



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

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

**Dydd Mercher, 4 Mehefin 2008
Wednesday, 4 June 2008**

Cynnwys
Contents

- 4 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions
- 4 Darparu Gwasanaethau ar gyfer Pobl Ifanc Anabl
Service Provision for Disabled Young People
- 13 Ymchwiliad i Faterion sy'n Effeithio ar Weithwyr Mudol yng Nghymru
Inquiry into Migrant Workers

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

Eleanor Burnham	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Christine Chapman	Llafur Labour
Chris Franks	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Nick Ramsay	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (yn dirprwyo ar ran Angela Burns) Welsh Conservatives (substitute for Angela Burns)
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Ann Evans	Pennaeth, Is-Adran Cymwysterau a Dysgu, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head, Qualifications and Learning Division, Welsh Assembly Government
John Griffiths	Y Dirprwy Weinidog dros Sgiliau The Deputy Minister for Skills
Mark Freeman	Gyrfa Cymru Careers Wales
Dr Dennis Gunning	Cyfarwyddwr, Adran Plant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Director, Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Welsh Assembly Government
Jane Hutt	Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
Fran Targett	Cyngor ar Bopeth Cymru Citizens Advice Cymru
Bob Waller	Pennaeth, Polisi Sgiliau, Cyflogadwyedd a Throsglwyddo Gwybodaeth, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head, Skills Policy, Employability and Knowledge Transfer, Welsh Assembly Government
Mair Watkins	Pennaeth, Cangen Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head, Additional Learning Needs Branch, Welsh Assembly Government

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

Claire Griffiths	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
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Tom Jackson Clerc
 Clerk
Helen Roberts Cyngorydd Cyfreithiol
 Legal Advisor

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9 a.m.
The meeting began at 9 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. As those of us around the table will know, we may conduct our business in English or Welsh, and translation headsets are available. If any members of the public join us, they will be able to hear proceedings on channel 0 and the translation on channel 1. I ask everyone around the table to switch off their mobile phones, BlackBerrys, pagers and everything else that might interfere with the broadcasting equipment. We are not expecting a fire drill this morning, so, if the fire alarm goes off, we will take our directions from the usher—or you can follow me, because I will be one of the first out of the building. *[Laughter.]*

[2] We have received apologies from Angela Burns and Huw Lewis, and Nick Ramsay is substituting for Angela. Nick will be joining this committee as a full-time member and a motion will be proposed in Plenary this afternoon to elect Nick to the committee. I am sure that, if you behave yourself this morning, Nick, we will elect you to committee this afternoon.

[3] **Nick Ramsay:** I will do my best, Ann.

[4] **Ann Jones:** You are very welcome to the committee. I have written to Angela to thank her for her contribution to this committee. That takes care of the housekeeping announcements, so let us move on.

9.02 a.m.

Darparu Gwasanaethau ar gyfer Pobl Ifanc Anabl Service Provision for Disabled Young People

[5] **Ann Jones:** I am pleased to welcome Jane Hutt, the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, along with her team of officials. By way of background, you will remember that, in January, members of the young people's reference group came back to tell us whether they thought that, 12 months on, the report had made any difference. We had a very interesting session with them. We agreed to write to the Minister for education, lifelong learning and skills—and children. Sorry, Jane, but your title keeps growing. We asked her to come back to talk to us about some of the issues. So, we are pleased that you have attended, Minister. If you would like to introduce your paper, we will then go to questions.

[6] **The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Hutt):** I was pleased to come, in my former ministerial capacity, back in November to give the first progress report following the January launch of this important paper. The written statement that I have provided for the committee is, I hope, a fairly extensive progress report. There is substantial coverage across many ministerial portfolios, and I have a co-ordinating role, although I am responsible for a tranche of the recommendations.

[7] Members will know that I am working closely with the Disabled Children Matter

Wales campaign. I meet regularly with its representatives to engage with them on policy issues. In my written statement, I have addressed some of the points that they have raised, because they cross over

[8] Last Wednesday, I was pleased to meet several young people at the Mencap stand at the Urdd eisteddfod, particularly Young Voices for Choices from Pembrokeshire. The Wales Network of Young Disabled People happened to be meeting at Bala last week, so they came along, and we had a useful discussion, and questions were put to me. I hope that the young people will see progress as a result of my responses to the committee's questions today.

[9] That probably sets the scene a bit. I have mentioned further funding in my written statement, and that has been important in addressing recommendations. I particularly want to mention the £1.5 million for the transition planning group over the next three years and the £1 million for leisure and play and short breaks for disabled children. We should all recognise that the single equalities plan, which you are engaged in and which is out for consultation, should be a key vehicle for the Welsh Assembly Government to respond to the committee's report.

[10] **Ann Jones:** Thank you. Who wants to start the questions for the Minister?

[11] **Eleanor Burnham:** I have a question on the support that the Assembly Government can give to young disabled people, particularly for those who live in remote areas. There are terrible issues at the moment given the price of fuel and so on, which is causing huge concerns. So, thinking generally about people on low income, what is the Assembly Government's response to all of this?

[12] **Jane Hutt:** The recommendations of the report on service provision for disabled young people take on board the spatial issues of rural communities. They apply to both rural and urban areas, but I recognise the fact that particular issues apply to rural areas, and those recommendations will ensure that those are taken on board.

[13] One update that is not included in my written statement on which I wanted to focus is on transport, which is crucial given current fuel prices and the importance of access to transport. It might be helpful for me to comment further on what we are doing on integrated transport. We have the Community Transport Association in Wales and there is funding of £3.9 million to pilot the community transport concessionary fares initiative, which involves 15 demonstration schemes in Wales that provide community transport at no cost for severely disabled people who are unable to access low-floor buses. That has been piloted since October 2005 and will end in March 2009. It will be important for you to consider the progress of that pilot in this committee. An evaluation of that has been undertaken. The three-year provision of the community transport concessionary fares initiative has raised awareness and expectations about access to appointments, for example. That is crucial for health-related appointments and non-emergency patient transport. So, that is one area that I wanted to inspect.

[14] Another important point that will interest Eleanor is what we are trying to do on direct payments. We are trying to open those up for all disabled young people. You will know that there was a firm recommendation, namely recommendation 32, to take a more co-ordinated approach to the provision of direct payments. The committee asked for independent research work to be done on the implementation of the direct payment scheme. That work has been done and a copy of that report has been sent to every director of social services in Wales, asking them to review their direct payments scheme arrangement, and reminding them of their statutory duties, which you will recall we introduced as an Assembly. You may want to follow up that independent report on the implementation of the direct payment scheme. I remind Members that that scheme covers persons with parental responsibility for a disabled

child, disabled persons with parental responsibility for a child, disabled children aged 16 or 17, and carers aged 16 and 17. At a UK level, a Health and Social Care Bill is proceeding through Parliament, which includes calls to extend direct payments, as that will be critical to empowering disabled people to access their own care arrangements. Those are just a few examples, Eleanor.

9.10 a.m.

[15] **Eleanor Burnham:** So, in practical terms, there is money available—you mentioned £3.5 million. Is that available to local authorities to dispense? How does it work?

[16] **Jane Hutt:** That is for the transition work. I think that it might be useful if I brought in Mair to say a couple of words on how that is being allocated.

[17] **Ms Watkins:** Following on from the recommendations of this committee's report and the report of the Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee on phase 3, which looked specifically at transition, one of the issues that was raised was the fact that young disabled people need one-to-one support to access further education, training and employment; otherwise things fall down once they are placed there. So, with Care Co-ordination Network UK, the Minister has allocated £1.5 million over the next three years to provide one-to-one support and ongoing care for individuals so that, once they get into education or further education, they can work with the colleges to find out exactly what support they need to be able to lead an independent life. The same applies to employers, in terms of encouraging them to understand what young people need and to facilitate sustainable employment.

[18] **Christine Chapman:** I wish to move on from that to mention choice for disabled young people. When I have spoken to groups, one of the main concerns that people have expressed to me is that they sometimes do not feel that a wide choice is available to them. I am grateful to Mair for her explanation about the transition and the work with employers. However, choice is a real issue sometimes, to do with the fact that we still have a lot of discrimination in the workplace, and there is still a long way to go in that regard. I wonder whether Jane could say something about the choices that are available for young people, even in terms of things such as work experience, leading up to leaving school or going on to further education. That is so important in helping people to have aspirations regarding the future. I would like assurances on that issue.

[19] **Jane Hutt:** This relates to recommendations 7 and 8 in the report. Recommendation 7 asked us to review the assessment and funding of support services to help young disabled people to move from education and training into employment, particularly focusing on work-based learning provision, and then jobs and progression opportunities and the equality of outcome that we would wish to see. We were also asked to look at the careers service, to ensure that all our information services are online, and to look in particular at issues relating to minority languages, accessible formats, and so on.

[20] I can give a bit of an update on the progress that we have made—some of this is in the written statement. What is important is the work-based learning improvement plan—Dennis is leading on this and can add to this—which is also looking at how we can pilot and evaluate opportunities for disabled people in terms of employability issues. In fact, a review of Skillbuild is going on at the moment. I think that the outcome of that will be an expectation of improved engagement with disadvantaged groups and an enhancement of the referral process. As you say, it is about how you get there. It is about opening up the choices and making better links with Careers Wales, through New Deal, for example.

[21] We have a website on transition for young people with special educational needs,

which is being developed by Careers Wales. That will be focused on transition planning and the options that are available to young people as they leave school. We are going to relaunch the website in August, and it will include sections called 'My Future' and 'My Site'. These things are being developed but must be tested by disabled young people to ensure that they are properly accessible, introduce new opportunities and add value.

[22] Is there anything that you can say about those developments with the Careers Wales website, Mair?

[23] **Ms Watkins:** Only to say to Christine that, in recognition of what you said, this was something that was pulled out from the Education Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee report, which looked specifically at transition and the options post-16. The transition external reference group is made up of stakeholders from across Wales, including disabled young people, and representatives of Voices from Choices are part of that group. We have three sub-groups. One is looking specifically at employability and the skills needed for employment; one is looking at education and training; and the other is looking at the transition planning process. We have young disabled people on all three groups. We are hoping that, by the end of this year, they will come up with some firm recommendations. They are working on action plans as we speak to come up with the options to increase awareness. Many of the issues concerning employers are very difficult; I know from the experience with the Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee that we had difficulty engaging with employer groups, but the sub-groups are working very hard and we do have some employment agencies on board with the task groups as well.

[24] **Bethan Jenkins:** How are the Department for Work and Pensions' 'Pathways to Work' and the Assembly Government's 'Want to Work' progressing in respect of this transition stage? How are you actively publicising the current campaigns? Having visited many special schools in my region, I do not think that they are aware that this exists, because they are tapping in to charity-based funding, much of which is coming to an end with regard to access to the workplace. This involves post-16 students—they are 19 and 20, and still in care in that respect. They feel that, if the funding comes to an end, they will not be supported or that they will not be able to be independent. I would ask you to advertise the opportunities that you are offering much more widely.

[25] **Jane Hutt:** I will bring Dennis in on this point. This relates closely to recommendations 16, 17 and 18 in the report. Clearly, you are focusing on what we are doing in our working relationships with the Department for Work and Pensions to deliver for disabled young people as well as, inevitably, the ways in which the voluntary and community sectors are engaged. As you say, they are often engaged through contracts. Our officials work closely with the DWP in relation to New Deal and Skillbuild Wales. We are looking for opportunities, and I recognise that we are in a transition period in European funding terms, which you probably picked up on in your discussions with projects and individuals in your region. However, we are looking this year to develop convergence funding bids for transition employment. In fact, I think that the convergence programme gives us new opportunities to access that. 'Skills That Work for Wales' will also address that. As you know, that is currently out for consultation, and John Griffiths will be launching it in July. Dennis, do you want to add something on this point?

[26] **Dr Gunning:** Following up that point, one of the issues that 'Skills That Work for Wales' is trying to pick on is the need for all-age strategies that deal with people of all backgrounds and abilities. For those who perhaps did not pick up on the jargon, Skillbuild is a programme that is designed to allow the development of employability skills in particular, so that the people who need access, for example, to foundation apprenticeships or just to the level of functional literacy and numeracy that supports employment can get those through that programme. That is being reviewed as part of the outcome of the improvement plan for work-

based learning. It is a very important aspect of the provision available.

[27] In addition, Careers Wales offers an all-age service. Careers Wales Online in particular has won awards for the quality of its online support. That is now being reviewed to ensure that it is accessible to all young people and not-so-young people.

[28] Finally, it is worth mentioning that part of our work is to ensure that all those services are also available in the Welsh language as well as the English language, so that there is a genuinely bilingual provision.

9.20 a.m.

[29] **Ann Jones:** Can I ask you to explain a little about the links between the DWP and the 'Want to Work' and the 'Pathways to Work' programmes? A point that Bethan and I picked up on was how widely available it is. People tend to think that it is for the low-skilled, for those who have not achieved in school for whatever reason, or for people who are returning to employment, but it is sometimes not advertised as being a scheme for disabled young people. I think that that is what we were trying to look at.

[30] **Dr Gunning:** That is very important feedback, because it is the type of thing that will enable us to improve the services. One of the key issues that we are trying to get at in 'Skills That Work for Wales' is genuinely integrating the education and training services and the employment services, and the key is that it is not about providing support that then dissolves away; the idea is to get that support in a way that provides for people to be in sustainable employment. It is an issue that you may wish to raise with the Deputy Minister, because it would be an important point to pick up on in the debate on 'Skills That Work for Wales'.

[31] **Jane Hutt:** I do not know whether you are aware of it, but the Deputy Minister set up an employer engagement taskforce and reported on that in January of this year. It includes recommendations that relate to disabled young people, so perhaps I could bring that to Members' attention. It is being taken forward and it links to 'Pathways to Work', because we have been working very closely with the DWP and Jobcentre Plus, particularly in relation to the employer engagement taskforce. Also—and this will be of interest to you, Chair, in terms of your constituency interests—the DWP has agreed to extend the Pathfinder city strategy pilots for the Heads of the Valleys and Rhyl pilots, and they are targeting the most disadvantaged.

[32] So, it is critical that we are working not just with the DWP and Jobcentre Plus, but with the voluntary sector, trade unions and employers on tackling these issues for disabled young people. It goes back to the way in which we open up the options, and underpinning this work must be engaging disabled young people in the design of any new programme or the revision or review of any existing programme.

[33] **Eleanor Burnham:** Mair, you said something about the lack of engagement with employers; that is a concern, is it not? When the Community Consortia for Education and Training were set up, there was a constant issue about the timing and the availability of employers, particularly small employers, to be engaged, because you could be engaged in a meeting every day if you so desired. What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to ensure that this engagement happens, because that is the crucial aspect? I know that the further education colleges in north Wales are wonderful at doing it, because they are very much in tune with what employers want, but, on the other hand, if there is lack of engagement, it is a critical flaw.

[34] **Ms Watkins:** The feeling that I get from employers' organisations is that their initial concerns would always refer to health and safety issues. However, as with all employers now,

they are governed by disability legislation. We have a specific sub-group looking at employment and skills, which is chaired by Dr Stephen Beyer, from the Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities based in Cardiff. He has also undertaken some research with the Shaw Trust, and I am hoping that, from its recommendations, we will potentially have something on which we can work with employers. It may mean that we will have to raise awareness among employers; that is probably what we will have to do, because they are governed by disability legislation and they should not discriminate against young disabled people.

[35] **Jane Hutt:** I just wish to add that the Confederation of British Industry and employers' organisations were involved in the employer engagement taskforce; in fact, it was chaired by Sheila Drury. I will bring the results of the recommendations to the committee's attention, because they focused on the employment issues and needs of disabled young people.

[36] **Ann Jones:** Okay, thanks. Joyce has the next questions.

[37] **Joyce Watson:** My point follows on from what has been said. The proof of the pudding is always in the eating. My interest is in the number of young disabled people who have been helped into work or training by Pathways to Work or Want to Work. Have we any idea of the number, or do we have a mechanism by which we can find out?

[38] **Jane Hutt:** I can partly respond to that, and officials will help me. I know that the New Deal for Disabled People has helped almost 19,000 people over the age of 18 into work since it started back in 2001. That is one statistic. In terms of Want to Work, we may have to get that information for you.

[39] **Joyce Watson:** Okay, thank you.

[40] **Chris Franks:** What additional powers does the Government require to ensure that disabled children and young people get the services they need? Can you give any examples where a lack of powers has frustrated your objectives?

[41] **Jane Hutt:** Thank you, Chris. We have gained new powers, as you know, with the first legislative competence Order in relation to education and training for people with additional learning needs. I mention in my written statement that we are now going out to consultation to enable children and young people to make representations to the special educational needs tribunal, which will be a new power and a unique development in terms of a Welsh Measure. It derives specifically from a recommendation of the former Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee. That will be very important. The LCO starts, in terms of that transfer of power to us as the Welsh Assembly Government and to the Assembly, a whole range of opportunities that we can take forward. There are also new powers that we can seek as a result of the LCO in relation to vulnerable children, which is making its way through the legislative process at the moment. However, the additional learning needs LCO will have a substantial impact.

[42] Also, we have not only the LCO but the learning and skills Measure that is now coming forward and which relates to 14 to 19-year-olds. That clearly has to empower young people, and will give them a menu of options across both vocational and academic curricula. It was interesting to talk to the young people last week at the Urdd eisteddfod. One issue that Careers Wales has been tasked to address is not about powers, but about trying to get employers to be much more open and flexible, and promote equality by offering work experience. The 14-19 learning pathways will open up new opportunities for disabled young people. However, we also have to get employers and work-based learning to collaborate on this. It is not about powers; it is about policy and commitment. That is what we need to take forward. That is just a brief response on powers issues, Chris.

[43] **Bethan Jenkins:** Can you expand on how the children's plans are working locally within the local inclusion strategies? Your statement says that there is an emphasis placed on local authorities to work with partners and with young disabled people to ensure that it is working on a local level. There is also a reference to working with Funky Dragon.

9.30 a.m.

[44] I have a two-pronged question. Given the financial difficulties of Funky Dragon, what investment are you willing to put into organisations that represent young people to ensure that their voices can be fully heard on a Government level, and that there is effective implementation at a local level? If there is only piecemeal representation from young people on these boards, then questions may arise as to how effectively young people are being represented, locally and nationally. I guess that that comes into your discussions with the working group. I acknowledge that you are working hard with it, but how is that being communicated with the population at large, and with young disabled people who may not be involved in that group?

[45] **Jane Hutt:** There were a few points there, Bethan. Let us start with the children and young people's plans. As you know, these plans are currently out for consultation, and I hope that Members have looked at the children and young people's plans that are forthcoming in their areas and regions. They should be underpinned by our seven core aims, which relate very much to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They also provide a huge opportunity in terms of a joined-up approach to policy and the provision of services at a local level. We have provided guidance on the development of the children and young people's plans that emphasises the importance of ensuring the participation of children and young people in developing, monitoring and reviewing services.

[46] I am sure that you will be interested to see what is happening in your areas. There is encouraging practice developing across Wales in engaging with children and young people in developing the plans, not just consulting on them. I have seen some plans that have been produced in children-and-young-people-friendly versions. Those are often much more accessible for everyone; you learn a lot by looking at how you can have much clearer representation. There have been awareness-raising seminars as a result of our participation work, which is important. Many of the early recommendations from the report are about participation. We cannot just rely on Funky Dragon, although it is an important representative vehicle for Wales. I met Funky Dragon representatives last week, to discuss the evidence that they are giving in Geneva in June to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

[47] On your point on Funky Dragon, we have been addressing its funding difficulties. Again, we are in a transition period, as are many organisations, in relation to European funding, but, working with the Welsh European Funding Office, Funky Dragon, and officials, we have been able to support its work to take it forward, because it is such a powerful vehicle. However, we have to dig deeper, which it recognises. The local participation strategy guidance was issued last August; I do not know whether you are aware, Bethan, but there are also leaflets available, and its guidance is also on CD. That guidance is important to local authorities and to local partners. There is also guidance on the children and young people's participation website, which we launched at the end of September.

[48] We have divisional link officers in the Assembly Government, across all policy areas, who have been asked to co-ordinate and support effective practice involving children and young people in decision making. We have broken new ground in the UK by involving young people in a recent senior civil service appointment. If we are committed to this as a Government, we have to do it ourselves, as well as encouraging others to do so. We are

working with other groups, such as Children in Wales, and we support the Wales Network of Young Disabled People, which, as I said, was meeting in Bala and came over to the Urdd eisteddfod last week. We are also working with several groups, and not only the Disabled Children Matter Wales campaign. Most organisations, such as the Royal National Institute for the Blind, Autism Cymru and the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, are engaging users more effectively, which feeds through to us in terms of policy from the voluntary sector. The children and young people's plans will be a real test of delivery at a local level and they are due to be published at the end of September.

[49] **Mark Isherwood:** I have two points to make in reference to the further education colleges, which have been mentioned several times. Eleanor referred to excellent schemes in north Wales, and I know that most FE colleges will tell any Assembly Member who visits about their excellent schemes for people with additional learning needs. However, what monitoring of outcomes is being undertaken and what efforts are being made to share good practice and tackle matters that need to be improved to ensure parity of access to outcome-focused schemes across the whole of Wales?

[50] Secondly, what role, if any, do you see local disability fora having in this agenda, as they are increasingly expected or relied upon to provide training, advice and monitoring for local authorities and public agencies? I visited one forum last week that is currently facing eviction as its building is about to be demolished, and the alternative that it was offered does not have disabled access. How are we going to join up the two sides of the river and have a bridge that everyone can cross?

[51] **Jane Hutt:** The example of the forum that you gave is very unfortunate, but, for FE, the monitoring of outcomes is via Estyn inspections. As you will remember from the chief inspector's most recent report, FE fared very well in terms of the inspections and the outcomes, and that would include the work that is being done in terms of the excellent provision, as you say, that we all see in our FE colleges. There is a benchmarking project across further education that is being developed in partnership with Fforwm, its co-ordinating body, and we also have our own assessment through our provider review process in terms of further education. So, the monitoring is pretty robust.

[52] On the local disability fora, I recall, as someone who was the Minister with responsibility for equality, that it was an issue, and you may want to raise that with Brian Gibbons separately in terms of their future role and position. The recent developments in terms of the planning process are important. You will have seen from my written statement that not only do we now have to have access statements, which came through last year, but there are also developments in terms of planning with the access statements, particularly in relation to the provision of accessible facilities, for example changing facilities. However, that may be a question to address to the Minister with responsibility for equality.

[53] **Nick Ramsay:** My question very much ties into what Mark just asked with regard to monitoring. You said in your earlier comments that it is not just about powers, but about policy, which was an important point. You clearly think that the legislative competence Order will help a lot in this area, but, when it comes to the implementation, local authorities will have to do a lot of that. Do you think that there is enough support available for local authorities to do this effectively? When you get good practice in a local authority—and I think that you mentioned divisional liaison officers—do you think that there are suitable systems in place so that that good practice can be picked up quickly and used to help delivery in authorities that feel that they may not be meeting the grade as they would like to do?

9.40 a.m.

[54] **Jane Hutt:** As you say, Nick, it is all about implementation; you can have a policy

and a statute, but it is about implementation. It is also about underpinning that implementation appropriately. Funding is obviously an issue and I have given quite a few examples in my written statement of ring-fenced funding that is going from the Assembly to assist local authorities. Interestingly, the money and the provisions in terms of transition working, for example, are going to help local authorities to deliver their responsibilities. They have statutory responsibilities and we are helping them by putting in this extra money; the money for short breaks for disabled young people, for example, and the money that focuses on play is also going to local authorities. I think that you can see ways in which we are trying to underpin their revenue support grant with additional special grants. Of course, special grants have a measure of enforcement in the sense that they have to deliver according to the special grant recommendations, but it should help them. When we expanded the direct payment scheme, we gave local authorities funding to help them to develop the infrastructure, because that is a huge new role and responsibility for local authorities. I think that we are doing a lot to support local authorities in that respect.

[55] The divisional liaison officers that I mentioned are actually just in the Welsh Assembly Government. They are our tool, for us to have, to make sure that we mainstream responsibility, particularly in terms of children and young people's participation. That may be a model that local government might like to follow and perhaps we could share that, as an opportunity, with the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government. I think that Mair wanted to make a couple of points on the sharing of best practice. Clearly, Estyn is one important route.

[56] **Ms Watkins:** Estyn is responsible in terms of the inspection of local authorities. It undertakes a number of inspections around the inclusion of services and services for disabled young people, which is all widely publicised. We hold an annual local authority conference with the heads of inclusion and that is another opportunity for us to disseminate and share best practice. Obviously, the websites give us another opportunity to do that. One thing that the Disabled Children Matter Wales campaign has asked the Minister to consider is a communication strategy. That, again, is picking up on the need to share and disseminate good practice, but it is also about making sure that people are aware of everything that the Welsh Assembly Government is trying to do in relation to children with disabilities.

[57] **Joyce Watson:** There is obviously an awful lot of investment, commitment and work going on to help disabled young people. However, in every case, there will be instances where those young people might not be happy with what they are receiving. What progress has been made in the development of independent advocacy services for disabled young people?

[58] **Jane Hutt:** This is an important opportunity for me to report, again, on where we are taking the advocacy services. You will know that, in March, I announced our plans to introduce a new service framework for children and young people's advocacy and that will include extending access to advocacy in terms of a national advocacy advice line for all children and young people. We are going to be engaging with children and young people to develop that advice line. It will be in place by 2009, but it is very important that it focuses on hard-to-reach young people and that it is accessible. Also, from next year, specialist integrated advocacy services will be provided across health, social services and education—commissioned by children and young people's partnerships—and that will be a one-stop shop for advocacy support, particularly focusing on providing specialist services and ensuring that it is available to the most vulnerable young people who want to make a complaint or raise a concern. This development is now on its way, and I am sure that I will want to report to the Assembly on its progress, particularly for disabled young people and children. They will be a focus in terms of the one-stop shop and specialist services.

[59] **Bethan Jenkins:** You referred to other Ministers in the Government; what cross-

cutting discussions have you had? The same question can be applied to child poverty, because disabled children intrinsically come into that. When it is the responsibility of another Minister, how often do you have discussions to marry what you are doing cohesively?

[60] **Jane Hutt:** This is a crucial role for me, as the Minister for children, and I chair the children and young people Cabinet committee, which includes the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, the Minister for Health and Social Services, and the Minister for Heritage—I could have virtually everyone around the table, looking at impacts on children. I also chair a senior officials group, because it is crucial that we have joined-up Government, so I co-ordinate policies. I have taken the lead in terms of the Disabled Children Matter Wales campaign, for example. Otherwise, you would have to meet all the different Ministers all the time; this committee, arguably, could have four Ministers presenting this paper, because it covers transport and housing as well as my responsibilities. Although it is a lot of work for officials, responding to you is an opportunity, in many ways, for us to take cross-ministerial stock, because every Minister and every senior official and department must respond to your request and provide a progress report, and I must account for it, as I am doing today.

[61] **Ann Jones:** That was nicely done. That just leaves it to me to thank you and your team, Minister. I believe that you are staying for the next item, Dr Gunning, so you are not getting away. We will be requesting a written progress report service provision for disabled young people in January 2009, as part of our ongoing monitoring of that.

[62] **Jane Hutt:** Will that be along the lines of what we have done today?

[63] **Ann Jones:** Yes, it will. Thank you.

9.50 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Faterion sy'n Effeithio ar Weithwyr Mudol yng Nghymru Inquiry into Migrant Workers

[64] **Ann Jones:** We are very grateful that the Deputy Minister for Skills, John Griffiths, has joined us; he has his team of officials with him. This is the second session for Dr Gunning today, so he will know what it is all about. Thank you for coming along. This is an important issue. During the evidence-taking sessions, many people raised the issue of whether the skills and qualifications of migrant workers are being put to best use when they are over here. Thank you for your paper. Do you want to add anything to it, John? We will then go to questions.

[65] **The Deputy Minister for Skills (John Griffiths):** Bob Waller, from the Business and Skills Division, and Ann Evans, who is head of the Qualifications and Learning Division, are with me.

[66] We believe that there is a balance to be struck between properly recognising the qualifications of people coming here from overseas so that they can get jobs commensurate with their qualifications and skills and be properly included in our communities, and protecting consumers and employers so that they can have confidence that people can do the job that their qualifications enable them to obtain. We have to strike that balance as well as we can.

[67] **Ann Jones:** Thank you for that. Do Members have questions?

[68] **Eleanor Burnham:** I am pleased that you mentioned that, John, because I have been reading with great interest the latest report of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied

Workers. I was lucky enough to go to see a group picking leeks and cauliflowers in Sealand. They were obviously working hard and seemed happy, although there were certain concerns that I will not bother you with. I understood that some of those workers were extremely well qualified but that, because their understanding of English was poor, they were working well below their limits. I am concerned about this. Do you believe that we are doing all that we can? There are many statistics that we do not have time to discuss in this wonderfully worthy document by USDAW, but it appears to me that there are some wonderful people here. Both my offspring work abroad in Europe, and this document confirms that there is a global movement now, which is healthy for us all and it debunks a lot of myths that we are all subject to as Assembly Members. Do you believe that the Welsh Assembly Government is doing all that it can to ensure that there is provision of English-language tuition so that the people who are extremely well qualified are not just picking cabbages, cauliflowers and leeks, which, obviously, in itself is very worthy?

[69] **John Griffiths:** The evidence that we have shows that an awful lot of people coming here from overseas are overqualified for the jobs that they do, and 12 per cent of those who took part in a Welsh Refugee Council survey felt that a lack of recognition of their qualifications was the major barrier to their getting employment at all. So, you rightly raise some important issues. I was talking to Ann on the way over here and she mentioned a cleaner that she knows from overseas who is a qualified teacher. So, there are huge issues around all of this.

[70] You mentioned English-language tuition, and that is crucial. We are working up an English-for-speakers-of-other-languages policy, which will be important in addressing these issues. Obviously, having the language skills is a basic starting point in getting employment, communicating and being properly part of Wales's communities.

[71] Brian Gibbons, my ministerial colleague, is also working up a refugee inclusion strategy, and there may be the possibility of a bid for European funding for the provision of English for speakers of other languages in our communities. That is a work in progress.

[72] Therefore, in short, quite a lot is happening on this front, because there is recognition, through the work of the Welsh Refugee Council and other work, that these are major problems for people coming here from overseas, who often end up in employment for which they are overqualified. We are not using their talents and abilities properly and they are suffering as a result. Furthermore, the services that are provided in our communities suffer along with our economy, because those qualifications and skills could be put to much better use.

[73] **Eleanor Burnham:** There is also an issue with the vulnerability of these people. What intrigued and bothered me a bit about the two large gangs of people who I saw was that one was shipped in from Manchester and the other from Wolverhampton, and, even though the supervisor appeared to be bilingual, he was speaking on their behalf, and I was concerned about their vulnerability.

[74] **Ann Jones:** I think that you have covered that, Deputy Minister, by saying that they are qualified and that their skills are not being used.

[75] **Bethan Jenkins:** In your paper, Minister, you mentioned various frameworks for qualifications and skills. What do you perceive will be the impact on Wales of the new European qualifications framework and the European Union directive? People outside the EU will not be incorporated into that, so how can we help those people? Do you believe that we will need more powers in Wales to deal with the situation, or do you think that the EU directives and the various frameworks currently in existence are robust enough?

[76] What are your links with various organisations, such as Careers Wales and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority? Is it your responsibility as Deputy Minister to engage with those bodies regularly to scrutinise this process and ensure that migrant workers are supported in the skills-based economy?

[77] **John Griffiths:** The European Union framework will go live in 2010. We, as an administration in Wales, are feeding into that by dealing with the levels of qualification, for example, the recognition of levels and how they translate across the EU states. That will be from 2010. The UK Government is feeding in the situation in the UK and we are feeding into that with our framework in Wales and our levels. These systems have been in place for some time in Wales and the UK but some member states have not had that luxury, so they are very much behind the game on feeding their own situations into the general framework. It will be a work in progress for some time at the EU level. However, we are quite content that we have done everything that is required of us with the situation in Wales and with how we fit into the European framework.

[78] Outside of that, it is patchy, but various EU directives apply. For example, in the health profession, there is little problem with EU doctors coming to work here. There would be English-language requirements, but there would not be many issues with recognising their professional qualifications. However, on trades, it is patchy. Some trades are easily transferable across the EU, but some are not. Some have been dealt with quite effectively at EU level up to now, while others have not. However, all of that, again, is work in progress and it is all being rolled out.

10.00 a.m.

[79] We are fairly content that we can do what we need to do within our existing powers on the recognition of qualifications and levels in Wales, and making them transferable across the European Union. I do not know whether any of the officials have any particular concerns about that.

[80] **Dr Gunning:** It is not so much a concern, but Bethan asked about what happens beyond Europe. It is interesting that one of the big developments over the past 20 years has been the fact that the concept of qualification frameworks has spread. The early examples were in Scotland, Wales and New Zealand, but now they are springing up everywhere. The advantage of that is that it is now much easier to move from a country like South Africa to the UK, because of the presence of qualification frameworks, even if it is not a single world framework, which would be the ideal end point. At least the way in which these are expressed—their currency, if you like—is much more equitable between countries. I think that that is gradually increasing the opportunity for people, even from countries in Africa, Asia and central America, all of which are developing qualification frameworks, to have that recognition, which they may not have had before.

[81] **Bethan Jenkins:** Are these discussions taking place between universities as well, at the initial stages of any implementation?

[82] **Dr Gunning:** Yes. There is a recognition framework in higher education, which was covered originally by the Bologna agreement. Increasingly, even countries that were not signatories to it want to be part of it, because it is seen as a way to create portability for higher education. So, it is just growing arms and legs, and I think that, eventually, it will virtually be seen as a wide-ranging international framework.

[83] **John Griffiths:** On the gangmasters, we are all aware of some of the terrible situations in which people who come to Wales and the UK are placed. They are often very vulnerable people and are exploited. For example, they pay ridiculous costs for

accommodation and transport and sometimes live in very overcrowded accommodation and difficult circumstances. There are various agencies in Wales that can deal with these problems and offer advice and support. However, if anything comes to us as an administration, we would be very keen to feed it to the Gangmasters Licensing Authority or directly to the UK Government. We need to know about these matters so that we can feed them through to the appropriate bodies. I must say that I am not really aware of how much of that sort of information comes to us, but we can certainly have a look at it and make sure that we have the right processes in place.

[84] **Nick Ramsay:** In her opening remarks, I think that Eleanor Burnham eloquently framed the problem that we are facing in this regard. Minister, you mentioned the problem of keeping up to date with the wealth of qualifications that exists. There are so many qualifications in this country alone that it must be hard enough to keep up with them in Wales and the UK, let alone those in the rest of the EU. Do you think that your department has the capacity to keep up with those qualifications?

[85] To expand on what Bethan Jenkins said about going beyond the European Union, do you think that there is enough capacity to have any hope of keeping up with the qualifications that exist outside the UK? Yes, we must focus on the situation in the European Union, but it seems to me that there is great potential for people outside the European circle to get left out, despite the fact that they have qualifications that are well worth our using in the right areas when they come here.

[86] **John Griffiths:** I think that you are absolutely right, Nick. It is extremely complicated on a Wales basis alone, without going further afield. There are many issues there that we must grapple with. I think that NARIC, the National Academic Recognition Information Centre, is an important agency for people who come here from overseas, because it provides equivalency statements to people, for a fee, which are authoritative statements of the value of their qualifications in the UK. Those are very useful for gaining employment and are relied upon across the board, by people who seek recognition and by employers. So, I think that that is important. That agency will also carry out research and provide general advice. It is used by universities and other organisations, as well as by individuals. So, it is very important and, because it has a great deal of expertise and experience, it can deal with that huge complexity and complication that you rightly mention. So, it is very valuable. I do not know whether Dennis wishes to comment on our capacity.

[87] **Dr Gunning:** Perhaps just a brief comment. The fact that the frameworks that I mentioned earlier are beginning to emerge around the world makes it easier, because you are not then trying to deal with the huge level of detail found in other countries' systems; rather, you are dealing with how they define level and credit in their system. Broadly, the UK approach to this has become consistent with the frameworks that are developing around the world, so that helps us.

[88] The other thing that helps us is that Ann Evans and her colleagues in Wales work very closely with the qualifications regulators in the rest of the UK, so we can share some of the load of this work. For us, as a department, primarily, we have to keep in touch with strategic directions in other countries, because bodies such as NARIC deal with a lot of the very detailed issues that come up in qualifications recognition, and individuals approach NARIC for this type of recognition rather than approaching us in Wales. So, for us, it is about having a strategic and policy level oversight, rather than having to be submerged in all that detail.

[89] **Eleanor Burnham:** I notice that it costs £850 plus value-added tax to access the NARIC database. That is quite a lot of money for a small employer. Is there a collective way to tap into it without having to incur that huge cost?

[90] **Ms Evans:** I can give you a written reply on that.

[91] **Christine Chapman:** How confident are you that sector skills councils are getting to grips with the problem? We have had discussions about what we feel have been issues around the sector skills councils, but they should be a key part of this. If you are fairly confident about that, do you have any evidence of good practice in getting to grips with the training and qualifications of migrant workers?

[92] **John Griffiths:** The general picture with sector skills councils is that there has been a lot of patchiness in Wales and across the UK. Some have been much better than others at dealing with the range of issues that they must deal with, which include ensuring that the qualifications, skills and experience of migrant workers are put to best use, and that any issues around how they relate to the indigenous workforce are properly addressed. When I have met with the sector skills councils—and I have usually done so in clusters—I have found that most of them mention issues around migrant workers, although the issue is more relevant to some sectors than others. It often comes down to the provision of funding for teaching English to speakers of other languages, and sometimes the Wales union learning fund has been used for that. The sector skills councils have raised issues around that, and so language issues are seen as being absolutely crucial. That is why I am very pleased that we are taking forward this policy to better develop ESOL provision in Wales, which will be very important.

[93] In addition, sector skills councils are going through a re-licensing process at the moment, which will be overseen by the new UK Commission for Employment and Skills. That will deal with the capacity of sector skills councils to address everything that they are tasked with properly. Migrant workers and the related issues will be part of that renewing and reinvigorating of the sector skills councils' role.

[94] **Ms Evans:** You could highlight the fact that ConstructionSkills has been very active in working with five different regions in Europe through EARLALL, the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning network, to try to work out what the level of skills of the different construction workers in different countries equates to. So, some of them are taking a proactive view in particular sectors.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.22 p.m. a 10.33 p.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.22 p.m. and 10.33 p.m.*

[95] **Ann Jones:** I call the committee to order. I remind Members that if they have switched pagers, mobile phones or BlackBerrys on during our short break, they should ensure that they are switched off again. Thank you.

[96] We now continue our inquiry into issues affecting migrant workers in Wales. It is my pleasure to welcome Fran Targett and Jonathan, who is sitting in the public gallery, from Citizens Advice Cymru. I also welcome Mark Freeman from Careers Wales. Thank you both for agreeing to come.

[97] I realise, Fran, that you will have to leave by about 11 a.m., so, if everyone is in agreement, we will take evidence from Fran and ask any questions, and then move onto Mark. However, if there are any questions that we think that you both can answer, we will perhaps ask you both to answer. We will endeavour to do that and see how it goes. We are grateful to you for coming here. Fran, please give us a brief overview of some of the issues that you have found, and then we will go onto questions.

[98] **Ms Targett:** Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence. I would like to apologise for my voice—I have a slight chest infection, so if my voice disappears, I will just

hand out papers.

[99] I am sure that all of you here are aware of the work that citizens advice bureaux across Wales do, so I will not go into that. However, I think that it is important for me to give you a little bit of background on the work that we do to support migrant workers, which we have been doing in the recent past. People come to citizens advice bureaux because they have a problem and, increasingly, migrant workers have come to bureaux across Wales, particularly in rural Wales, with a series of problems. The issues that they face, from our perspective, are particularly about unfair treatment at work, legal rights being flouted by employers, and issues to do with poor working conditions. We are faced with people who have had unreasonable deductions from their pay for such things as food, accommodation, refreshments and uniforms. We are aware of cases where accommodation is provided, but the charges for it are extremely high—well above local market rents—and, in some cases, the accommodation is poor and unfit. We have also had cases where people have been dismissed for being sick and, at that point, have been evicted from their accommodation. Interestingly, our evidence has shifted over time. As time has moved on, evidence is starting to come in from migrant workers who have been resident and working in Wales for a year or so, and who are from European Union countries and therefore have different entitlements. They are now starting to come to us with inquiries that are more mainstream, relating to such things as benefits, debts and housing, and so more like the other inquiries that we deal with on behalf of the rest of the population.

[100] I have a number of case studies that I would happy to share with you. I would like to remind you of the challenges that our service faces and which I think read across into public services in general in Wales. These are challenges to do with things such as communication. When we are dealing with a client group whose first language is neither English nor Welsh, the cost of translation to get to the bottom of their inquiry, with them, and to assist them, has been substantial. I think that if you look at some of what we, the Assembly Government and some local authorities have done—there is some very good practice out there—in terms of translation of information packs, those are the sorts of things that I think are answers to some of these questions.

[101] Certainly, from our perspective, on the availability of advice, in talking about migrant-worker issues, we are not, in general, dealing with the complexities of immigration advice. Sometimes people get mixed up and think that we are talking about immigration. We are not. We are talking about a range of advice that covers the same sorts of issues that we deal with for the general population. For example, poor employment practice does not just affect migrant workers, but local people in Wales. So, the issue of access to advice goes broader than migrant workers, but it does particularly impact upon them as a group.

[102] We also have to think about the changing nature of the problems that are brought to us, as an organisation and as public services. As people come to us from different places, there will be different languages to deal with. As people become settled, there is a shift in the issues that they bring to us. In that context, we think that there are some issues around access to services in general. We have come across, in our inquiries, what we would consider to be issues of community cohesion, where the needs of migrant workers and the needs of the indigenous population can potentially lead to pressures. There are examples of good practice, but we need to ensure that those examples of good practice are spread.

10.40 a.m.

[103] In terms of good practice, some of the local bureaux have deliberately gone out and recruited volunteers from migrant communities, so that not only is there a translation facility, which is the first step, but people are getting advice in their first language from people trained in our service. That is not always as easy to achieve as it might seem, but, in the Carmarthen

bureau and in the Ynys Môn bureau, there has been success in taking that forward. Ynys Môn CAB has been working with the North Wales Race Equality Network to provide services using volunteers, particularly from the Polish community, and has now achieved—for one year only, sadly, but at least it is for one year—funding through the new Equality and Human Rights Commission to investigate further the services needed for migrant workers for the future. That is a good example that I would like you to give consideration to.

[104] In terms of our recommendations for policy, it is important that a lot of these things are in the hands of Westminster, but I do not think that that should stop you from giving them consideration and potentially putting pressure on Westminster. One of our key recommendations on employment is the establishment of a fair employment commission, which we think would be a good move and want to see happen, particularly in terms of people like migrant workers, who are vulnerable. The aim is that the commission would have the right to investigate poor employment practice without an individual having to put themselves at risk by raising their case.

[105] We also think that there are issues to do with the resources that need to be allocated to agencies, both public and third sector agencies, for where they need to deal with migrant communities. Some of those issues will be around responsibilities like translation. However, we also think that we need to set some examples, and we would like to see the Welsh Assembly Government set examples around creating positive messages about migrant workers. Some really interesting pieces of work have been done; Wrexham County Borough Council has done admirable work with myth-busting leaflets talking about the good things about migrant workers, which is worth looking at for other places. We all have a duty in terms of social cohesion, tackling race crime and promoting positive messages.

[106] I hope that the Assembly will look to fund the development of proper, adequate and sustainable employment advice. Many of the inquiries that we receive about migrant workers are about their employment, their employment status and the way that they have been treated in their employment. That changes over time, it is a different set of people, these are not a cohesive set of people, but that is at the bottom of the main part of our advice. We do not yet have an answer to the call for advice on discrimination and employment made some years ago through the old commissions, and now through the new equalities commission, in the report that was published jointly by them, 'Snakes and Ladders', which talked about the dearth of good, sustainable employment advice across Wales. Matters have improved, but not enough.

[107] We are an organisation that looks at rights and responsibilities. Our view is that, when you consider migrant workers in particular, there is no point in having a right to something unless you know that that right exists and have a robust place where you can go to get redress if that right is infringed. That is the sort of issue that I would hope that your inquiry will emphasise in terms of an outcome for migrant workers. It is an outcome for people who are not migrant workers too, but these people, in particular, are, in our view, very vulnerable.

[108] **Ann Jones:** Thank you. We have about 15 minutes for questions, so we will ensure that we keep our questions succinct.

[109] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you for your presentation. I have two questions. You have mentioned that a lot of the issues that are brought to you relate to employment. Could you say something about the role of trade unions and whether you, as an organisation, work with these people to encourage them to join trade unions?

[110] My second question is about debt. Representatives from the citizens advice bureau in my area visited the Assembly yesterday and we had a discussion about the problems that they were taking on board. They said that debt was one of the biggest problems that people were

coming to them with in my area. Is there a link there with migrant workers?

[111] **Ms Targett:** On trade unions, we have, over many years, worked very closely with the trade union movement and individual trade unions, and where a person is not a trade union member, a bureau would normally advise him or her of trade unionism and trade unions and encourage them to take that up. On the other hand, many of these people are in vulnerable employment and joining a trade union will make them feel even more vulnerable and may make it more difficult for them. They may also be reluctant, as individuals, to join. So, our role is very much to support the clients in making that decision. We are aware of some very good work and investigations that unions, not just in Wales, but in the UK, are doing around support for migrant workers. If we are talking about the community cohesion side of things, they have published some very good reports around what migrant workers bring to the country in terms of improvement. So, we work together in those ways. In the end, for us, it comes down to the individual client, their position, their employer, their specific place and their choice.

[112] Across England and Wales, debt is now the biggest issue in terms of inquiries that we receive. For the first time, across England and Wales, those inquiries have exceeded inquiries on the benefit system. I guess that we are suggesting that that will increase. We deliver services on debt at a generalist and specialist level across the whole of Wales. So far, we have had a relatively small amount of evidence around migrant workers and debt but, over time, some of those migrant workers, like lots of other people, are coming to us for debt advice. We are at the start of that. Clearly, this issue is usually linked to people who are moving into a more settled position. Bureaux have told me of cases such as that of a migrant worker who was severely injured through work and who is now unemployed. They have settled in this country and have a family and they are struggling to meet the payments that are necessary to support their family. It is a very sad case. We will see an increase in such cases.

10.50 a.m.

[113] **Bethan Jenkins:** I have three questions. In my capacity as child poverty spokesperson, I am aware of the centralisation of services with regard to Jobcentre Plus. On your evidence on capacity to perform and to provide services, will any change to your capacity as an organisation affect how you can perform and is that something that we should take to the UK Government? The second question is on your call to establish a fair employment commission. I assume that you think that that should be on a UK basis; if so, how should we go about making that known to the Westminster Government? Do you think that we could do that through our links in the Welsh Assembly Government? Thirdly, on the poverty agenda, is enough being done by our Assembly Government Ministers in terms of its cross-cutting nature and on how they could address this issue on an Assembly level?

[114] **Ms Targett:** On Citizens Advice capacity, clearly we lack capacity. All of you in your local constituencies will know that bureaux are not open full time, as we would want them to be. The difficulties of clients accessing Citizens Advice are not to do with us not wanting to deliver our services, but are related to a lack of resources to deliver those services. So, an increased capacity in terms of our delivery would help migrant workers and our other clients. On current policy, we are in a difficult period and it is fair to explain that we are currently going through an interesting period, where the Welsh Assembly Government and the Legal Services Commission, which was under the auspices of and funded by the Ministry of Justice, are seeking to work together to change how independent advice is commissioned across the whole of Wales. That is an area where we believe there is a real risk and a real threat to delivery on a local basis by third sector organisations such as Citizens Advice, and to maintaining that delivery on a whole-Wales basis.

[115] On the part of not only Citizens Advice, but the whole of the independent advice

sector, we have been lobbying on this for some time and I urge the Welsh Assembly Government and the Government in Westminster to rethink whether that is the right way forward in terms of clients getting the best advice. On the other hand, I can give you good news on the issue of debt and on the financial inclusion fund money from central Government that is coming to Wales, which we manage across Wales and which has given us extra capacity over the last two years. We have now had confirmation from Treasury on that fund. We were facing a 20 per cent cut in that budget and were in a position where we were likely to make five people redundant in bureaux across Wales, but the Treasury has come up with the some extra money. We are now in a position to say that the financial inclusion fund posts in Wales will continue. We will, sadly, lose one post, although it was, fortunately, a vacant post. However, it means that we will be able to continue with that work.

[116] On the fair employment commission, our view is very much that this should be UK-wide. I do not think that employment law should be different in Wales at this stage, and probably not in the future. Given that people move between European countries, I would hope that employment law would remain UK-wide. We have been lobbying on the issue of a fair employment commission for many years. Many people support it and the fact that we have not yet achieved it does not mean that we will not continue to lobby for it, because we believe that it is important for our clients.

[117] Finally, and last but not least, on the poverty agenda—you are asking some small questions—clearly, our view is not enough is being done yet in terms of the poverty agenda. That agenda is partly a UK agenda, but the issues of economic development and benefits are considered at a UK level and at an Assembly level. More can be done in terms of encouraging the take-up of benefits. We know that people in poverty who are entitled to benefits are still not getting access to them. We raise large amounts of money through the benefits system that go into the pockets of our clients every year and we know that there is a lot more money that we do not get to. We want to be able to do more of that take-up work than we can currently do. We also think that there is a whole set of issues around financial inclusion, which is about people understanding money issues and not getting into debt, which is the other side of the poverty agenda.

[118] In terms of migrant workers, specifically, and poverty, our experience has been that, in general, these people are at the further margins of the same agenda. So, the agenda applies across the population, but the migrant workers who come to us are at the most vulnerable end of that and are more likely, for example, not to be getting the national minimum wage than people in settled communities and are less likely to have access to benefits. Some of them are excluded because of how the rules work as well as because of an inability to claim.

[119] **Bethan Jenkins:** On the UK commission for employment and skills, could we contact the responsible Minister to see what communication there has been with the UK Government on this issue?

[120] **Ann Jones:** We could do that. We now have a test, as we have three minutes left and four Members wish to ask questions, and the answers must also be given within that time. So, whether we finish on time depends on you now.

[121] **Joyce Watson:** I am particularly concerned about those people who remain vulnerable in the meantime, because we do not currently have an employment agency for the non-regulated hospitality and cleaning sector. Do you keep a record of the numbers of people in that particular sector who come to you, so that we can start to gather some of the evidence on the need for inclusion, because everything must be evidence based? I am very concerned about that.

[122] **Ms Targett:** I do not have that evidence with me. We gather evidence from our

bureaux on an electronic basis, and we can extract that information. The evidence that I have received in this regard shows that a relatively small number of people come to us but that their situation is very serious. So, I think that we would have evidence on a relatively small number of people, but if you are interested in receiving more in-depth statistical evidence on that, we could draw it out for you.

[123] **Joyce Watson:** I am very aware of the Legal Services Commission and the issues regarding finding funding to do that work in terms of full cost recovery. Perhaps it would be worthwhile putting a paper together for Members to explain the possible implications of that and the work that you are doing in this regard and in other areas.

[124] **Ms Targett:** We would be extremely happy to provide that for you.

[125] **Eleanor Burnham:** If you had a magic wand, what would be the minimum extra funding that you would require to deal with the capacity issue? The service that you provide is wonderful. A former neighbour of mine worked for Citizens Advice, and I am full of admiration for all the work that you do; it is quite fantastic.

11.00 a.m.

[126] **Ms Targett:** Thank you. I hate being asked that question. I would suggest that, if we are talking specifically about working with migrant workers—for instance, I explained to you that Ynys Môn has just had one-year funding. It has that one-year funding for one post, which is excellent and is good stuff, but what happens in March next year to the work that that person has done to build capacity in the migrant community and to get their trust for our organisation? What happens then? That person's role is to raise awareness, not to give advice. My suggestion is that, in areas where we know we have large numbers of migrant workers, which I would suggest is probably seven or eight areas across Wales, as you could look at joining some of the larger areas together, you need to employ somebody to do the awareness raising, the getting into communities to earn their trust, as well as the advice work. So, you are talking about some £100,000 times eight. We would love to have that. *[Laughter.]*

[127] **Ann Jones:** Fine, thank you. Finally, Nick has a question—unless Mark has something to ask.

[128] **Mark Isherwood:** No, it is all right.

[129] **Nick Ramsay:** While you are waving your wand, do you think that there is scope to recruit many more migrant workers?

[130] **Ms Targett:** I think that there is. Only a limited amount of migrant workers who are here have the time and capacity to offer their time for volunteering because, generally, they are struggling to make ends meet and to work. Where that has happened, it has worked very well, so I think that we would be looking to employ more people directly from the migrant communities so that we have a direct input both ways.

[131] **Ann Jones:** Well done, as we are only a minute over time. Thanks very much for that rush. Fran, you said that you would send more information to us, so, as long as you are okay with it, we will have the committee secretariat send a follow-up letter to you. There are a couple of questions that I want to ask about public service delivery, and, if you could just address those in your letter, that would be fine. Thank you very much for coming. It was at a bit of a canter, but we got there in the end.

[132] **Ms Targett:** Thank you all very much indeed.

[133] **Ann Jones:** Thank you, Mark, for sitting there so patiently and listening to Fran. We move on to your paper, the submission from Careers Wales. Please briefly introduce your paper—you know the format now, so I do not need to explain it to you.

[134] **Mr Freeman:** Thank you for the invitation. The paper before you was collated by Careers Wales Cardiff and the Vale on behalf of the six regional careers companies. It is therefore something of a précis and synopsis of the work that has been going on across Wales.

[135] Hopefully, the paper is fairly self-evident and clearly written. I will just touch on a few major points, however. It introduces what Careers Wales does, and so I will not repeat what is in the paper other than to state that the work that the Assembly Government commissions us to do takes us across a broad range of policy areas. They include: lifelong learning, which would be the education and skills agenda; social inclusion, which touches on the poverty agenda; and the health agenda, because if you are in work and you are achieving, you are more likely to be healthy. Our work across the whole of Wales touches on those important areas.

[136] Of the issues that I would identify in particular—although I know that some will be repeats of previous evidence to you—I will start with the fact that there are no reliable figures or data on which to base service provision and planning. The information that the Assembly Government requires us to hold records ethnic origin and not the origin of a migrant worker. This is not a play on words; it is a significant difference. A Polish worker, for example, would be recorded either as being white or white European. If that person ticks the wrong box, he or she could be in the same box as an Australian. So, it is not helpful in trying to capture those data. The report gives you some figures, and we do collect information about first languages, which gives you an idea of the breadth and range of languages that Careers Wales companies are dealing with. There will be hot spots in and around Cardiff, Newport, Wrexham and Swansea, but we have deliberately given you the figures for north-west Wales just for a different perspective. Beneath that table it gives you some hard figures around Cardiff, for example.

[137] The age group of the migrant workers would be typically around the 18 to 34 group, which is evidence that you have received before. That means that, in the families that come here, the children are more likely to be of primary-school age, but, as they stay longer, over time, older families with older children will come, and that will have a more significant impact on our work in secondary schools. The report highlights that where we are dealing with people in key stages 3 and 4—that is the 13 to 16 age group—our work is more resource-intensive because of the language barrier, but, by and large, we can use the translation and interpretation services within the school, and the report makes reference to the Cardiff ethnic minority achievement service. You are often re-educating a young person's whole culture—their understanding of the education system, of vocational progression and options, and it is very time-consuming, more so than would be the case for someone who had been living in a country for a good number of years. It would be similar with a college-aged person.

[138] Our work in schools would include information, advice and guidance, but we help young people to deal with the transition phase, at age 16, 17 and 18, from school into employment. We seek to place migrant young people into employment at that age. We are not dealing with the 18-plus age group, because that would be picked up by Jobcentre Plus. However, particularly with adults, we seek to be accessible. We do not just wait in our careers centres and careers shops for them to turn up; we go out into the community to engage. There are examples of that in the report. Unless we do that, the young people will not always find their way to our centres, given their language barriers. However, all careers companies would report an increase in adult clients whose first language is not English, so that demand is ever-growing. Where possible, we will provide translated information to parents, young people and

adults, when requested, and that will also have a cost implication for service provision.

[139] Does that place a strain on resources? We tend to be fairly flexible and adaptable, and we will make provision when they come into the offices or when they arrive at school. or we will see them in the community. However, over the next three years, that resource strain will grow as Careers Wales is working within a three-year standstill budget. So, it will become increasingly difficult, not just with migrant workers, but also to maintain our services.

[140] The report also touches on adults in work, whom we will often come across through redundancy, and the report makes reference to the recent job losses at LG Electronics. It also makes reference to workforce development, as we call it, because many of these adults are going into low-skill areas such as hospitality and cleaning work, and workforce development is about working with those employers and employees to upskill them. That is another area where we have come across migrant workers.

[141] On the recommendations, no organisation can do it all. One way to have more impact is by having more effective partnerships. It is easy to say that magic 'p' word, but partnership is difficult to achieve, particularly in this area, which is always moving and changing, and there are no ready-made answers. However, if we can begin to move on that agenda and get examples of good practice, and perhaps some imperative on councils to take a lead in this area and to work collectively across Wales, over time—and it will not happen immediately—we could be more effective.

11.10 a.m.

[142] If you want to come to work, train and be educated, you will need to do it mainly through the media of English and Welsh, and, as you have heard before, it is a real barrier, whether you are low skilled or high skilled. There have been previous examples of asylum seekers and refugee workers who had equivalency of qualifications, but their English was not of a sufficient standard to enable them to practise. That is important, because as migrant workers seek more skilled work over time, they need to have the commensurate language ability to communicate in that profession. Standards are set by professions as to what is deemed to be the appropriate level of English needed to communicate.

[143] Finally, more guidance is needed on the collation of those data. If we are serious about looking at the nature and size of the problem, we need to collect a common set of data. That would involve all organisations—third party and local—but also Jobcentre Plus. We need to recognise that it would not take long for migrant workers to find their way into jobcentres. It is true that they cannot sign on for 12 months, but, once they have been here for 12 months, they may claim benefits. So, there are enormous amounts of data circulating in Wales, both within local and national organisations, but also within organisations whose remits are determined by Westminster. We could make some progress on that. I think that I will leave it there.

[144] **Ann Jones:** Thank you very much for that, Mark. We will move on to questions. Eleanor has the first question.

[145] **Eleanor Burnham:** You are obviously aware of the good practice in Wrexham County Borough Council. I would imagine that you would be happy if that were to be replicated throughout Wales. I happen to live in the borough, and I think that it has done a lot of good work.

[146] **Mr Freeman:** Yes, it is about communicating more clearly and stridently and beginning to set some benchmarks and standards as a result of that good practice.

[147] **Eleanor Burnham:** It has worked with the police, and I am sure that you know that one policeman has learned Polish, which has been beneficial, particularly when there were some riots a couple of years ago. My question is about hospitality. We are all aware—for example, from talking to people who work in the hospitality industry in north Wales, which is my region—that these migrant workers have been extremely key to the development of tourism. I notice that Coleg Llandrillo Cymru has a British regional information training scheme to assist workers. Do you have any input on that? How does that work? Is that just happening at the college, or are you involved with it?

[148] **Mr Freeman:** I could find out in more detail for you. I am not entirely sure of the level of input that the careers company has had on that course. It provided the data that that course was running and, because it is within the college, I would expect it to be involved with those students in the same way as it would be involved with any student on a course. However, if you wanted specific detail, I could certainly obtain that for you.

[149] **Eleanor Burnham:** I was just concerned, because, sometimes, some of us are not sure how Careers Wales feeds in and is involved with admirable activities such as this. We all praise the further education colleges in north Wales, because they are doing extremely well at the moment. I just wondered what input you have or what relationship you have, because you are all doing similar jobs in many respects, helping young people with their careers, whether they are migrant workers or otherwise.

[150] **Mr Freeman:** The input for all of the colleges across Wales would be virtually identical. In other words, members of staff would be attached to those institutions and they would work primarily via student services, with tutors, working on courses to identify potential retention or progression issues, and those with additional needs—and I would class that as an additional need. So, that would be standard practice within any college on how it would function. If you want specific details about how much contact time has been spent with that course, I could certainly get that information.

[151] **Eleanor Burnham:** I have one final, very short, question. Looking at the latest information pack from the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, I presume that you also work with unions, including that one.

[152] **Mr Freeman:** Yes. We would work with the Wales union learning fund, particularly around workforce development issues.

[153] **Christine Chapman:** Does Careers Wales monitor any evidence of exploitative employers, who may try it on by taking on low-paid workers? I would expect there to be a code of practice. I would be grateful if you could say something about that, Mark.

[154] Eleanor has talked about the hospitality industry, and I know that many migrant workers are instrumental to that industry at present. I heard something interesting on the radio last week about research that has been done on the hospitality industry, which shows how great the cases of exploitation are in that industry; the minimum wage is not being paid, and employees are expected to make up the minimum wage with tips. There are all sorts of sharp practices going on, which I was concerned to hear about. How closely are you working with the sector skills councils, particularly in the hospitality industry, but also in other areas where migrant workers may be working in great numbers?

[155] **Mr Freeman:** On exploitation, we would tend not to be the first point of contact for adults to communicate that information—that would not be our prime remit. As we have heard, Citizens Advice and Jobcentre Plus are the organisations that people would raise those queries with generally. I say that because Careers Wales's remit with adults is about information, advice, guidance and referring people on—it is not a job placement agency.

Therefore, as we are talking about adults, I would not expect to have queries referred to us, as we are not a job-broking agency for adults.

[156] On exploitation in the hospitality industry, perhaps for similar reasons, we are not getting that information. We have many examples of good practice, where employers across Wales have struggled over many years to recruit local workers. This has provided an opportunity to find reliable and highly effective people, who have done a great job and have enjoyed the work, and the employers have provided accommodation. It can almost tend to be outside the system, because that network is established. It might have started with recruitment agencies that have been set up, and it then perpetuates—workers might be there for a summer, and they then come back, and bring others with them, so it is outside the system. Employers are happy because of the high quality of staff, and the migrant workers in those areas of good practice are earning the minimum wage.

[157] However, we have anecdotal evidence from adults who come in for advice and guidance—not on job placing, but on what will happen next. They will sometimes share experience of where they may have been exploited. It is easier to exploit someone when they have a poor use of language; we know how vulnerable we can sometimes be as a holidaymaker, asking, ‘What is that on the menu?’; it is basic stuff like that. You can imagine coming into a country, and not understanding anything.

[158] I had an example a few days ago of a Romanian family with children—and Romania is not part of the A8 countries, so there are restrictions—who turned up in Cardiff with no money and no accommodation. That is quite rare, because of where they are from, but they had been in Spain for seven years, which complicates it. However, that is the type of issue that public agencies are faced with. I forgot to say that that family could not speak English or Welsh, so you are faced with dealing with a confused, agitated family, and more so when children are involved; that is difficult for any agency to respond to immediately. It is difficult to set up guidelines on how to deal with it, because you are tailoring your response to the individual situation.

[159] On qualifications, it is important to emphasise that, compared with refugees and asylum seekers, there has been a difference. Many asylum seekers and refugees came with a high level of qualifications, and they were able to move out of the country. However, they still needed a language skill to be able to practice—the reverse has been the case, but language is still that barrier. If we want to help people to progress in education, training and employment, we need to help them to be able to communicate in English or in Welsh. As has already been presented to you, there is often not enough capacity in the ESOL provision locally, particularly in the hot spots. Migrant workers have had to go on basic skill courses as a way of getting at least some simple English instruction.

11.20 a.m.

[160] So, if we really want to help migrant workers settle in and adapt quickly, we must provide that appropriate language support. That is a fundamental building block to settling in and engaging in the community.

[161] **Bethan Jenkins:** I have two questions. The first is in reference to Citizens Advice’s call to establish a fair employment commission and to suggest that to the UK Government. Have you made any representations on that to the Government? The second question, which you touched on, is based on the data on migrant workers. In your paper you say that the

[162] ‘Welsh Assembly Government does not require this breakdown.’

[163] When we met with John Griffiths earlier, he said that most of this responsibility was

with the UK Government and that he would make representations. I am curious about the suggestion that this breakdown is not required and, therefore, about how we could facilitate it being required in any future analysis of data.

[164] **Mr Freeman:** That is a fair point. The statistics are UK-driven and we provide the information as is dictated by the Assembly and as is dictated to the Assembly by the UK Government. However—and no-one will thank me for saying this, because, sometimes, we can be driven demented by the amount of information that we collect and can get lost in the forest of data and not know how to interpret it—if we wanted to capture that data, it is possible to collect information, over and above that key ethnic origin data. As I said, we collect first-language data to help us to understand better how to adapt our services locally. Many career companies will produce information in languages other than English and Welsh, on the basis of what the local population requires. So there are examples of areas where you can go over and above the statistics required centrally.

[165] **Bethan Jenkins:** What would be your key recommendation, therefore, to the Welsh Assembly Government on data collection? What would you see as the most necessary or the most capable thing for the Government to be doing on this basis?

[166] **Mr Freeman:** If we are serious about trying to identify the migrant workers that we have that are staying, we need to collect that language data. It is terribly confusing when we have no idea how many are registered for work and how many have national insurance numbers, because we do not know how many have returned home. There is plenty of evidence that some have returned home, but they might come back in another six months. Your other question was about the fair employment commission; we have made no representation on that.

[167] **Bethan Jenkins:** Why is that?

[168] **Mr Freeman:** It is not something that we have considered making a representation on. It has not been addressed within Careers Wales.

[169] **Bethan Jenkins:** Do you think that that is something, given that you mention partnerships with other organisations, that you could look into as an organisation?

[170] **Mr Freeman:** Listening today, it is something that I will take back to my colleagues. We are always looking to strike a balance—and I am talking generally now—and sometimes we are moved to do things to stamp out bad practice, which can almost be the tail wagging the dog. There are many examples of good practice across employment, and it is always about trying to get the balance. We are trying to encourage employers to take on and offer opportunities to young people, but, increasingly, we find that employers feel so burdened by the amount of legislation and bureaucracy that some of them decline to want to employ young people. Some of them are fearful of offering work-related opportunities to support the 14 to 19 agenda, again, because of the feeling of bureaucracy. So, we are trying to get the right balance in having a workforce that is protected in all sorts of areas and having an employment market that can respond and offer opportunities—that is the real challenge. Careers Wales, if you like, is the bridge in trying to help young people and adults into employment. So, we are talking to employers and we are hearing how burdened they feel sometimes.

[171] **Bethan Jenkins:** I have one further point. When you say that you will go back to make a representation, will you come back to us with your opinions on it?

[172] **Mr Freeman:** We would certainly do that. We will rise to that challenge.

[173] **Ann Jones:** That would be good; thanks.

[174] **Joyce Watson:** To pick up on your comment that you operate as a bridge, we have heard from many people who are bridges from one route to another, whether it is employment and rights or overseeing employment and so on. What has come to light, to my mind, is that many of you, from different organisations, are calling for cohesive working by others—in fact, it is probably fair to say that nearly every organisation has called for cohesion and partnership working by others.

[175] Therefore, having heard that repeated time and again, do you think that there would be some value in all of you working together? I know—and I hear what you say—that you are an advisory service that helps and directs individuals towards making the right choices for their future and wellbeing, and it is very specific role. However, you have just said that you engage with employers and there has to be some sort of element of responsibility within that, as far as I can understand, of ensuring that people are directed into things that are right for them and that will give them good employment opportunities, even if it does mean bureaucracy, because it will. Do you think that there is a value in setting up a co-ordinated approach where you all speak to, and learn from, each other so that you tick the right boxes to ensure that that passage—whoever is implementing it—is a smooth one?

[176] **Mr Freeman:** Yes; having a clear focus is perhaps how I would identify it. If I think about the situation closer to home, in Cardiff there is a learning and skills partnership that brings employers, the third sector, the authority and Careers Wales together, and it is looking at skills and employment issues. However, it is a voluntary partnership and it can become very diffuse, with the range of issues involved, with regard to what drives it. It may be the demand side of the employers. The hospitality, catering and construction employers will say, ‘We need X otherwise we are not going to come and site in Cardiff.’, and it is about trying to match that. That is why, in Cardiff, the migrant workers have been a help. It is difficult to see how the work that is going on in Cardiff would have happened without migrant construction workers, and the same is true of the hospitality and catering industries. So, it is always about who has the stronger voice and what is driving it.

[177] I guess that where Careers Wales is—I will perhaps repeat this—is that we are very much trying to advocate on behalf of the young person or adult to make sense of what can often be conflicting demands in the labour and education and training markets. In these partnerships, we would be focusing very much on the client, the individual. If we can make sense of that, for the employer and the education institutions, we will have a more effective and efficient local economy and local education market. That is very much how we are trying to work to bring the two together. Perhaps many organisations talk about being a bridge, but I think that that is something that Careers Wales, by and large, does very well—it provides a bridge to link industry to schools and colleges and also a bridge to link young people and adults to training and employment.

[178] **Nick Ramsay:** I was going to ask, again, about the dreaded ‘p’ word, ‘partnership’, but I think that you have answered on that point quite comprehensively. I have two other points beyond that. Going back to the English-language situation, you have identified a real problem with migrant workers coming in who do not have the necessary English-language skills. Quite simply, how available are English-language courses to those workers from your point of view? Also I will ask a question that we asked Citizens Advice earlier, which I think is probably just as relevant to you. Do you think that there is a benefit to having those migrant workers working with you to help other migrant workers? Is there scope to increase the numbers of volunteers or people working with Careers Wales so that those migrant workers have a face that they recognise and so that they do not feel that you are just talking at them, but that you are talking with them?

11.30 a.m.

[179] **Mr Freeman:** ESOL provision is a real problem throughout Wales; there is just not enough of it. I do not think that migrant workers should have to go on basic skills courses as a substitute, although it does help. It is as blunt as this: unless we increase provision, we will not help any foreign national coming in to settle into the education system and into work. The situation is different in schools. Cardiff is an example of where the authority has identified two or three schools in which it concentrates support and develops language skills, so that pupils only access the mainstream curriculum once they have sufficient English-language skills. So schoolchildren are reasonably well catered for, but provision for adults is poor. I am sure that everyone says that the Assembly needs to find more resources, but I think that that would be something in common across all the agencies. Unless we can give people the language skills to progress, they cannot make progress. They cannot have an interpreter in the workplace with them; that is just not going to happen.

[180] In terms of the volunteers—what I would call role models—I am sure that there will be opportunities to take role models into schools as part of work-related opportunities. Our thrust is to go out into the community, and, therefore, we will work with the community. That is our approach. Rather than expecting people to come in, we will take our staff out to the community and work in partnership with the appropriate local agencies, because that is the only way that we can do it. So, that is how we try to deliver our services and that applies across Wales. I have talked about Llanelli and Cardiff, and how we work with Polish community groups, for example, and the same would be true of ethnic minority community groups. That is a tried and tested practice for Careers Wales.

[181] **Ann Jones:** I see that there are no further questions. Thank you for coming along today, Mark, and for your written and oral evidence, which will help us when we come to drawing up our final report.

[182] Before I close the meeting, I remind Members that the next meeting is scheduled for 18 June, which is a Wednesday morning, and it will probably start at 9.30 a.m.. It will be our last evidence session, and we will take evidence from voluntary sector organisations that work with migrant workers. If Members feel that there is an organisation or area that we have not covered in our review, or that there is anyone who could add anything extra that we have not already heard from other organisations, please let the committee secretariat know as soon as possible. There may be an opportunity to have one last evidence session if there is an issue that has not been teased out. I will leave that with you to think about. On 2 July, we have a hefty meeting, so please clear your diaries. It will probably start at 9 a.m. and go right through the morning. We will have a private session at the end of the meeting with the standing invitees of the former Committee on Equality of Opportunity under the Government of Wales Act 1998, namely representatives from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Stonewall Cymru, the Welsh Language Board and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, who will talk to us about issues for the following terms. That will be a private session, but we would appreciate it if Members would block that time out in their diaries as well. That will be on 2 July.

[183] **Bethan Jenkins:** Can we have those dates in writing?

[184] **Ann Jones:** We will send the dates around by e-mail, but I wanted to—

[185] **Bethan Jenkins:** Is it on a Wednesday?

[186] **Ann Jones:** Yes, we will be meeting on Wednesday mornings until the end of term, but we are not sure what our slot will be in the autumn term. Watch this space for that. Thank you once again for your attendance, and with that I will—

[187] **Mr Freeman:** As you were asking for additional evidence, Chair, forgive me if you have already had Jobcentre Plus in, but if not—

[188] **Ann Jones:** I think that we asked for it to come in, but we could not sort out a date.

[189] **Mr Jackson:** It will be submitting written evidence to us.

[190] **Mr Freeman:** It is just that Jobcentre Plus has a European employment service.

[191] **Ann Jones:** Jobcentre Plus was mentioned several times in evidence today. Thank you for that, Mark, that was helpful. I declare the meeting closed.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 11.35 a.m.
The meeting ended at 11.35 a.m.*