration (Jocelyn Davies):** I have a few comments to make, if that is okay. I thank you for the opportunity to update the committee on the progress made in improving the provision of adaptation services. My original paper refers to the research that we commissioned to identify progress since the 2005 report that was compiled by Chris Jones. I believe that you all now have the research paper from CEL Transform. That research responds to recommendation 1 and provides us with a good evidence base for future work. It concludes that there has been sustained and significant improvement on the average time taken to process disabled facilities grants, and an increased emphasis on the quality of the service.

10.10 a.m.

[84] On the performance indicator, there has been a 41 per cent improvement since 2006, which brings the average completion time within our statutory timescales. I know that some Members have expressed misgivings about the performance indicator, so I will just point out that it has been developed with local authority practitioners. It measures end to end and, therefore, reflects the client's experience. It encourages local authority corporate responsibility, and is now a statutory performance indicator that will be audited in future, which should then ensure consistency across local authorities.

[85] On minor adaptations, significant progress has been made. Many are now being provided outside of the statutory system. We know, from our report, that there is an abundance of good practice. We now need to ensure that local authorities use the good practice that exists—to get it to travel slightly better than it does on its own. We know that satisfaction among clients is generally very high, at around 90 per cent, which is very pleasing.

[86] Awareness of services will be enhanced. We are putting together a leaflet jointly with Age Cymru, Care and Repair and the College of Occupational Therapists. I know that the position of occupational therapists is something in which Members are particularly interested, and we know that, since 2005, there has been an increase of 17 per cent in the number of occupational therapists employed by local authorities. The Minister for Health and Social Services is monitoring availability.

[87] Finally, we can see from the report that the funding is fairly static. In 2009-10, £32.5 million was allocated for disabled facilities grants, which does not account for the money that is spent on this kind of work on our physical adaptation grants programme, which is between £8 million and £9 million. Therefore, that is on top of that £32.5 million.

[88] In general, I am pleased with the progress and I am sure that the committee will find the CEL Transform report to be valuable.

[89] **Mohammad Asghar:** On recommendation 2, your paper notes that the Minister for Health and Social Services declined to include a specific commitment to keep the committee informed of progress on implementing the 2005 review within the older people's strategy. Were you made aware of the specific reason for this?

[90] **Jocelyn Davies:** It was not the case that the Minister for health was not sympathetic with the aim of it, but it is a high-level strategy. The document does not go into that level of detail. It was not the case that she did not want to take on board the work that is being done; she just did not think that that document was the appropriate place for that level of detail. I suppose, Chair, that, should she accommodate that one, there would be calls for other bullet points to be included in the document, and you could end up with a large, unwieldy document.

[91] **Ann Jones:** Absolutely.

[92] **Jocelyn Davies:** She knew that it was going into the housing strategy. We had the report, 'Living Well—Living Independent Lives', authored by Wendy Bourton, the then chief executive of Care and Repair, which has informed the housing strategy and the older person's strategy. Therefore, it is not the case that she was rejecting it; she just did not think that that particular document was the appropriate place to note that recommendation. I hope that the committee accepts that it was not with any ill will that the Minister did not take that up, and that there is probably a good reason. She is probably right that that document was not the appropriate place. We tried to make the strategy documents as brief as possible in order for them to remain overarching. It is a matter of striking a balance between the level of detail and their being succinct. It is a shame that I could not be as brief with my answers, I suppose, Chair. The way that you are nodding your head suggests that you are saying 'Get on with it'.

[93] **Ann Jones:** No. You are fine. I am nodding in agreement with you.

[94] **Mohammad Asghar:** Why is it more appropriate for this commitment to be contained within the national housing strategy?

[95] **Jocelyn Davies:** It is a housing commitment, I suppose. It is related to housing. Our action plan, which will underpin that, will go into some detail. The housing strategy is a very brief document. You do work even if you do not have a published strategy. However, as the Wendy Bourton report was informing the housing strategy, we thought that the housing strategy was a good place to have it.

[96] **Mohammad Asghar:** Moving on to recommendation 3, the task and finish group that you have established has identified that existing documentation and guidance on housing adaptation is sufficient. Have older people been involved in that process, and how have their views been taken into account?

[97] **Jocelyn Davies:** There seems to be an abundance of guidance and good-practice documents and so on, and we know from the CEL Transform report that that is the case. The trick is getting people to use it, as I mentioned earlier. When we commissioned the research document, older people and clients were included. With regard to documents that are intended for use by the clients themselves, as I mentioned earlier, we are putting together leaflets that are specifically for Wales with Age Cymru, Care and Repair Cymru and the College of Occupational Therapists, so that we have literature that is suitable for the clients. The practitioners in the field and the commissioned experts felt that there was enough guidance, but that the next thing that we needed to do was to point people towards it and get them to use it.

[98] **Mohammad Asghar:** Moving on to recommendations 4 and 5, what has changed in the way you monitor the performance of local authorities in delivering home adaptations since the committee published its report?

[99] **Jocelyn Davies:** As I mentioned earlier, we have had discussions with the Minister for local government. He gave his reasons for not adapting the PI, although it is now split between children and adults. It is now a statutory performance indicator, and so it will be audited, which will ensure that it will be applied more consistently across local authorities. The CEL Transform report says that local authorities often state that they are using the PI properly, but other local authorities are not. So, having it properly audited will ensure that we are comparing the same thing across local authorities, and having it as a statutory PI is important.

[100] We also have a network, and an awful lot of work has been done by the WLGA. It

would be fair to say that this area now has a higher profile than in the past, thanks to the work of this committee. Therefore, there is a higher profile, we have a statutory PI, we have a network, and it seems that this area is being looked at closely. It is now becoming a corporate responsibility for the local authority, which is exactly where we wanted to be with it.

[101] **Mohammad Asghar:** Do you think that local authorities are sharing best practice?

[102] **Jocelyn Davies:** No, not always, as I mentioned. We know that there is some very good practice, but if something works well in one area, it does not necessarily mean that it will work well in another. It does appear—and the report says this clearly—that good practice has not travelled well around the country. That is the trick for us. We do know that there are some examples of very good practice; the issue is getting that out there.

[103] **Janet Ryder:** There remain some areas where there is very bad practice, but I will not go further on that. My question is about recommendation 6, and it takes us back to something that you touched on in your introduction regarding the performance indicator. The committee has made clear its view that it should be split into various categories. Performance management should show waiting times, the number of people, the time taken for each stage of the process, the preparation of adaptations that were completed, the number of days taken, the different age groups, and so on. We would have liked to have seen all those data coming forward separately, so that we could see the situation much more clearly and so that it was much more open and visible. You seemed to indicate in your introduction that you are moving towards having an end-to-end performance indicator.

[104] **Jocelyn Davies:** Yes.

[105] **Janet Ryder:** Why have you chosen that route?

[106] **Jocelyn Davies:** That reflects the clients' experience. It means that, if they are requesting help today, they will know how long it will take for that to be completed. So, from the client's point of view, that is what we measure because that is their experience. The idea is that it is then a corporate responsibility.

10.20 a.m.

[107] We took this up with the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government. There has been a move away from collecting information that might be terribly interesting to us, but which may be burdensome to collect and does not always reflect the clients' experience. So, for a range of reasons, the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government felt that having a statutory audited PI for the whole experience was more appropriate, but he has agreed to split the data between children and adults, which should not be too difficult to collect. There is always tension between getting the detail and asking local authorities to collect that information. We sometimes find that information that we have asked local authorities to collate is not always used, which is a shame. So, it is a matter of getting that balance. In the paper that I submitted to you, you will see that I have included a long explanation by the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government on each of the suggestions from the committee as to why he did not think that it was appropriate, although I am pleased that it is a statutory PI that will be audited.

[108] **Janet Ryder:** The one advantage of splitting the information into various sections is that it would highlight weaknesses. So, if there was a problem with assessment, it would clearly show that that authority was having a problem. Therefore, it would help if the data were being used adequately to remedy that situation—presumably by your officers monitoring that and assisting that authority to face those problems and overcome them. How do you intend to ensure that authorities know where the problems are occurring in their

systems and are addressing these problems?

[109] **Jocelyn Davies:** We can see from the significant progress and improvement that has been made over the last couple of years that local authorities are making an effort to look at their systems to see exactly what was causing the long delays. We should be very pleased and we should congratulate the authorities on the progress that has been made. We can also be pleased that the average time is now within the statutory time limits. I do not dismiss your suggestion that local authorities might want to know where the holdup is and what they can do to overcome this, but there was a question as to whether that should be collected on a national level and whether we should ask them to collate it. The Minister said that this could provide some perverse incentives to tick the box and it was felt that having the whole client experience was more appropriate.

[110] We need to keep monitoring that PI and ensure that there continues to be improvement. Since this was highlighted as being of interest to this committee and the Assembly Government, and something that local government has taken up through its networks and so on, the trend seems to be that local authorities are adapting this as a corporate responsibility rather than, perhaps, making it the responsibility of the housing department alone within the local authority to 'focus on their bit'. There is an argument either way, and the Minister felt that, with the understanding that we are developing with local government and the move away from micromanagement from the national level within local authorities, this is the best way to approach it.

[111] **Janet Ryder:** I would now like to move on to recommendation 7, which is to do with ownership. When we undertook the report, a number of questions were raised regarding ownership and, therefore, the ongoing maintenance of equipment. You note in your paper that new guidance on the ownership and maintenance of adaptations has been published by the WLGA and that more will be published by the Welsh Government shortly. What steps are you going to take to evaluate the effectiveness of that guidance?

[112] **Jocelyn Davies:** It is important that we clear up any confusion, to make it quite clear to everybody what the legal framework is. As I said, I think that there has probably been an abundance of guidance in the past. It is a matter of ensuring that people read it, I suppose. We were waiting for the report to see exactly what the gaps were, engaging with the WLGA. It now has good practice guidance, guidance No. 6. Perhaps the committee would be interested in seeing those good practice guides at some point. That might be useful as the monitoring of progress goes on. If we have them and the WLGA has no objection, we could pass them to you.

[113] On housing associations, I am glad that, because of the committee work, the issue of the ownership of that has been cleared up. I am not sure how we would monitor that in every single case. You can produce a legal framework, provide guidance, and have good practice, but it would be impossible for a national body to ensure that, in every single case, the guidance is being abided by. Perhaps, as we are producing leaflets for the clients, we can make it clear to them. We could ensure that the leaflet makes it clear to them beforehand. However, I think that it would be a big commitment to say that we would monitor that the guidance is being abided by in every single case. Again, that would get down to micromanagement within individual organisations, including every social landlord and so on. It would be difficult.

[114] **Janet Ryder:** I certainly accept what you are saying. It would be extremely difficult. However, there are some fundamentals. When adaptations are being made, the situation is not always clear in a person's mind. They think that if the council is coming to put something in, it must be responsible for the maintenance of it. Then there is the realisation that, in some cases, the council would not be responsible for ongoing maintenance. So, it is a general



principle that people should be made aware of the situation when they are being assessed and before the adaptations are made and they agree to them. They need to know what the implications are for them and for whoever is making the adaptations.

[115] **Jocelyn Davies:** We know from the CEL Transform report that some people do not pursue their application once they realise the implications of the means test and so on. That is certainly the stage at which things need to be made clear. Although we can ensure that that happens from now on, there are people who have already had that service, and they are the ones who are probably paying the charges. With regard to housing associations, the legislation does not allow them to spread the cost among other tenants. So, if you receive a service from the housing association, it can charge only those who are receiving the service for that service. The local authority has the discretion to spread the cost among all tenants. Housing associations do not have that discretion, nor are they allowed to make a profit from providing that service, and they are supposed to be very clear and transparent and to provide information. So, although we can insist on this in our guidance, it would be very difficult to ensure that, in every case, the guidance is followed. I would not like to commit to ensuring that the guidance is always followed, Janet.

[116] **Janet Ryder:** It is a question of good practice, really. It is a case of encouraging social housing landlords.

[117] **Mr Williams:** As the Deputy Minister said, a reference to it will be included in the leaflet that will be made available to all likely recipients of disabled facilities grants.

[118] **Mr McLean:** The guidance we have produced is quite explicit about this. An owner-occupier should be given the right advice about maintaining the equipment. By and large, I think that local authorities do give that advice, but of course, we cannot speak for everybody.

[119] **Janet Ryder:** On recommendation 8, we took a lot of evidence about the advantages of moving to a single, publicly-available register of adapted housing across all tenures. It is your decision not to move ahead with that national accessible housing register. So, how do you intend to ensure that access to adapted social housing does not become a postcode lottery?

10.30 a.m.

[120] **Jocelyn Davies:** The task and finish group looked at this carefully. There is also the Disability Wales report, which was published in September 2009, on a single housing register; I do not know whether the committee has seen that report. That report considers this issue, and concludes that producing a single register would not be practical; I am not sure what the benefits would be. However, it is beneficial at a local government level. I suppose that, if every local authority had a register, you would, in effect, have a national register. However, if someone lived in Aberystwyth, for example, knowing that there was a suitable property in Porthcawl would not be of much help to them. Generally, people want to stay in their local authority area, although communications between neighbouring local authorities could be useful. However, I would not want anyone who needs specially adapted accommodation to be pressurised into moving large distances from their own community, just because there was a national register. That is an important point.

[121] We would like to see a register on a local authority level. We know from that 2009 Disability Wales report that many local authorities had such a register at that time. Many authorities also intended to have such a register, because they could see that considerable cost savings could be made and that a lot of time could be saved. However, again, I would not want anyone to feel coerced into moving out of their community because a property was available in another part of the country. Therefore, in reality, you would have a national

register if all local authorities had one, because that would be your snapshot. It would not give you more properties, but it would give you a snapshot of what was available.

[122] **Janet Ryder:** You are satisfied, therefore, that, if a person or a family were relocating, for work or through choice, they would be able to contact the authority that they were moving to and ask for their register of adapted housing?

[123] **Jocelyn Davies:** The 2009 Disability Wales report states that two local authorities, I believe, did not have such a register; I do not know which local authorities they were, but we will look into that. If there was a local authority register, we would want that information to be shared, should someone be in the circumstances that you mentioned. However, I would not want a local authority to say, 'We know of a property that would suit your needs, but you live in Aberystwyth, and it is in Porthcawl', because families need support as well as suitable accommodation. There are not many instances—in fact, it is very rare—of local authorities refusing a disabled facilities grant. I believe that one case has been mentioned to me, where, had the works been carried out to the property, that person, because of the location of the property, would have been a prisoner in the house. I believe that there is just one famous example, where the local authority felt that it would be better to move to a better location. There were many steps leading up to the house, and so on, in that example, so, even though the inside of the house could be done, not much could be done about the outside. However, on the whole, local authorities give the DFG if a person has been assessed as needing one.

[124] **Ann Jones:** Joyce has a supplementary question.

[125] **Joyce Watson:** I have dealt with two cases where a local authority has refused to give a disabled facilities grant. The reason was the same in each case; it was the same authority, anyway. It involved children who were moving, so their care package was somewhere, and they were moving somewhere else. The dispute that followed, and the distress for those families, was enormous. I cannot imagine that I am the only person who has ever dealt with such cases. Young children were tied to their house, with their parents, not able to even get in or out of the front door unaided. They were growing up, and therefore causing a greater burden, simply because people did not want to accept the responsibility of the cost. I know that they were not average cases, but to say that it never happens is not true—I am aware that you did not say that it never happens. There seems to be a real issue in getting health and social services to work together, because that was the complication. It cannot be acceptable that if someone moves—as you have just highlighted—they cannot get the house to be fit for purpose for their growing child, because it was a child in both cases. Will you look at any cases that have come your way, because there is definitely a pattern here? I have come across a pattern within a particular authority, as I am sure others have in other places, where the authority flatly refuses to pick up the cost for a child because that child has moved, and they say that it is someone else's responsibility.

[126] **Jocelyn Davies:** You are welcome to write to me about those cases. However, I would not want that local authority to say to a family, 'We know that there is a house that would suit you perfectly at the other end of the country, so you'll have to go there so that we don't have the cost'. Regarding the cases that you mentioned, that is why we have a statutory framework. I am pleased that there is overwhelming support for the statutory framework to remain in place.

[127] **Joyce Watson:** Moving on to recommendation 9, you have mentioned several times that new guidelines will be issued to local authorities and social landlords on how best to inform older people of their home maintenance and adaptation options. When do you expect that to happen?

[128] **Mr Williams:** The leaflet will be issued within two months.

[129] **Ann Jones:** Will the dissolution of the Assembly stop that work from going on?

[130] **Mr Williams:** No, because it is not a Welsh Assembly Government leaflet—it is put together by practitioners.

[131] **Jocelyn Davies:** It has been prepared jointly with other organisations.

[132] **Mr Williams:** That includes the Commissioner for Older People in Wales, who also took a keen interest.

[133] **Joyce Watson:** Moving on, there has been a suggestion that local service boards have a significant amount of discretion over what issues they consider. What role do you see for local service boards, if any, in facilitating a more integrated approach to home adaptations?

[134] **Jocelyn Davies:** Local service boards determine their local priorities, which is right, and they do not have responsibility for delivering specific services. However, I would be very happy to make local service boards aware of the committee's report and recommendations. I meet cabinet members for all local authorities regularly, and we could raise the issue of the report at that meeting. I would be very happy to do that, even though you cannot insist that they take action. Housing is often a priority for local service boards, and I am sure that they would be happy to look at this. However, they would not be formally responding to me or to the committee's recommendations. Raising awareness is about as much as we can do with the local service boards, because the whole point is for them to decide on priorities in their areas, and they are not responsible for the delivery of services. I do not know if any of the officials have anything to add to that.

[135] **Mr McLean:** I would only add that you would expect a local service board to look at the corporate activity in the area. While we have encouraged a corporate approach to the delivery of adaptations, you would expect that to be reflected at a local service board level.

10.40 a.m.

[136] **Joyce Watson:** Finally, I gave you the example about money, so how realistic is it to expect new funding opportunities for home adaptations to present themselves in the current financial climate?

[137] **Jocelyn Davies:** Capital is particularly affected, so I do not think that we will have many opportunities for that. Of course, things have changed a lot since you produced your recommendations, but I think that the committee would be pleased that we are protecting the budget for the rapid response adaptation programme, and we know from the report that every £1 spent there saves at least £7.50 for the health service alone, so it is money well spent. We have also protected the major repairs allowance, and it can now be used for adaptations to council stock. If capital was available, I would bid for it; this is certainly an area that we feel is important, and that is why we have made funding available for physical adaptations grants. However, we have also looked at the guidance that goes with stock transfer, and we have a particularly keen eye on ensuring that the business plan has sufficient funds for adaptation. Those tenants could still legally apply for a disabled facilities grant, but we try to ensure that the business plan for stock transfers means that that can be accommodated in future years without turning to DFGs. We are trying in all the ways that we can to ensure that the services delivered on this are protected.

[138] On the capital grant that goes to local authorities, from which they pay for DFGs, that has had a reduction, but we have ensured that it has not gone below what they normally spend on DFGs. We just have to keep watching, I suppose, Joyce. This budget, and the money that

is spent on this, will have to go into the mix in terms of priorities, and especially with capital, it is not easy.

[139] **Ann Jones:** Do you want to move on, Joyce?

[140] **Joyce Watson:** Yes. Moving on to recommendations 12, 13 and 14, the latter specifically looks at the employment of occupational therapists within the Welsh Government's housing directorate, which was a recommendation that you rejected. Are you planning to take any steps that would allow the number of occupational therapists engaged in adaptation assessments to be more accurately monitored? If so, will this ensure that any shortages could be quickly identified and addressed?

[141] **Jocelyn Davies:** We now know the figures from the CEL Transform report, and there has been an increase of 17 per cent since 2006, so we can certainly keep monitoring it. The reason for the rejection of this particular amendment was that this suggestion came about because the Northern Ireland Housing Executive employs the OTs, but of course that body also owns the houses. We do not play a landlord role, but we are very happy to call upon the expertise of occupational therapists in all the work that we do, and we feel that having them employed at the local authority level is most important. We will continue to monitor that. We have formal and informal links with occupational therapists, so we would like to think that their views are always taken into consideration in the development of policy. They are on the task and finish group also, so they are well embedded in the Welsh Assembly Government's work, even though not actually employed by us. We have the figures now, and we can monitor that, and I am pleased that there has been an increase. We were not really sure about where we were in terms of how many were being employed in local authorities and where, but now we have robust data, so there is something to use for comparison in future years.

[142] **Joyce Watson:** That is fine, thank you.

[143] **Janet Ryder:** May I ask about home maintenance standards? In our report, we highlighted a lack of consistency in home maintenance services across Wales and, in your response, you mentioned a pilot scheme in Bridgend, but you have not indicated whether that will be rolled out. Would you give us some further information on that pilot scheme? Will it be possible to maintain services and to raise them further without further legislation?

[144] **Jocelyn Davies:** We mention Bridgend as another good example, and I am sure that there are probably other good examples throughout Wales. It is a pilot scheme, because you need to run something like this for a couple of years to see how it goes. We know that it is also being trialled in Porthcawl, by Valleys to Coast and Care and Repair. There is quite a bit of information in the paper about this, but Huw is probably in a better position to give you some more detailed information on this. If the pilot scheme is successful, it will be filed in the good practice box and will then be rolled out in all local authorities.

[145] **Mr McLean:** The feedback that I have received is that it has been very successful, quite often for small amounts of money, and people have been giving some really useful advice. As the Deputy Minister says, it has been run by Valleys to Coast and Care and Repair in Bridgend. From discussions that I have had with Care and Repair Cymru, I believe that the intention is to roll it out in other areas. We are in the lucky position of having a Care and Repair agency in every local authority in Wales. So, that is the way that we would envisage it working.

[146] **Jocelyn Davies:** Since the last time that I reported to you, Care and Repair has joined a group structure with Community Housing Cymru, where they do not just share back-office staff but also expertise. So, through the housing association umbrella organisation, there is a good opportunity that this could be spread out. I am delighted that they have formed that

group structure, along with CREW—the Centre for Regeneration Excellence in Wales in Merthyr—so that they can share their expertise and experiences. I think that the Welsh Local Government Association will be very interested in this if it works. It seems to be filling a definite gap and gives older people peace of mind.

[147] **Ann Jones:** We must accept that there have been considerable improvements since we first looked at the report, and I thank you, Deputy Minister, for taking that forward along with your officials. Is there any further progress expected to be made on the committee's recommendations over the next 12 months?

[148] **Jocelyn Davies:** I can only speak up to May, Chair. [*Laughter.*]

[149] **Ann Jones:** Yes, you can go until May, while we can only go until March. So, what progress can you expect in the next six weeks?

[150] **Jocelyn Davies:** We will not have the leaflet by then, but, given this committee's persistence, this subject continues to have a much higher profile than was previously the case. So, a light is being shed on this issue. We also have a willing audience, as far as the WLGA and local authorities, even those that were taking a long time, are concerned. There is still a long way to go, but the main thing is that we do not think 'This is done now', and for the committee to keep an eye on the issue and to continue to insist on a Minister coming before you every 12 months—whoever that Minister may be—to give you a report. The officials might be in a better position than me to say what they have planned for the next 12 months.

[151] **Mr Williams:** The issue will obviously not go away, as you say. It was very interesting and rewarding to note that when we awarded the contract to CEL Transform, which came to us from across the border, it was pleased and impressed with what it found in Wales. That is no reason for us to be complacent, but it is something to build on. So, we will continue to keep the pressure on for the next 12 months.

[152] **Ann Jones:** I am sure that our legacy report will contain something about keeping this as a high-profile issue. The committee carried out a substantial piece of work and we all want to ensure that it does not just prop the piano leg up—that is my favourite saying about reports—which can sometimes be the danger with committee reports, particularly if there have been a substantial amount of them. So, I thank you all, particularly the Deputy Minister, for driving this forward; it has been very helpful.

10.49 a.m.

### **Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion**

[153] **Ann Jones:** I now need to ask the committee whether we can go into private session to discuss our latest report. I move that

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

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

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.  
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.49 a.m.  
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.49 a.m.*