



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru  
Y Pwyllgor Cyfle Cyfartal**

**The National Assembly for Wales  
The Committee on Equality of Opportunity**

**Dydd Mercher, 25 Hydref 2006  
Wednesday, 25 October 2006**

**Cynnwys**  
**Contents**

- 3 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau  
Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest
- 4 Cofnodion, Adroddiad y Cadeirydd a Materion yn Codi  
Minutes, Chair's Report and Matters Arising
- 8 Cynllun Drafft y Cynulliad ar Gydraddoldeb i Bobl Anabl  
Assembly's Draft Disability Equality Scheme
- 17 Seithfed Adroddiad Blynyddol y Cynulliad ar Gydraddoldeb ar gyfer 2005-06—  
Adroddiad Gwasanaethau Seneddol y Cyulliad  
Assembly's Seventh Equality Annual Report for 2005-06—Assembly Parliamentary  
Service Report
- 22 Seithfed Adroddiad Blynyddol y Cynulliad ar Gydraddoldeb ar gyfer 2005-06:  
Adroddiad Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
The Assembly's Seventh Equality Annual Report for 2005-06: Welsh Assembly  
Government Report
- 28 Y Diweddaraf am y Comisiwn Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol  
Update on the Commission for Equality and Human Rights
- 37 Cynnig Trefniadol  
Procedural Motion

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

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

*Aelodau Cynulliad yn bresennol: Gwenda Thomas (Cadeirydd), Lorraine Barrett, John Griffiths, Jane Hutt (y Trefnydd), Mark Isherwood, Helen Mary Jones, Laura Anne Jones, John Marek, Jenny Randerson, Catherine Thomas, Leanne Wood.*

*Swyddogion yn bresennol: Gavin Moore, yr Uned Cydraddoldeb ac Amrywiaeth Strategol; Denise Rogers, Gwasanaethau'r Pwyllgorau ac Ymchwil yr Aelodau; Sir Jon Shortridge, Ysgrifennydd Parhaol; Paul Silk, Clerc y Cynulliad; Helen Thomas, Pennaeth yr Is-adran Strategaeth a Chydraddoldeb.*

*Eraill yn bresennol: Will Bee, y Comisiwn Hawliau Anabledd; Kate Bennett, y Comisiwn Cyfle Cyfartal; Liz Morgan, Stonewall Cymru; Meg Munn, Is-ysgrifennydd Seneddol dros Fenywod a Chydraddoldeb; Chris Myant, Cyfarwyddwr Gweithrediadau yng Nghymru, y Comisiwn Cydraddoldeb Hiliol.*

*Gwasanaeth Pwyllgor: Dr Virginia Hawkins, Clerc; Elizabeth Wilkinson, Dirprwy Glerc.*

*Assembly Members in attendance: Gwenda Thomas (Chair), Lorraine Barrett, John Griffiths, Jane Hutt (the Business Minister), Mark Isherwood, Helen Mary Jones, Laura Anne Jones, John Marek, Jenny Randerson, Catherine Thomas, Leanne Wood.*

*Officials in attendance: Gavin Moore, Strategic Equality and Diversity Unit; Denise Rogers, Members' Research and Committee Service; Sir Jon Shortridge, Permanent Secretary; Paul Silk, Clerk to the Assembly; Helen Thomas, Head of Division, Strategy and Equality Division.*

*Others in attendance: Will Bee, Disability Rights Commission; Kate Bennett, Equal Opportunities Commission; Liz Morgan, Stonewall Cymru; Meg Munn, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Women and Equality; Chris Myant, Director of Operations in Wales, Commission for Racial Equality.*

*Committee Service: Dr Virginia Hawkins, Clerk; Elizabeth Wilkinson, Deputy Clerk.*

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

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

[1] **Gwenda Thomas:** Dechrewn y cyfarfod. Yr ydym ychydig yn hwyr—dwy funud. Yr wyf yn eich croesawu i gyd i'r cyfarfod. Yr ydym wedi derbyn ymddiheuriadau oddi wrth Huw Onllwyn Jones o Fwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg ac yr wyf yn deall y bydd Andrew White, pennaeth yr uned sector gwirfoddol ac iechyd, yn dod yn ei le. Hefyd, bydd Huw Lewis yn hwyr yn cyrraedd. A oes unrhyw ddatganiad o fuddiant? Gwelaf nad oes.

**Gwenda Thomas:** We will start the meeting. We are a little late—some two minutes. I welcome you all to the meeting. We have received apologies from Huw Onllwyn Jones from the Welsh Language Board, and I understand that Andrew White, the head of the voluntary sector and health unit, will be here in his place. In addition, Huw Lewis will be arriving late. Are there any declarations of interest? I see that there are not.

[2] Mae'r pwyllgor yn gweithredu'n ddwyieithog, a gellir defnyddio'r clustffonau i wrando ar y cyfieithiad neu i glywed yr holl weithgareddau yn well. Bydd sianel 0 ar y

The committee operates bilingually and headsets are available to listen to the simultaneous translation or to amplify the sound of the proceedings. Channel 0 on your

clustffonau yn darlledu'r trafodaethau gair am air, a bydd y cyfieithiad ar gael ar sianel 1. Gofynnaf ichi ddiffodd unrhyw ffôn symudol, *pager* neu unrhyw ddyfais electronig arall, gan eu bod yn tarfu ar y cyfarpar darlledu a'r cyfieithu.

headsets provides the verbatim feed and the translation is available on channel 1. I ask you to switch off any mobile phones, pagers or any other electronic devices, as they interfere with the broadcast and the translation equipment.

[3] Os bydd larwm tân, cawn ein tywys o'r ystafell. Gofynnaf i bawb beidio â chyffwrdd â'r meicroffonau; maent yn dod ymlaen yn awtomatig.

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, we will be ushered out of the room. I remind everyone not to touch the microphones, as they come on automatically.

9.20 a.m.

### **Cofnodion, Adroddiad y Cadeirydd a Materion yn Codi Minutes, Chair's Report and Matters Arising**

[4] **Gwenda Thomas:** Are there any comments on the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September? There appear to be none. I will, therefore, move on to my report.

[5] As you know, at its last meeting, the committee considered the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Order 2006, and unanimously agreed a recommendation that the Assembly reject the Order, which was due to be debated in Plenary on 11 October. A copy of the committee's report was circulated to all Members and laid before the Assembly. Following the publication of our report and subsequent discussions with the Minister for business, equalities and children, the Secretary of State agreed to remove the Welsh bodies, namely public authorities operating wholly and exclusively in Wales, from the Order and the motion for debate was withdrawn. I understand that the Minister has commenced negotiations to secure a transfer of functions Order relating to the gender equality duty, and we look forward to a positive outcome to those discussions.

[6] The cross-party working group on equal pay met on 17 October to receive an update on the equal pay campaign. I will circulate a copy of the minutes of the meeting for your information. You will be aware that the committee will receive a progress report from the Minister on the Close the Pay Gap campaign at our next meeting. In addition, Steve Thomas, chief executive of the Welsh Local Government Association, has been invited to that session to discuss progress made by local authorities in taking forward the equal pay agenda.

[7] At our last meeting, the committee considered the Welfare Reform Bill. A copy of the draft committee report has been circulated, and it would be helpful if Members could provide comments to the committee clerk by the end of the week. I understand that the Committee Stage in the House of Commons began on 17 October and is programmed for completion by 30 November. In view of that, it is important that our approach is forwarded to Members of the Commons' committee and other relevant parties as soon as is practicable.

[8] As you know, committee members will undertake a visit to the Scottish Parliament next week to meet our counterparts and to discuss issues of mutual interest, particularly the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, mainstreaming equality, and the role of our respective committees in scrutinising legislation. We will observe a formal meeting of its Equal Opportunities Committee and meet members of the committee and the Scottish equalities co-ordinating group. A detailed programme for the visit will be circulated shortly.

[9] Members may already be aware that Trevor Phillips, who will be chair of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, has recently announced that the Commission for

Racial Equality will join the CEHR in October 2007, at the same time as the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission, not in 2009 as originally planned. I am sure that Members will welcome this news. As you know, we will discuss the new commission at length later in the meeting.

[10] To update on progress made on actions arising from the previous meeting, a note from officials at the Department for Work and Pensions on the effect on entitlement to housing benefit of young people entering full-time education, and the implication for youth homelessness, has been circulated to Members. There is one paper to note for today's meeting, which is a summary report of the engagement events on the disability and gender equality schemes. Members will be aware that we will consider the Assembly's disability equality scheme under the next item.

[11] I now refer you to paper 1 for today's meeting on the functions of the Committee on Equality of Opportunity and the third Assembly. As you know, Jenny Randerson chairs the Committee on Standing Orders, and she wrote to me last month requesting this committee's thoughts on the functions of the Committee on Equality of Opportunity in the third Assembly. Members have before them a paper setting out some of the issues. Members will also have received a copy of a letter from Helen Mary Jones and Leanne Wood to Jenny Randerson, which sets out their views on the functions of the new committee. The new Standing Orders are being drafted in a permissive way, which will allow committees to develop their roles in the third Assembly. While the Committee on Equality of Opportunity will need to consider what its successor's specific functions should be, it is likely that the Standing Orders will be drafted in the broadest possible sense. This will allow the Committee on Standing Orders to maintain consistency in the Standing Orders, and allow members of the Committee on Equality of Opportunity from May 2007 to determine the specific work of the committee.

[12] Members will see that the paper before us identifies certain areas for discussion, namely the role of the Committee on Equality of Opportunity in advising on, or directly scrutinising, the areas of work of other committees, the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Assembly Commission. For example, should the committee directly scrutinise Assembly Measures and committee reviews, or should it advise other committees on the equality issues raised by the Measures or reviews, leaving it to the relevant committee to scrutinise? What might be the role of the committee in scrutinising how the Assembly, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Assembly Commission carry out their duty to promote equality in their functions, and what might be the role of the committee in scrutinising the budget? I would like us to agree a response to help to inform the work of the Committee on Standing Orders. Would you like to say something, Jenny?

[13] **Jenny Randerson:** Yes, very briefly. The intention of the Committee on Standing Orders is that we have a generic Standing Order that covers procedures and rules in all committees. For each committee, we will have a separate Standing Order setting out its remit as permissibly as possible, as opposed to being restrictive. This issue is really about what you want to include in that permissible approach. In particular, the paper gives you two possible models in paragraph 8. We aim to write it in such a way as to allow the committee to carry out at least the functions that are specified, and it will also give the freedom to go beyond that.

[14] In addition, this committee will be particularly interested in the role of standing invitees, and you have already given the view that you want standing invitees to remain. The new Act will not allow non-Assembly Members to be members of an Assembly committee, but it will be important for us to write the Standing Order so that standing invitees can play an active part in the committee, and not simply be observers.

[15] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you, Jenny. Are there any other comments on the paper?

[16] **Helen Mary Jones:** Briefly, I just want to say that I am very encouraged to hear Jenny's comment about the role of standing invitees, because the committee feels strongly that we do not want to lose that aspect. In moving to a more traditional parliamentary body, I am concerned that we should not throw the baby out with the bath water, given some of the good practices that we have developed. I was encouraged to hear Jenny say that the role should be written in as permissive a way as possible, because we will not necessarily know what the new equality committee needs to do until we see how the other new committees are working, and how the relationship between Ministers and committees develops under the new system. The new equality committee needs to have as much freedom as can be delivered to develop its own role in response to the Assembly's new ways of working. So, the more open the Standing Orders can be, the better. There is no real change, because the current Standing Orders do not allow non-Assembly Members to be members of committees, but they allow for standing invitees. Therefore, that is encouraging, and not surprising with Jenny in the chair.

9.30 a.m.

[17] **Jenny Randerson:** Gwenda is a member of the committee, and made a powerful case.

[18] **Gwenda Thomas:** Given that consideration of equality of opportunity will remain a statutory responsibility under the Government of Wales Act 2006, we perhaps need to make the point that we see the continuation of the Committee on Equality of Opportunity, as close as possible to what we have now, as the way to facilitate that statutory requirement. That makes the committee, and the Assembly as a legislature, unique. Perhaps we can make that point, if you agree.

[19] **Jenny Randerson:** Do people have any views between 8a and 8b? I do not know how that will fit in with how we write Standing Orders for other committees, and there has to be consistency, but it might be worth getting people's views on which of those would be more in line with their thoughts.

[20] **Gwenda Thomas:** Are there any views on that, in relation to the paper before us?

[21] **Helen Mary Jones:** Does it have to be either/or, Jenny, or is there a way of writing both? The scrutiny function will be more important in the new model, but it would be a pity if that meant that it became only a reactive scrutiny, and there was no capacity to proactively advise. Is there a way of combining the two?

[22] **Jenny Randerson:** I could not see why it was either/or.

[23] **Lorraine Barrett:** I was just going to say that—I would not be able to choose between a or b, because it is a bit of both. That came home to me the other week in the Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee, when we discussed equality issues relating to that committee. We had probably not done that in any depth before, and so many issues came out of that. I would not want to lose that opportunity for this committee to influence other committees, or to scrutinise and to advise. That is a positive move—for it not just to scrutinise, but advise, as we consider Assembly measures. Therefore, if there is a way of combining those two, I would be happy with that.

[24] **Gwenda Thomas:** Therefore, we can send that message to the Committee on Standing Orders.

[25] **Mark Isherwood:** I agree that we should have a permissive approach, which would

permit the successor committee to advise or scrutinise, according to what was most appropriate in the circumstances.

[26] **Ms Bennett:** I will comment briefly on both matters. When you go to Scotland next week, it will be interesting to compare and contrast how the committee here compares with that in the Scottish Parliament, because it does not have standing invitees. When people have visited from Scotland—and we have also had visitors from Ireland—they have felt that that has been a powerful thing. From our perspective, we have found it to be incredibly helpful. One issue that needs to be given some consideration is that, this time next year, there will be just the one commission—the Commission for Equality and Human Rights—on the statutory side. I feel that there has been some power in your hearing more than one voice on this side of the table. Therefore, you may want to think a little about the detail of that, because just to have one person representing the commission would perhaps be a mistake.

[27] On the question about the balance between scrutiny and advice, I would agree that both would need to be pursued. I believe that the Scottish Equal Opportunities Committee has had an evaluation of its effectiveness in how it has approached those tasks, and that could be useful to feed in. However, there is no doubt that you would want to do both—possibly with an emphasis on the scrutiny end.

[28] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you, Kate. I will write a letter to you, Jenny, conveying the committee's views on this.

[29] **Leanne Wood:** I have a question on that. With the new commission coming in, there are obvious implications for representation on this committee by standing invitees. Other strands of equality will also be brought into that, such as religion and age. I accept the point that Kate has made, but we need to think about how we will accommodate all of the different voices. My concern is that, under the new commission, there may be some kind of hierarchy. Some equality strands may have more of a voice than others, potentially, so I want to make sure, if we possibly can, that, in Wales, those strands are given an equal voice in this committee.

[30] **Gwenda Thomas:** This has been a matter of consideration. I am sure that you would want to comment on that.

[31] **Ms Bennett:** Yes, indeed. As you know, we have worked up, between around 20 organisations, an equality manifesto in relation to the Assembly elections, where we have tried to work together. We do not really know the structure of the new organisation, but I think that it is probably right to say that we are not expecting it to have gender, race, sexual orientation or age departments—it might have a research department and an Assembly liaison department. I am sure that most of us that may or may not make it into the new commission will be extremely keen on making sure that everyone is represented. When we did the work on our manifesto, we did not feel that there were seven—including the Welsh language—neat strands. We felt that it widened out a lot more, with issues of children and issues of class that we have often spoken about in this committee. I do not think that any of us have an easy answer to this, but I guess that we are all pointing in the same direction, as you suggest.

[32] **Gwenda Thomas:** Virginia has made a suggestion that it might be useful to have an agenda item, after Christmas, on representation for standing invitees. I see that everyone is happy with that, and so we will proceed in that way. We will communicate with the Committee on Standing Orders. Thank you.

[33] Are there any other questions or comments on the rest of my report? If not, I will circulate that report. Thank you.

[34] *Cadarnhawyd cofnodion y cyfarfod blaenorol.  
The minutes of the previous meeting were ratified.*

9.37 a.m.

### **Cynllun Drafft y Cynulliad ar Gydraddoldeb i Bobl Anabl Assembly's Draft Disability Equality Scheme**

[35] **Gwenda Thomas:** The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, requires that the National Assembly for Wales publish a disability equality scheme by 4 December 2006. I welcome the Minister, Jane Hutt, who is supported by Helen Thomas of the Welsh Assembly Government's Strategic Equality and Diversity Unit, and John Marek, Deputy Presiding Officer and Chair of the House Committee, who will be supported by Paul Silk, Clerk to the Assembly, and Denise Rogers of the Assembly Parliamentary Service Members' Research and Committee Services. I see that we also have Gavin Moore with us. I welcome you all. I will take the Welsh Assembly Government's draft disability equality scheme first, and I invite the Minister to make introductory comments.

[36] **The Business Minister (Jane Hutt):** I am pleased to be here to say a few words. This is a very positive step forward, because it is a duty on the public sector to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. It is also important that, as a result of that, we have a duty to provide not only a disability equality scheme but an action plan. One of the key aspects of this, for us, has been the requirement to involve and consult disabled people. Again, innovation in terms of a step forward in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, gives that requirement for us to take this further and more seriously than, perhaps, we have been required to do by previous legislation.

[37] I just have a couple of comments, following on from my report to the committee. We have set up a dedicated team in order to deliver and to develop the Welsh Assembly Government's disability equality scheme.

9.40 a.m.

[38] I particularly thank Disability Wales and the Disability Rights Commission, because they were involved in the four engagement events, which were so important across Wales, in order for us to enable, discuss and engage with disabled people to ensure that the elements of our scheme were based on and formulated by disabled people. I launched the draft disability scheme at the Scope Cymru stand at the National Eisteddfod in August, consultation went through to 13 October, and it comes before Plenary on 15 November for full discussion. As well as the engagement events, I have also been pleased with the consultation responses, and I know that you will have seen a summary of those. I just want to say how important it is that we had both elements, the consultation and engagement events, and the full consultation, which has brought back some very good and useful new aspects, which we are incorporating in the scheme. This goes back to our learning from the race equality scheme, in that we have to be the exemplar. If we are not, how can we expect the rest of the public sector to be exemplary? That is the imperative as far as the Welsh Assembly Government is concerned. I am happy today to see in what ways the committee feels that we can strengthen our scheme even further.

[39] **Helen Mary Jones:** Clearly, lessons have been learned from the race equality scheme, because we were not all happy with the process for that scheme. This has been done much better, and we can congratulate the Government on that.

[40] The scheme itself seems very good, but my expectation is that the level of awareness



about how to do this will be different in different divisions. I would expect some divisions, for example, social services, to have a higher level of understanding of this than, say, the planning inspectorate. I am not picking on the planning inspectorate deliberately, I hasten to add, because in terms of disability issues, planning is important, but the links may not be there. Can the Minister say a bit more about the Government's plans to ensure that staff understand what this means for their day-to-day work, as they develop policy and implement it? I think that, with schemes and action plans such as this, we can sometimes ask people to do things without always being clear what that means for them when they sit down at their desks at 9 a.m. on a Monday morning, in terms of thinking, now that we have the disability equality scheme, what they ought to be doing differently or in a new way, and what other things they need to consider. So how will the Minister monitor, with other Ministers, the implementation of the scheme? The scheme is good, but it is just a piece of paper.

[41] **Jane Hutt:** You hit the nail on the head in terms of ministerial engagement, because this has to have cross-Cabinet engagement. The scheme has already come before the Cabinet, and, indeed, adjustments and amendments have been made to departmental action plans as a result of the consultation. In fact, I expect the final, revised action plans by 3 November. This goes back to mainstreaming, in terms of the delivery of positive outcomes. It cannot just be an action plan—we have to ensure that this is mainstreamed in the thinking, planning and delivery of all Welsh Assembly Government departments. I intend to monitor this, as I must as the Minister with responsibility for equality, and put this at the forefront of policy in the Cabinet, but, we also must ensure that through our network of equality champions, and through Helen Thomas and the Strategic Equality and Diversity Unit. The unit has already done extensive work to deliver this. We had to be quite robust about some of the early plans that came forward, as they were not good enough. That is what we learned from the race equality scheme—we do not accept 'not good enough' at this stage. So, it has already been robust in the challenge to departments and to Ministers, and it all links to the delivery of better outcomes in the quality of public services. I am therefore making those connections clear, as well, and I know that the Disability Rights Commission—and, I am sure, Will—will have a view on this. The DRC will be scrutinising us, as the Commission for Racial Equality rightly was, because it will also want to see us as the exemplar.

[42] **Lorraine Barrett:** I am interested in the events that were held across Wales. I think that they were joint Assembly Government and Assembly Parliamentary Service events. It is interesting that many respondents made the point about British Sign Language being used more across the public services. Could you say something about how that might be progressed with regard to pupils learning at least a basic grasp of BSL? That needs to start with teachers and in teaching colleges. There is also the matter of NHS staff and home carers. It must be very difficult for elderly people, particularly, who cannot leave their homes and cannot communicate in their language.

[43] My other question has been covered, because Disability Wales or the commission—I am looking at Will here—helpfully ensured that we had a cross-representation of people with various disabilities. Do you feel that you managed to reach everyone, whether they were people with sensory impairments or learning disabilities such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, as well as those with physical or mental health disabilities?

[44] **Jane Hutt:** There could be a joint response from the Assembly Parliamentary Service and us in terms of those engagement events that had important outcomes for us across the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government.

[45] We can take some comfort that we are at the forefront of addressing issues around British Sign Language with the £1.6 million that has gone into the BSL Futures scheme. So, in terms of there being a discrete and dedicated scheme and funding for that whole programme to train BSL interpreters, that can be monitored in terms of progress. Karen

Sinclair is still chairing that working group, the task group, which is driving through the BSL Futures scheme. We were all pleased when we saw BSL interpreters in our new Chamber in the Senedd and the impact that that had. We would like to see them more often but that cannot happen until we train more interpreters and, on a parliamentary basis, the Shadow Commission must look at that for the future. It clearly involves education in terms of our schools. To give you an update, the first 10 apprentice interpreters have already started their apprenticeships, and a further 10 will be starting this autumn. That will be at the forefront of scrutiny monitoring and will be a challenge to take forward.

[46] On meeting all the strands, and in terms of impairments and recognising this across the board, I hope that we reached out with our engagement events. Will might like to comment on that. It was as a result of advice from Disability Wales and the DRC that we tried to reach out as far as possible. You could always do more, clearly, but we got quite a wide range of follow-up responses to our consultation. That shows that we did reach out but there is always more that one could have done, and APS might want to comment on that.

[47] It is interesting to look again at those who came; the Royal National Institute of the Blind, for example, was very engaged, as were Carers Wales and Skill Wales. These are all organisations that were not involved in engagement events, or which responded in addition to the engagement events, as well as DRC and Disability Wales.

9.50 a.m.

[48] **Mr Bee:** I need to be a little careful in speaking on this subject because, ultimately, we have an enforcement role here. However, we try to work constructively with the Assembly in preparing a scheme. I acknowledge that there has been a real commitment to making a success of the scheme and, in contrast with my experience of Whitehall departments, there has been a commitment to practical involvement that goes beyond anything else that I have seen. As the Minister said, there will always be gaps in involvement. Two weeks ago, the National Aids Trust introduced some guidance promoting the need for that community to be involved and how it may benefit from disability equality schemes—it falls within the scope of the definition of disability. On the other side, there needs to be recognition by disabled people, and those who fall within the spectrum of disability, that disability equality schemes are potentially powerful tools and something with which they should engage. So, it is a two-way process, but we have been pleased with the efforts of the Assembly to date.

[49] With regard to the overall scheme, we are a little concerned that it does not always demonstrate where that involvement has influenced some of the proposed actions. In revising the scheme, that is an important element in the transparency that needs to be demonstrated. That is a point that we have made. We would be looking for a clearer overarching strategy, which, again, is drawn from the involvement and how the various departmental proposals fit within that strategy, giving the overall appearance of coherence. Although there are actions within some of the material provided by departments, I praise the tabular layout used in the Assembly Parliamentary Service scheme, which clearly sets out steps and measures and how they will be evaluated. Those are comments that we made in our consultation response, which may help the committee in looking at the scheme.

[50] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you, Will. Mark and Jenny would like to speak and we will then move on to the Assembly Parliamentary Service's draft scheme and perhaps have some interaction on the issues that have been raised.

[51] **Mark Isherwood:** I would like to comment on something that Will said about the paper launched two weeks ago on AIDS and the AIDS community falling under the legislation. I had not appreciated that until that moment. Would it be helpful for the committee to receive a list of all of the conditions that would be included? Someone

mentioned that they thought that cancer was included and I had not appreciated that either. It would help our understanding if we knew more clearly what would fall within this as it is often not what automatically jumps to mind.

[52] Looking at some of the consultation responses, and I think that it refers to some comments earlier about the need for performance measures and dates, I would put the case for a process as well as a plan. So, we need not only performance measures, but performance-management measures. As with any performance-management system, this would be an ongoing process and each point of review would identify what is working well, but also what still needs to be improved and focusing the objectives over the next measurement period on that. It will be systematic; it is not something that will suddenly be achieved and then finished, it will be forever. So, it needs to be a process rather than just a plan.

[53] On the consultation process, 'Involving Disabled People' is one of the headings in the Assembly Government's paper. I cannot see a reference from the consultees to their involvement in training or any other aspect of the process other than the consultation. When I have met some of the disability fora—certainly one in the area where one of the engagement meetings was held—they told me that they would be keen to see their own involvement in, perhaps, awareness training and so on at a local level, if not beyond that.

[54] Finally, I note from the consultee paper that one respondent commented that it was regrettable that the proposed scheme did not include carers. What consideration are you giving to that? Examples are always coming forward—a recent one was at an Alzheimer's Society meeting where carers expressed concern that, when their partner or the person that they were caring for was diagnosed, they were not given any advice on how to access health support, benefit systems and so on. Another example is a particular local authority that has introduced a scheme that promotes access to local-authority-owned sporting venues where the carer can go in for free in order to give access to the person being cared for. So, again, what sort of consideration are you giving to that? I will stop there.

[55] **Gwenda Thomas:** I will bring in Jenny and Catherine and then ask the Minister—

[56] **Jenny Randerson:** I was getting ahead of myself, Chair. My question was on the APS scheme.

[57] **Catherine Thomas:** I read with interest about the summer placement scheme for disabled undergraduates and graduate students. I was encouraged to read that a number of those involved in these placements have gone on to have permanent positions here. Has there been any consideration to opening that up and setting up a scheme that was not just targeted at undergraduates and graduates, and considering a scheme that would be open to other individuals, without those qualifications, who would, perhaps, be interested in other areas of work in the Assembly? In addition, looking at the dignity at work policy, which aims to tackle bullying and harassment in the workplace, I wonder if we could have a little more information with regard to how that is being monitored and on any outcomes from that, and how those outcomes are responded to.

[58] **Jane Hutt:** I am sure that some of these issues—Catherine's, particularly—might be relevant to APS as well as to the Assembly Government. In responding to your points, Mark, I agree with you on AIDS. Will raised this when we went to the National AIDS Trust event, and I think that we all recognised it—in fact, the Terrence Higgins Trust was involved in an engagement event. As you said, Mark, we learned that we had not recognised that we were still seeking out all of the opportunities, because of the new provisions within the legislation. That may mean that we need to provide an overall starting point that is not just a definition of disability, but covers all the conditions that should comply. That is something that we could perhaps get some help on from the DRC, to ensure that people have that at the forefront of

their disability equality scheme.

[59] Secondly, we take note of the tabular approach, which is in the annual report. We will apply that tabular approach, as APS has done, to the final scheme. That will give us the opportunity to chart the outcome expectations. So, it will help in terms of the way that we present the scheme and the action plan. I take the point about the importance of training and awareness-raising, which goes back to our mainstreaming agenda, the recommendations of the mainstreaming strategy and the need to ensure that that is inculcated across the whole of the Welsh Assembly Government.

[60] As far as the carers issue is concerned, as I said earlier, we got a response—and rightly so—from carers about the importance of recognising their needs in relation to the scheme. That will be arranged and we will reflect that in the scheme. Catherine's first point is probably for us as employers. It is key that we go beyond the graduate scheme, which has been important and has opened up opportunities. That is something that we need to look at as employers, and, indeed, in the civil service, in terms of how we can open up these opportunities in different areas of work. I am sorry, Catherine, I missed the second point of your question.

[61] **Catherine Thomas:** It was in relation to the dignity at work policy, which aims to tackle workplace bullying and harassment, and how that is monitored and how you respond to any outcomes, especially negative outcomes.

10.00 a.m.

[62] **Jane Hutt:** Perhaps we could return to that when we discuss the annual report, as the Permanent Secretary will be here as well. Maybe we could raise that with him, in relation to both aspects of your question, Catherine, particularly the dignity at work issue and the outcomes of that.

[63] **Gwenda Thomas:** Lorraine, I think that you have a brief point to make.

[64] **Lorraine Barrett:** Yes, I would like to make one point. I am glad that Catherine raised the issue of the graduate work-placement scheme, but I helped to launch Scope's graduate work-placement scheme as a lot of disabled people were being offered only menial work-experience opportunities. That scheme was to help to redress the balance and to let people know that a lot of disabled people are graduates, so please give them a chance and do not just give them menial work. There is a balance to be struck, and I think that there is room for both.

[65] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you for that point.

[66] We will move on now to discuss the Assembly Parliamentary Service's draft scheme. I invite Dr John Marek, the Deputy Presiding Officer, to make some introductory comments.

[67] **John Marek:** You have the document before you. The Assembly Parliamentary Service has produced this scheme under the guidance of the Clerk to the Assembly, Paul Silk. I would like to thank him and especially Denise Rogers, who worked full time, for a long period, on producing this report. It was considered by the House Committee about two weeks ago, and it was satisfied with it, and so any comments that you make or changes that you would like to see in the scheme would be looked at carefully by the House Committee.

[68] To anticipate one question from Helen Mary about monitoring, in this case, the best monitors would be the Assembly Members, given that this concerns the parliamentary estate, and I am very sure that they will be good monitors. I have no worries about that for the future.

The scheme is before you and I do not think that I need to say any more about it unless there are any questions.

[69] **Jenny Randerson:** My question is on a specific issue. I noticed the comments about good physical accessibility in this building, but also that not all constituency offices are accessible, and that is where many of us meet most of our constituents. In fact, that is the most important part of our work because, although getting people to visit us here is interesting and important for their engagement in democracy, we are here to help our constituents with their problems.

[70] There are probably two reasons why most constituency offices are not accessible: one is a sheer lack of awareness, though I would say that most AMs quickly become aware that their offices are not accessible because so many disabled people come to meet us; the second reason is simply that the allowance for renting an office or the contribution towards the cost of purchasing an office is limited. It may be relatively generous in certain parts of Wales, but in Cardiff, it is ridiculously small. I am not making a personal plea, because I have solved this problem by having a joint office with the local MP, and our joint allowance—hers being significantly more generous than mine—allows us to rent somewhere accessible. We looked for somewhere accessible.

[71] I am not suggesting that you should increase the allowance for everyone, but I think that you should consider having a special fund to which AMs could apply for adapting their offices. I know that you would have to look at it and check that it was a sensible use of public money, and that they should not just go out and rent a more accessible office, but I think that a special fund, targeted at that, would be useful.

[72] **John Marek:** We are guilty of not telling Assembly Members what is available to them, because we have such a fund. That money is available on the same basis as the security fund, from the office costs allowance. Any amount over £2,000 spent on disability access does not count against each Member's office costs allowance. I must say that Assembly Members are individual employers, and so they run their own offices; the Assembly has no responsibility in law, I think, with regard to what you do, Jenny, in your constituency office, or what I do in mine. The Senior Salaries Review Body will be assessing allowances and salaries again, and the House Committee has decided to leave that discussion until after the elections. Thank goodness, it will not be my responsibility and I will have nothing to do with it, but those who will be in my place will no doubt have to argue. If there is a demand for this, especially in high-cost areas such as the Cardiff Central constituency, I hope that you will make those points to the SSRB in due course. However, there is this fund. You have to spend the first £2,000 out of your office costs allowance—and security is another item to consider here—but if there are any more expenses over and above that in ensuring disabled access, to carry out the provisions of the Act, they do not count against the allowance. So, I hope that that is of some comfort to you.

[73] **Gwenda Thomas:** Jenny, is that okay?

[74] **Jenny Randerson:** Yes, fine, thank you.

[75] **Helen Mary Jones:** First, further to that point, I am interested, because I did know that there was extra money available, but, for many of us, our office costs are committed. For example, renting a ground floor office is often more expensive than renting an office upstairs, and finding the initial £2,000 can be impossible. I know, because I reviewed it for my own office. We were already renting a downstairs office, and so we had already made certain security arrangements. I want to know why the £2,000 is there, and whether it is an arbitrary figure. John will probably say that this is a matter to take up with the SSRB, but I agree with the point about what can be rented in Carmarthen with our office costs is very different from

what can be rented in the centre of Bridgend or Cardiff. Perhaps those allowances should be weighted to reflect the cost of renting somewhere that is open and accessible to the public. I would reiterate Jenny's point about that being the major interface, although I completely accept John's point about individual Assembly Members having the main responsibility for their own offices.

[76] I have a further point on the assessment of qualifications in the recruitment of Assembly Parliamentary Service staff, and on recruitment and training. I am pleased to see that formal qualifications are an essential criterion in recruitment only when necessary, and I am interested to hear more about how 'when necessary' is determined and defined. What is the process for deciding which jobs need formal qualifications and which can go on capabilities or capacity?

[77] **John Marek:** I will pass that latter point on to Paul to answer, because the House Committee delegates staff terms and conditions, at least for staff up to grade 6, so that would be better answered by officials.

[78] On your first point, the answer is that of course that £2,000 is arbitrary, to a certain extent. For example, I own my offices so I do not have to pay any rent whatsoever, but I pay council tax. Other people who come in, 40 years younger than me, have it all to do and have to pay enormous sums for rent, especially in Cardiff. There is probably a case for splitting the office costs into the rental aspect—which would be paid, providing that the rent is reasonable—and into an extra allowance for all those other things, such as the provision of telephones, heating, and lighting. I think that it is an argument that we ought to have, but let us do it when the SSRB comes next April. I will now pass over to Paul.

[79] **Mr Silk:** On the point about recruitment, I think that the formal qualifications are required only when one is recruiting a lawyer or a statistician, when it is a requirement that they should have a formal qualification. However, we do not make A-levels or a degree a qualification for the majority of jobs that we recruit in APS.

[80] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, I understood that, because, for some roles, it is absolutely clear. For example, if you are recruiting a lawyer, you have to have someone who has a legal qualification. However, I am interested in whether there has been a systematic process of going through the roles to determine which ones need qualifications. For example, if you are employing a translator, presumably that person has to have had some training to be able to do that job. Has there been a systematic process, or is there a plan to do a systematic evaluation of all roles?

10.10 a.m.

[81] I ask this because I am aware that, in other organisations, assumptions have sometimes been made about when formal qualifications are needed and when they are not, and then, when you do a systematic review, you find that you were wrong. In some of the jobs for which you thought formal qualifications were not needed, it would have been wise to ask for them; otherwise you are asking people to apply for jobs that they have no chance of getting. For other roles, where organisations have traditionally asked for a degree-level qualification, because that was expected, when you review the role, you might find that that is not necessary. Has a systematic approach been taken to that, and, if not, could that be considered?

[82] **Mr Silk:** In that sense, there has not been a systematic analysis of all jobs to consider what we would ask of applicants if the posts were vacant. However, a systematic approach is taken to each job that is advertised to see whether any particular qualification is needed. I think that Denise will confirm that, for most jobs—apart from specialist posts, such as

lawyers or statisticians—qualifications are not required.

[83] **Ms Rogers:** The approach to filling posts is generally competency-based. People will be asked to show, whether from work experience or from other aspects of their lives, that they have the skills or capacity to do the job.

[84] **Gwenda Thomas:** I think that everyone needs to join in here now and respect the Chair. We need to move on.

[85] **Lorraine Barrett:** Thank you for the report. It is really easy to read. I must confess that I have not read every page, but I tried to make my way through as much of it as I could. There is a paragraph on page 9 about staff involvement. It obviously applies to the staff employed by the Assembly Parliamentary Service, but it also made me think about Assembly Members' support staff. John made the point that we are employers. Is there an opportunity for Assembly Members' support staff in Assembly offices to be involved in the focus group? Would that be appropriate? That led me to think about work stations, because the report mentioned the need to ensure that APS staff work in a safe environment. That applies to us as employers within the estate, whether in our constituencies or in our Assembly offices.

[86] With regard to APS staff, are work stations assessed regularly, not only for people who already have disabilities, but also to prevent people from becoming disabled by problems with their backs, legs, circulation and so on? I often call on Kay Burns, the health and safety officer, to have a look at our office and our chairs, to see how we are working. Is there a way in which Assembly Members as well as APS staff can ensure that their work stations are assessed regularly, whether once a year or every other year?

[87] **John Marek:** I will pass that question over to Denise. The assessments are done, but I would not say that I welcome this chappie coming along to tell me how to hold my mouse, and this, that and the other. I think, 'How long is he going to be here?'. However, at the end of the day, it is the right thing to do, and I am better off for it.

[88] **Ms Rogers:** All members of staff, including support staff, have an annual assessment. If someone has any particular needs, he or she will have a more specialist assessment and adaptations will be made. That is done annually, but anyone can ask for an assessment at any time. The health and safety team members are quite visible, certainly in the Assembly offices.

[89] **John Marek:** You could send an email to inform Members that this is available.

[90] **Gwenda Thomas:** I have been thinking about that. Perhaps we should share the information that we have received this morning with all Assembly Members. A briefing note could be prepared to spell out what Assembly Members' duties are under the disability scheme and what allowances are available to help with those. It would be helpful if that could be arranged.

[91] **Mr Silk:** We are planning to hold a seminar for Members at some point after Christmas on the disability scheme, but that could certainly be supplemented by written material.

[92] **Mr Bee:** I am going to be a little naughty and try to weave in one or two bits that I missed out about the Assembly Government's scheme under this item. First, I note that the scheme will run until May 2007. Technically, any new scheme needs to repeat the involvement process and so forth. We would consider—given the limited time span that the Assembly Parliamentary Service has before it goes through such a transition—whether it is possible and appropriate to draw on the material gained from the existing involvement. It also struck me that the Assembly scheme only runs for two years, which is perhaps surprising.

However, to weave in a bit about the definition of disability, I was recently struck by the fact that a significant proportion of Assembly Members meet that definition. The Assembly is rightly proud of its gender balance and if Members are willing to go public about their disability, there are grounds to celebrate the fact that it has a higher proportion of disabled AMs than of Assembly staff.

[93] That links to the definition of disability, which is included in one of the schemes—I am sorry, I cannot remember which one—and, in response to what Mark said, it is not a medical definition. For example, someone who is beginning to lose their hearing will, at some point, cross the threshold where it impacts on their day-to-day living, in such a way that they fall within the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act. It may be helpful to illustrate a scheme with some of the conditions that are not immediately associated with being disabled, such as diabetes, epilepsy and so on. We would be happy to collaborate on that sort of work.

[94] **Gwenda Thomas:** I think that that is important, Will. I would find it easier if the loop system worked in the committee rooms, and I have raised that matter a few times. However, there are issues that can help. That leads me to comment on the social model of disability and to ask how effective the awareness-raising project was and whether there is a wide enough understanding of the social model. All of this grows out of that, does it not? Would you like to say something on that?

[95] **Mr Bee:** The work on the social model was undertaken by Disability Wales, so I can side-step that. It is true that even among disabled people, recognition of the social model of disability is not that strong. Research that we have done, working with the Department for Work and Pensions, shows that as many as 52 per cent of those people who meet the definition of disabled within the legislation do not consider themselves to be disabled. A proportion of those people are actively hostile to the label 'disabled'. So we are having to use, in some of our communications on rights, the phrase 'disabled people and those with long-term health conditions' in order to get through to people the fact that they have protection.

[96] You may have picked up, some weeks ago, that we ran a story on people with breast cancer and how employers refused to make adjustments for them. Many of those people did not realise that cancer is now covered, from the point of diagnosis, under the Disability Discrimination Act, because of the number of employers who behave in that reprehensible way at an early stage in the treatment of cancer. That resulted in a 100 per cent increase in calls to our helpline from people with that condition, partly because of the extensive media coverage that we got. It is important to recognise that the scope of disability goes well beyond the conventional stereotype, and the social model is key to finding that out.

[97] **Gwenda Thomas:** Mark is next. Can you be brief, please, so that we can move on to the next two items?

[98] **Mark Isherwood:** Yes, certainly. On the cancer point, I commend MacMillan Cancer Relief's publication on cancer in the workplace, which I launched. Last week, I hosted a group of disabled people in the Chamber. They were from south Wales—I was just a passing AM who was grabbed to meet them—and they were very interested to find out about the facilities in the Assembly and the Chamber. They seemed pleased with the answers that they received. They saw my hearing aid, and began to ask about loop systems and the discussion grew from there.

[99] On proactivity and reactivity, we are talking about positive feedback from staff, and the number of staff, in terms of qualifications, who have been supported to undertake advanced study, but how systematic is that? I have raised points many times about the development of staff. Obviously we want equality at the recruitment stage, but how do we then positively develop people to be in the right place at the right time, recognising that many



jobs will require qualifications?

10.20 a.m.

[100] Equally, in terms of being proactive with Members, I know that I can go to you if I have a particular complaint about the equipment, but it has been a long time since anyone has asked me if I have any concerns about the equipment. For example, the new earpieces that we were given fell apart the first time that I used them—they are very poor quality. So, how proactive are you now or are you planning to be?

[101] **Mr Silk:** That is a good object lesson that we should be more proactive, but I would like to think that in a small Assembly such as this Members will always be able to approach me or other members of staff to ask for improvements where they see that things need improving. As far as staff are concerned, we engaged all the staff in the Assembly Parliamentary Service in the development of the disability equality scheme. What we learned from that was not just that some of our staff are disabled, and perhaps have not previously wanted to say that they are disabled—and part of the purpose of this scheme is for people to be more willing to say that—but much good information came from staff with disabled relatives or friends, and they fed that back into the system. So, it is very important to capitalise on the knowledge that our staff have of disability and what it means. This scheme has been based on that.

[102] **Mark Isherwood:** There was also the question on the more academic and professional qualifications, and developing people's skills and qualifications once employed by APS.

[103] **Mr Silk:** We would do that for all staff, and not particularly for staff from a particular group in the community. We spend quite a lot of money on the development and training of our staff, in terms of access to education externally as well as the training courses that we run internally. If you would like some figures on that, I can provide them.

[104] **Mark Isherwood:** Thank you.

[105] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you. John, would you like to say something in conclusion? No? In that case, I thank you all for that item—it was very informative.

10.22 a.m.

**Seithfed Adroddiad Blynyddol y Cynulliad ar Gydraddoldeb ar gyfer 2005-06—  
Adroddiad Gwasanaethau Seneddol y Cyulliad  
Assembly's Seventh Equality Annual Report for 2005-06—Assembly  
Parliamentary Service Report**

[106] **Gwenda Thomas:** On the agenda, we are to consider the Welsh Assembly Government's report first, but we will reverse the order of the presentation of the reports. Items 4 and 5 cover the Assembly's seventh equality annual report for 2005-06, and the committee will be aware that the Assembly's equality annual report is made up of three sections: the Welsh Assembly Government's equality annual report, which includes a statement from the Permanent Secretary, the Assembly Parliamentary Service's equality annual report, and the committee report, which was agreed on 27 September. As previously agreed by the committee, in order to help streamline the reporting process and to avoid repetition, reports from the Welsh Assembly Government and the Assembly Parliamentary Service on the race equality schemes have been included in their respective equality annual reports. Members have a copy of the reports. Following today's discussion, a covering

statement of the committee's assessment of the report will be prepared for clearance outside of the committee. The Assembly's seventh equality annual report for 2005-06, including the committee's statement, will be laid before the Assembly for debate in Plenary on 28 November.

[107] I now move on to the Assembly Parliamentary Service's equality annual report, and I invite John Marek to make introductory comments.

[108] **John Marek:** Again, I will be quick on this, Gwenda. The report was considered by the House Committee on 12 October 2006, and I am pleased to say that the committee was content. The report is before you, and there are certain features in it in which we can take some satisfaction. I am not aware of any great gaps in the report. There is an innovative outreach programme, which aims to raise awareness of the Assembly Parliamentary Service as a potential employer, and that provides guidance on APS recruitment procedures. We have established an APS equality steering group that the Clerk chairs, which he can talk about. We have a new APS equality champion, and we have produced a guide to the Assembly in 18 languages. I am sure that we can do more. Comments and suggestions would be welcome.

[109] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you, John. Would any of the standing invitees like to comment at this stage on the APS equality scheme? No? Do any Members wish to comment?

[110] **Helen Mary Jones:** I have a general point. The way that the scheme is set out is helpful, as it is easy to read. However, in terms of the positive outcomes, there are some places where you are reporting process, and other places where you are reporting change. Therefore, in some places you are reporting that a training course has happened, which is process, and in other places you report that you have allowed six members of staff to work from home, which is an outcome. I would not suggest changing it now, but, for future reports, it might be easier—there is a thing about measuring what you have done, and then there is a thing about measuring what difference what you have done has made—to work out positive actions, and the outcomes of those actions.

[111] **John Marek:** That is helpful. I think that the reply is that the Clerk has heard what you have said.

[112] **Helen Mary Jones:** I also have two specific points, both on page 9 of the tabulated part of the report. You report that people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds are under-represented at senior level, and that actions are planned to address this. What are those actions? It is encouraging to see that there is gender balance at senior level. On the next stage, on the additional funding available to disabled Assembly Members, again, there is the figure of £10,000. How is that figure arrived at? At some stage, we may have a Member whose needs would cost them more, in terms of their additional cost, than £10,000 a year; there may be other Members who may need relatively minor adjustments—to their working environments, or whatever. Therefore, I am rather worried that that is an arbitrary figure. We could have someone at some stage, for example, who was a wheelchair user, and who had large additional costs.

[113] **John Marek:** I will answer the last question, and then the Clerk will answer on staff. It is an arbitrary figure, and if someone had special needs that were over and above £10,000, there would be immediate action to ensure that appropriate help was provided. The question is whether we need to put that into guidance or law or any determination. We could, but it would be a lot of effort. I honestly believe that, if there was a case where that figure was going to be breached, there would be no problem.

[114] **Helen Mary Jones:** I am sure that that is the case. However, we should perhaps have a reference to that somewhere in the guidance; it is about encouraging people to feel that they

can stand for office. If you are a disabled person who has fairly profound needs, you might think, ‘Well, the figure is capped at £10,000, and my current employer is able to support me in another way, and so perhaps I could not do it’. Therefore, it would be good if there was a sentence in the guidance that said something like, ‘This is the norm, but it would be possible to make adjustments for an individual Member’s needs’. It is not about who we have here now; it is how we can send a message.

[115] **John Marek:** I take the point. I do not know whether it appears in the determination. We are just about to present the updated determination for Members; there is nothing substantial by way of changes. However, if it appears there, I will ensure that that is taken on board. If it is not in the determination—and I cannot remember whether it is, because I do not have it with me—we will discuss it at the House Committee, and we will need to find a form of words that gets around your problem. You make a good point.

[116] **Mr Silk:** On staff, we recognise that, although the number of BME community members of staff that we have has gone up marginally—I believe that it was 3 per cent two years ago, 4 per cent a year ago, and it is just over 4.2 per cent now—those jobs are concentrated largely in team support and lower grades. Part of the action to counter that is to develop those staff that we have recruited, and we have recruited some good people in those team support roles. We need to invest in their training and development, so that they can, in due course, occupy management jobs here.

[117] However, looking at outside recruitment, we have also taken other steps, or we plan to take other steps. Part of this will be easier when APS, or its successor, is no longer part of the civil service. Therefore, for example, the nationality rules that apply to the civil service will not necessarily apply to APS, which might make it easier to recruit people from the Somali community in Cardiff than it is inside the civil service rules.

10.30 a.m.

[118] We need to advertise—our media relations people are looking at this—inside those parts of the media with the best penetration in the black and minority ethnic community. We intend to do that. We have been using Cardiff University multi-faith students to promote vacancies here. We have also used Race Equality First to advertise vacancies to people from ethnic minority groups. That is the hill that we have to climb inside the parliamentary service to visibly see people from the black and minority ethnic communities in management roles who then become role models for recruiting. We are a very white organisation at present at anything below the ground level of the organisation.

[119] **Laura Anne Jones:** Visually impaired people form a group that is often overlooked, so I am delighted to see, on page 11, that you have improved signage in the Senedd. How did you decide where to put the signage? Did you consult with groups of visually impaired people?

[120] **John Marek:** I had nothing to do with that, but do you want to say something on that, Paul?

[121] **Mr Silk:** We have an access officer, Chris Morgan, who has been very actively involved in this. There has been some dialogue, if I can put it as mildly as that, with the architects. Architects do not always appreciate signage and other things that they regard as intrusive in the building, but I think that there is a need for us to do various things. For example, the visible markings that you have on this window are not always visible on some of the other glass panels around the rest of the building, which is an issue that visually impaired people have raised with us. There was a certain dialogue with the architects. It is now the Government’s building, but when it becomes the Assembly Parliamentary Services’ building,

we will be responsible for determining these matters.

[122] **Laura Anne Jones:** Therefore, will you be looking to do more?

[123] **Mr Silk:** I hope so. As you will see in one of the papers in front of you, there is a checklist of different issues that have been raised with us. This is something that Lorraine's committee will need to consider.

[124] **Lorraine Barrett:** Briefly on that point, I support what John Marek and Paul Silk have said about the access officer and the architects. The integrity of the building has to be taken into account, but I always say to designers that, when they are designing buildings, whether as an architect or any other sort of designer, they must look at the practicalities and the equal opportunities of the building. There are issues with regard to signage, but we are looking to find a way forward that will suit both needs—that will retain the integrity of the building, but improve the signage and some health and safety aspects on the outside of the building. It was something that we were discussing yesterday, so it is ongoing.

[125] **John Marek:** Thank you, Lorraine.

[126] **Ms Morgan:** I draw your attention to something on page 9 that is related to what you said about BME representation. It is about the need to collect more robust data in relation to disability and sexual orientation. From Stonewall Cymru's perspective and for lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Wales, this is key. The lack of data, monitoring and research all tie in. I look forward to hearing how you intend to progress that. Stonewall Cymru would welcome being an active partner in that process. For the lesbian, gay and bisexual community, this would be a most important point.

[127] **John Marek:** You cannot insist on collecting any of the data.

[128] **Ms Morgan:** We can talk about that. As for monitoring, the answer is 'yes'.

[129] **John Marek:** I have nothing useful to say. Where people want to give the data, there is advantage in having the data, but it is a matter of the personal wishes of the individual. It depends on how you do it, and I have nothing useful to say, except—

[130] **Ms Morgan:** Stonewall Cymru will be working with the Welsh Assembly Government to run a seminar on monitoring, so that will be useful.

[131] **John Marek:** Denise has something useful to say.

[132] **Ms Rogers:** APS joined the Stonewall diversity champions, and we need to come for advice there. However, some of the things that we have been doing to prepare the way include, putting the information that we get from you on the news page. We put the Stonewall survey out and encouraged staff to fill it in, if they wanted to do so. Some of it is about making any gay staff feel that this is a place in which the organisation is friendly towards us. In terms of how we take the monitoring forward, we would come to you for advice. I think that we are going to have a new HR system that will allow staff to feed information in about themselves—I think that that is next year, but that will feed in to that.

[133] **Gwenda Thomas:** Lorraine, you wanted to come back, and then Mark can come in.

[134] **Lorraine Barrett:** On that point, I remember, in the early days of the Committee on Equality of Opportunity, the Office of the Presiding Officer, as it was then, conducted a survey of staff to identify the needs or to ask staff whether they were disabled and about their sexual orientation, and it was clear that many staff did not want to identify themselves as

disabled or divulge their sexual orientation. We felt that that was very personal information, but we were offered support from Stonewall, in particular, as to how one could generate that information. Both strands are personal issues, but if there is an opportunity to glean that information and build up our data, then that can only help everyone in the long term.

[135] **Gwenda Thomas:** Do you want to comment on that point, Paul?

[136] **Mr Silk:** That is the issue, is it not? Every member of staff here should regard themselves as being treated equally, whether or not they are disabled and whatever their sexual orientation or religious belief. If we can reach the stage at which our staff feel that there is no discrimination in the organisation, then we will have achieved what the Committee on Equality of Opportunity wants. We are constantly striving for that, and I hope that staff will recognise that and will, therefore, be willing to identify themselves.

[137] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you.

[138] **Mark Isherwood:** On page 22, under the key objective heading, 'To improve communication within the division and with our customers and partners', the column for process implementation mentions building links with external equality organisations. I will not name names, but on Monday, I had a meeting with representatives of a major organisation working in race equality, and they were very poorly informed about the Assembly, how to access it, who was on this committee, who its Chair is, who the various party spokespersons are and so on. So, I gave them the information, for which they were grateful, and I suspect that they will communicate much more with us in the future.

[139] However, I was concerned that they did not already have that information. You could say that they could have found it if they wanted it, but the fact that they did not have it highlights a problem. If they are in that situation, how many other organisations are in the same position? They had a torrent of issues that they wished to raise with me, and I will write to the Minister about them—I will not raise them all today. That highlighted a concern.

[140] **John Marek:** APS is going to have a new website. I think that your concerns are real; it is very difficult to find out what is going on, and that is really because we have had this split between the two bodies. One of the problems, Jane, is that, when you telephone 825111, they say, 'Welsh Assembly Government'. I then have to say, 'I don't want the Welsh Assembly Government; I want the Assembly—I want to speak to Mark Isherwood'. Of course, they put me through, but the answer that you are through to WAG when APS is on the same telephone number is not helpful to the public. What is the answer to that? We need to find our own number for the National Assembly and have it in all the information points, so that members of the public know the difference.

[141] Similarly, I must report what you have just said to the House Committee. BT has the contract for the new website, and it will need to feed into that website all the information that you just mentioned.

[142] **Gwenda Thomas:** We will now move on.

10.40 a.m.

**Seithfed Adroddiad Blynyddol y Cynulliad ar Gydraddoldeb ar gyfer 2005-06:  
Adroddiad Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
The Assembly's Seventh Equality Annual Report for 2005-06: Welsh Assembly  
Government Report**

[143] **Gwenda Thomas:** Members will recall that, in May, I wrote to all subject committee Chairs, inviting them to scrutinise—*[Interruption.]* As you are leaving, I thank you for your attendance.

[144] I wrote to all committee Chairs inviting them to scrutinise relevant sections of the Welsh Assembly Government's annual report on equality. You have before you paper 6, covering comments received from subject committee Chairs, which I thought would be helpful for this discussion.

[145] I welcome Sir Jon Shortridge, the Permanent Secretary, to the meeting. Minister, would you like to make introductory comments?

[146] **Jane Hutt:** I am pleased to introduce this. This is the seventh annual report on equality and is for 2005-06. I have very much taken on board the discussion in committee last year and want to highlight several recommendations that came from that. Those recommendations related to ministerial scrutiny, with regard to equality scrutiny from subject committees, and have really made a difference, as you have outlined, Chair, in terms of outputs being recorded as 'outcomes'. That is clearly inappropriate; we need the outcome focus that will make the difference. We also need the availability of Welsh statistics as a baseline for us to judge and monitor the outcomes.

[147] I will just say a few words about how we have taken on board committee discussions and views in preparing this report. It relates very much to our previous discussion about the disability equality scheme, particularly in terms of the role of Ministers and making Ministers, my colleagues, fully accountable for the actions that are undertaken in their portfolio areas. I hope that the report evidences that equality is firmly on the Welsh Assembly Government's strategic agenda across all portfolio areas. I stress that the Cabinet has taken on board, and has recently agreed, our mainstreaming equality strategy. That has to steer the Cabinet in all aspects of policy.

[148] As I said, subject committee scrutiny has been helpful and it means that equality is scrutinised in each policy area. As at present, the Minister is there as part of that committee discussion, but that will start to change with separation from May, and the scrutiny role is crucial in terms of taking this forward and in future plans. As you know, we have used the policy document, 'Wales: A Better Country', as a structure for our report and hopefully to assist the subject committees in trying to link the work of the departments in taking forward equality within the portfolio. So, I hope that it is clearer.

[149] I move straight to the issue of outcomes, because this is crucial. It is not easy to achieve and we have made every effort to improve upon last year. We are not there yet and we recognise that, but we are en route. I will give you some examples of what we have been doing. Officials have run workshops across departments on how they can give their contributions to make them more outcome-based and not just descriptions of actions, which they were a year or two years ago. We have been working, through training and awareness-raising, on that outcome focus with all departments. That is linked to this issue of availability of equality evidence in Wales, because that is the only way to truly measure outcomes.

[150] You will know that we now have the Office of Chief Social Research Officer; the chief social research officer, Angela Evans, is working with the Statistical Directorate to strengthen the evidence base in equalities in many ways. We have a snapshot audit for every portfolio area; that was one of the recommendations of the mainstreaming equality report. We also now have the development of research and evaluation plans. That will deliver the mainstreaming evidence base that we need to assess the outcomes. The snapshot has been important in terms of seeing across departments—they chose what they wanted the audit to identify—and then looking at the outcomes. So, the mainstreaming agenda, the report and the strategy are really starting to have an impact on how we produce the report.

[151] It is also about tools and systems to guide us, but we have to link it to our purpose, which is to deliver better public services in Wales. That is why we are trying to look through the outcomes in terms of delivery, and to link that to ‘Making the Connections’ and all of our legislative duties. We have the specific report on the race equality scheme as an annex to the overall annual report. That must be linked to our annual report and to the disability equality scheme that we have just discussed, in order to make it an exemplar.

[152] On the gender equality scheme, you know that I have asked for Wales to be given the power to make its own regulations, which will enable us to have our own specific gender equality duty. I am committed to this and have discussed it with Kate Bennett from the Equal Opportunities Commission. I wanted to bring it to your attention at this point. I also think that we must continue with our gender equality scheme at this stage, because we do not want to let anyone off the hook, let alone us. We have already had the discussion. That is a bit of an aside, but we will have our own statutory duty as we work through securing the transfer of function.

[153] I have already mentioned, under the disability equality scheme, our important project on British Sign Language interpreter services, which is one area where there has been positive and innovative development in Wales. Now, it is for the committee to scrutinise this report. Hopefully, it will see that we are moving in the right direction in terms of an outcome base. There is a lot of activity, as this report shows. The tabular format looking at the outcome focus will help you to monitor, judge and scrutinise whether the activity is leading to real change in promoting equality.

[154] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you, Minister. Sir Jon, would you like to make some comments?

[155] **Sir Jon Shortridge:** Thank you, Chair. My report, like the Minister’s, is for 2005-06. The main focus of my attention during that year was the mergers. At the end of the year, the number of staff in the Assembly Government went up by about 1,700, which is nearly a 40 per cent increase. As you can imagine, that has substantially changed the composition and diversity of the organisation. It also meant that, through the year, I reduced the level of external recruitment, because we knew that we would be assimilating this number of people, and I wanted to have as much flexibility as possible. External recruitment is the prime means that I use to improve the diversity of the workforce, so that was a limiting factor last year.

[156] On the other hand, we had our diversity survey, which we discussed the last time I was here, when concern was expressed about the response rate. In the end, we achieved a response rate of over 90 per cent, which I think compares very well with other public sector bodies. I now have much better data, but for the old Assembly Government, which is what this year’s report is about. That told me that, in terms of gender and black and minority ethnic backgrounds, we were pretty much in a steady state throughout the year, with no significant change. What we did discover from the self-reporting was that we had a significantly higher proportion of self-reported disabled people than we thought. That was a significant difference. Overall, my diversity statistics, certainly for gender and disability, compare well with those

for the wider civil service, but I still have some way to go to beat the targets that I have set for myself. On accommodation, we have been investing progressively in our estate to address disability access issues, and that will continue.

10.50 a.m.

[157] I would like to make a final comment on perceptions. As you will see from the report, the research that we undertook indicated that we are still perceived as an unattractive place to work by some minority groups, and that is an important and serious issue. We have work in hand to address those issues specifically, but we will not change perceptions overnight. On the other hand, I have also put into the report, in paragraph 11, some of our benchmarking achievements, which suggest that if you compare the reality with the perception, as an organisation, we are better in many respects than some of the minority groups perceive us to be.

[158] **Leanne Wood:** I will focus my comments on the committee's response to the report. To be frank, there is a lot of spin in some of the statements that are made here. On page 18, it is concerning to see that employment levels are falling, and we need to acknowledge that the problem is more acute in some areas of Wales than it is in others. I could give the local example of the 300 jobs that will be lost in the upper Rhondda Fawr, which is an economically declining area, but there are also job cuts in the civil service. The links between those cuts and the changes to incapacity benefit, which we have discussed many times in this committee, could mean that many vulnerable people will end up waiting a lot longer for benefits. It would be useful if we could have some kind of statement on that here, because these changes will have an impact not only on working-class people in Wales, but also on people in BME communities, women, and disabled people, who will be expected to apply for jobs when these welfare benefit reforms come in. If the jobs are not there, what will the implications be? Will their benefits be reduced? Will we see greater poverty in some areas of Wales?

[159] On page 21, regarding the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, we have seen plenty of examples of this Government allowing the closure of schools in Communities First wards, which has resulted in the loss of breakfast clubs and after-school clubs, and which has then had an impact on people and their ability to work. That is another attack on working-class people, which is relevant to this committee.

[160] I wonder, Chair, whether any work has been done to consider the potential impact of the smoking ban that is coming in. That is mentioned on page 29 in the health part of the report. My concern is the potential for more people to end up smoking at home, exposing more children to smoke and perhaps also leading to the development of more alcohol problems, through more drinking taking place in the home. Are there any plans to look at the potential impact of the smoking ban from an equal opportunities perspective, particularly in deprived areas?

[161] On page 30, with regard to mental health services, my opinion is that the Government's record on mental health is shameful. The national service framework has not been allocated resources and it has not been sufficiently implemented. The mental health lobby groups are calling for a mental health commissioner to safeguard the needs of mental health service users. Mental health in general is meant to be a priority for the Government, but there is no evidence that this is the case, and it would be useful if that were acknowledged.

[162] On developing strong and safe communities, we have the bizarre situation in which crime is falling but the fear of crime is increasing, and the fear of crime is more acute among those disadvantaged groups in our society. Government announcements, particularly on the



Respect agenda, do not help. One of the other things that we have talked about in this committee is the number of young people with learning disabilities who have ended up being issued with anti-social behaviour orders. It would be useful to have that mentioned in this report.

[163] There are other issues involving local authorities that will have an impact, such as the cuts in Cardiff, which will affect people with learning difficulties. There are also threats to women's aid provision and to children's services in the Vale of Glamorgan. I think that we will see more local authorities cutting services to the most vulnerable people in our communities, and so I would like to know what the Assembly can do to intervene to protect them. It strikes me that this committee should have a role in that.

[164] A final and general point—and I accept that this a non-devolved matter—is that we are presiding over an increase in Islamophobia in society. There has been an increase in the number of physical and verbal attacks on Muslims, and the situation is not helped by debates on the war on terror and asylum seekers, or by Jack Straw's very unhelpful recent interventions regarding women wearing veils. Muslims in Wales are vulnerable to attack and it would be useful if there was some kind of statement on this matter, so that the Government could tell us what it is doing to try to counteract the tabloid agenda.

[165] **Gwenda Thomas:** Before you came in, so it is important that I repeat this for you, I referred to the Welfare Reform Bill, which relates to your comment on benefits. Of course that is a non-devolved area, as are some of the other areas that you have mentioned this morning. A copy of the draft committee report has been circulated, and I said that it would be helpful if Members could provide comments on it to the clerk by the end of the week. On the benefits issue, it is important to provide those comments directly to the clerk, to have the opportunity to discuss the Bill. Would you like to comment on that, Minister?

[166] **Jane Hutt:** Yes. It is important for there to be an opportunity to scrutinise the impact of the whole range of Government objectives, policies and programmes. There are several such issues. I am looking at the committee's report, relating to the first point that you made, and I see that the Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee expressed contentment with the action taken to build equality into the departmental objectives, and many positive outcomes have been achieved to date. Clearly, that is not being complacent, Leanne, in terms of the challenges that we recognise that we face. On the issues that you have raised, I could list a whole lot of investments that we have made, not just in terms of addressing employment, but in supporting Communities First and the early years, with £45 million for Flying Start.

[167] You may have your own views on the smoking ban that is coming in next year, but we know that it is key that we look at offering smoking cessation services to pregnant smokers and smokers from groups where there may be an issue with smoking in the home, and that is highlighted in the report. In fact, I understand that there is some research on how we address this issue. Some of the most powerful advocates of smoking cessation and of supporting people through that, particularly pregnant women, are midwives and health visitors. The Royal College of Nursing has been at the forefront of supporting the Assembly Government. There is cross-party support from the whole Assembly for Wales for the pursuit, promotion and delivery of the smoking ban. These are policy issues, which I am sure will be discussed.

[168] On the links with mental health, we talked about mental health issues and the users of mental health services earlier. Lorraine asked about our disability equality strategy and whether we had engaged with users and the organisations that represent, campaign, and provide services for people with mental health needs in drawing up our disability equality scheme. Our adult mental health strategy is now making a big difference to delivery, not just

for the NHS, but also with regard to expectations of better delivery of mental health services by local authorities, as well as creating stronger communities. I mentioned Communities First, but £100 million has also been put into the crime-fighting fund.

[169] On local authorities and social services, how they manage their budgets is a pressing and current issue in some local authority areas, but, I must say, not in all. We would expect all our strategic schemes, such as 'Fulfilling the Promises' for people with learning difficulties, to be delivered by local authorities, using the investment that we put in, not only through the revenue support grant, but also through ring-fenced grants.

[170] To make a final point about Islamophobia, I am sure that you will have seen, given that we circulated it to all Assembly Members, the strong, clear and balanced statement that came from the interfaith forum last week. That was an important representation of views in Wales.

11.00 a.m.

[171] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you, Minister. Catherine and Jenny have indicated that they want to speak, and you are now indicating, Mark. I ask you to be brief and, if needs be, I will cut you off at 11.05 a.m., because we only have Meg Munn from 11.15 a.m. to 12.15 p.m. for the next item. I am sure that you will bear with me on that. Let us get you all in if we can, but briefly, please.

[172] **Catherine Thomas:** I will try to be as quick as possible, Chair. My questions are for Sir Jon. On the Assembly Government estate, how many of the buildings that we now have—because, as I understand it, the estate has grown in recent years—comply with Disability Discrimination Act regulations, and if any do not, what are your plans to ensure that they comply? I asked two questions earlier, which I hope that you will be able to address. I commend the summer placement scheme for disabled undergraduates and graduate students. I think that it is a good scheme. However, I was wondering whether consideration has been given to introducing a different scheme, which was not targeted just at graduates and undergraduates, in order to widen opportunities for individuals without academic qualifications. Also, looking at the dignity at work policy to tackle workplace bullying and harassment, how do you monitor the policy and its outcomes, and how do you respond to any outcomes?

[173] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you, Catherine. I will have to ask for written responses to these questions so that we can keep within the time.

[174] **Jenny Randerson:** This question is on point 6.18, the ethnic minority achievement grant, and point 6.19, the asylum seeker education grant. I am just using this as an example. This is an extremely good idea, but there are massive problems with the way in which it operates. If you talk to any local authority that receives significant amounts of this grant, you will know that the big problem with the way in which it operates is that it comes through so late in the year that they cannot plan properly. Also, it is based on retrospective figures—and I cannot think of a way around that—and the combined impact of late delivery every year and the retrospective nature of it makes it difficult for local authorities to use it as well as they should.

[175] On page 27, on the case study on free prescriptions, I would regard that as an anti-equality measure. I see this as a symptom of the Government's thinking that anything it has done with regard to health must be about equality. That measure does not promote equality at all; it gives free prescriptions to the better off.

[176] I also have a question for Sir Jon, on paragraph 8 of his report. You say that since

July 2005 a generic press advertisement alerts potential candidates from under-represented groups to a website address, but the key issue is where that generic press advertisement appears. There is no reference to where it appears, and I would like some information on that.

[177] **John Griffiths:** I will be brief, as I know that we do not have much time. I welcome what Jane said on faith issues, and about the fact that many people in Muslim communities now feel beleaguered and under great pressure. I would like Jane's assurance that we will continue to keep a weather eye on this, because things can change quickly and pressure builds quickly. We need really good communication with our ethnic minority communities.

[178] The smoking ban is a great measure for tackling health inequalities, and public health people have been calling for it for an awful long time to help people in working-class communities to have better health. We should welcome it. However, does Jane agree that we should monitor the effects of the ban upon smoking in the home and the effect of that on children's health? In taking the ban forward, something is proposed to measure that. Does Jane agree that that is a good idea?

[179] **Mark Isherwood:** The report, in part, reads rather like an election leaflet, which is regrettable. However, to focus on the issues, page 18 refers to the Welsh local labour force survey and unemployment levels. Is the first reference to unemployment levels—that the rate increased to 6 per cent in 2005—to unemployment among men only? It goes on to say that the female unemployment rate is lower. My recollection was that it was lower than that, although it has risen again over the last year. I am slightly confused by those figures.

[180] On access in Objective 1 areas and so forth, I was speaking yesterday at the launch of the new autism group to someone who had been attending courses in her community. However, with the end of European social funding, she has been told that the courses will come to an end. What transitional provision, if any, will be made for that?

[181] In terms of local authorities, among others, Wrexham County Borough Council, which has the largest overall population of people that have come here to work from other countries, I am very concerned that there does not seem to be any UK or Assembly Government funding, beyond a very basic level, to meet the level of demand on services to ensure that those people can live in dignity and that friction does not develop within the community.

[182] There has been reference to the youth justice system. We heard a report yesterday that, in England and Wales, the system is approaching crisis. We know, from previous evidence, that a large proportion of those young people have mental health problems or learning needs. Again, we need to address how we will deal with that.

[183] On bullying, and personal and social education, I was with a group on Monday that expressed concern that, too often, bullying strategies are bits of paper that do not actually inform the culture within schools. In terms of understanding other communities, in particular, what work on that can we push forward through the personal and social education programmes? With regard to support for additional learning needs, I had a letter only two weeks ago from a parent with a child who has an autistic spectrum disorder. Again, that parent was very concerned that mainstream provision in schools is not forthcoming from teachers, who, through no fault of their own, do not have adequate training in specialist needs.

[184] **Gwenda Thomas:** I do not want to force the committee to choose between you and Meg Munn, Mark, but we have to set up the video link during the break, therefore will you please bring your contribution to a close?

[185] **Mark Isherwood:** I have two final things. First, on strategies for older people, I have

been told, in relation to one local authority, that older people's fora might be replaced by a new body of 12 appointed persons. There is huge concern about that, and I wonder whether you could comment on it.

[186] Finally, on housing, I was speaking to representatives from the north Wales race equality network recently. They told me that the network is constantly being approached for legal advice from housing providers and others. They are happy to give it, but are not resourced to provide it. What provision can be put in place to meet that broader need across Wales?

[187] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you, Mark. All of that was important. I ask, Minister, that you provide Virginia with written responses to those questions from Members, so that they can then be circulated to all Members. I thank you all for your presence, and for responding to Members' concerns.

[188] Andrew White of the Welsh Language Board has been involved in a car crash, and that is why he is absent. We think that he is all right.

[189] We will now take a break.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 11.09 a.m. a 11.22 a.m.  
The meeting adjourned between 11.09 a.m. and 11.22 a.m.*

### **Y Diweddaraf am y Comisiwn Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol Update on the Commission for Equality and Human Rights**

[190] **Gwenda Thomas:** I thank Meg Munn for joining us over the video link. Welcome, Meg, to the Committee on Equality of Opportunity. The purpose of today's session is to receive an update on the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. I am very pleased that you are able to join us, Meg. The Minister, Jane Hutt, is also with us. Meg, would you like to make some introductory comments?

[191] **Ms Munn:** Certainly. I am sorry that I was not able to come to see you in person, but, as you are aware, we are getting towards the end of the—*[Inaudible.]*

[192] I will provide you with a very brief update on where we are, because I think that the paper that your Minister, Jane Hutt, has put before you is an excellent summary of the progress on this issue. The big thing for us about the new commission is that it is—*[Inaudible.]* There are new areas where we now getting discrimination law—age, sexual orientation, religion and belief—with the underpinning human rights issues. Importantly, I see it as being a body that will take us into a new area with regard to dealing with equality issues. As it should be, equality will be a concern for everyone. Just because you do not have a particular label, you may still be quite disadvantaged. The example that I like to use is that white, working-class boys in school do not do particularly well, but they would not necessarily automatically be seen as coming under the remit of any commission. So, the commission has the ability to really look at where there is inequality and disadvantage and to begin to address that across the board, and to give everyone the sense that equality is something that matters to them.

[193] It is also important in the sense that it will have a strong regional presence. As you are aware, it will have a Welsh office and you will have a designated commissioner for Wales. *[Inaudible.]*—as well, so those are very important issues.

[194] The most recent progress to date is that, early in September, we announced the

appointment of the chair, Trevor Phillips, and we hope to be in a position in the next few weeks to announce the appointment of commissioners. As the paper says, we can appoint up to 15 in total, but it may well be that we do not get the full number of commissioners from this first process. We are very concerned to ensure proper representation of people who have experienced discrimination in all the areas. We really do want an organisation that, in terms of its commissioners, has relevant experience of the areas of discrimination and experience in areas such as business, the public sector, trade unions, or the voluntary sector; that sort of thing. That is a quick overview of where we are at. I am happy to answer questions.

[195] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you for that. Minister, would you like to make any comments now?

[196] **Jane Hutt:** No. I think that this is a useful opportunity to have a discussion with Meg Munn. I welcome the fact that she has joined us. I met Trevor Phillips when he came here on 13 October, and I know that he also met several equality groups. So, already, he has demonstrated his commitment to Wales, and we had a very useful session with him on the equalities review not so long ago in this committee. It is now a matter of ensuring, as I said to him on that occasion—and I know that Meg Munn understands my views on this—that Welsh interests are clearly represented on the commission.

[197] **John Griffiths:** Bore da, Meg. How challenging is the timetable, in terms of getting everything up and running as you want it? Also, what practical steps can you mention as to how we can ensure that the new strands and the underpinning human rights aspects, from the very beginning of the new body, have parity and equality with the established strands? What can you tell us about the practical measures that will ensure that it is all integrated as fully as we would all like to see? Obviously, there are many challenges in that regard, and it is important to be as effective as possible, as early as possible in the life of the new body.

[198] I was interested in, and encouraged by, your remarks about social-class aspects, talking about white working-class boys, for example. It has always struck me and other committee members that there are gaps, sometimes, when we look at equality of opportunity in terms of those wider social-class aspects that limit people's life opportunities and their ability to fulfil their potential. Can you say a little more about how the new body might work to address those social justice and social-class aspects?

[199] **Ms Munn:** Thank you. First, the timetable is very tight; we want the commission to open its doors in October 2007—in a year's time. We have a very well developed and tightly defined organisational process; we have a transitional team working on that, and everything is on track. However, there is absolutely no doubt that we have to keep very much on top of that and keep to all the milestones to ensure that we deliver on that; that is obviously an important priority. We are, however, on track, and we will continue to monitor that very closely.

[200] On your second issue about how you ensure that the new strands are integrated and that there is no feeling that they are behind, as well as how you get that philosophy of everybody working together, there are some key aspects, one of which is the organisational design. A great deal of work is going on in relation to that, and it is one of the areas in which we have had a lot of debate. The Government took the view, as long ago as the White Paper in 2004, that we wanted an integrated approach, and not a federated structure. There are some who still disagree with us on that, but it is very clear that that is the design that we want: this integrated structure.

11.30 a.m.

[201] So, we have to try to deliver that within the organisational design of the commission while still recognising that there need to be people with specific abilities and that actions need

to be taken in different areas. As I say, it is not about doing equality in the abstract; it is about having to take different steps in relation to disability, race, sexual orientation and so on. So, you will need expertise in those areas and organisational design will be enormously important in that.

[202] The second aspect that will be enormously important is stakeholder involvement. I know that Trevor Phillips has been giving a great deal of thought to how you ensure that all the groups that have an interest in this can impact upon the commission's development and can, from an early stage, have confidence that the commission is going to deliver for them. My experience of working on this area for the best part of 18 months now is that stakeholders' confidence is crucial to getting us to the point where we have a commission that people really believe will deliver on equality.

[203] On the social-class aspects of this and how you deal with issues where you would not necessarily tick a box and say that somebody is black, therefore they are disadvantaged, or whatever, we know that class interacts with that in a major way. An important tool within what is required is the three-yearly state-of-the-nation report, which is an opportunity for the commission to take an in-depth look at the issues of inequality that exist in our countries and to ensure that there is a programme of work to address that. One of the real difficulties will be expectations around the new body; it will not be able to deal with everything at once. So, having a mechanism and a means by which the analysis can be transparent and shared and commented on is enormously important.

[204] The following impacts upon all the questions in terms of how I need to respond to them. We are now at the stage where my job is more hands-off than it was, because we have the chair, and will shortly have the commissioners, in place. My job is to ensure that the new body delivers what Parliament expected when we passed the Equality Act 2006. Nevertheless, this is a non-departmental public body with an arm's-length relationship. It is independent of Government and needs to be in a position where it can comment on Government and not be closely associated with what Government is doing. It is not an arm of Government. So, while I have a role in ensuring several of these aspects, a lot of these issues will also then be down to the commission and to how the stakeholder groups hold the commission responsible, along with the Government with its continuous responsibility. I hope that that clarifies where we are and why I may not be able to say for definite what is going to happen on various issues.

[205] **Helen Mary Jones:** I have three specific points. There has been concern on this committee about the balance in the new commission between promoting equality for traditionally excluded groups and the human rights agenda. There are specific examples where those could be perceived to be conflicting, namely that somebody might have a human right not to employ somebody from a group that they do not want to employ somebody from. Given your previous comment that you are now more hands-off, how would you see the new commission balancing those two potentially enormous areas of work? Our concern has been that the human rights stuff might be so big that it overwhelms some of the promotion of equality.

[206] The second point, which I am sure you will have dealt with with our Minister, is on how you will ensure that the commission is able to work bilingually in Wales from the outset. There has been some difficulty in persuading other commissions that they need to do that, and I say that as a former director of the Equal Opportunities Commission in Wales whose job it was to try to persuade our central office that it had to comply with the Welsh Language Act 1993. We would all be looking to see that the new commission gets it right from the beginning.

[207] Finally, a big area is the whole question of the advice deficit. We understand that the intention is that the new commission will not give as much advice to individuals as the old

commissions did. I have a profound concern about that and this committee has previously expressed concern. Can you say what you will be doing to ensure that that advice deficit is addressed? If the new commission will not be dealing with it, will other bodies, such as citizens advice bureaux, be sufficiently resourced and upskilled to be able to deal with quite complex inquiries from individuals?

[208] **Ms Munn:** In relation to the first issue of promoting equality and the human rights agenda, I do not necessarily see them as being in conflict. We have the opportunity, with the underpinning nature of this, to understand how equality and human rights interact. They are often the same thing rather than different things. If you are not being treated equally, then that can impact on your human rights. In relation to areas where there are conflicting issues around this, we are currently working on the sexual orientation regulations in terms of goods, facilities and services. There is a big issue there about matters relating to people's religious freedom. How those interact has to be set out in legislation.

[209] The human rights aspect of the new commission has been the subject of a great deal of debate. It has not come to a conclusion, nor would it be likely to, as I said earlier, given that it is for the commission to determine how it does that. So, there have been different suggestions on whether all of the commission's areas of work should have what I think were referred to as embedded human rights experts, or whether there should be a separate part dealing with human rights. My view is that you have to integrate the thinking around that. The commission could help us with taking forward that debate and having a clearer view about that. So, I certainly think that your input into the thinking on that would be welcome.

[210] On the issue of bilingualism, I support what is said in the paper from your Minister, namely that there is a wider equality context here and that there has to be implementation in terms of the Welsh language scheme. As far as I am concerned, there is no question about that. The CEHR will need to comply with that. That is a positive step that was raised, I am sure, with Trevor Philips during his visit. It is certainly something that needs to be taken forward, because we need a commission that recognises all of the equality issues and all of the diversity issues, which should be a strength rather than anything else.

[211] The issue of the advice deficit is enormously important. I was interested to hear you say that CEHR will not give as much advice as the old commissions did. I do not think that that has been officially said or recorded, because the commissions that exist at the moment have taken different views over different periods of time. They have focused upon taking forward what they call strategic cases: issues with impacts for wider groups of people in terms of establishing law. I would expect to see the new commission doing that. Having said that, there is no doubt that the commission needs to look very clearly at the fact that our legislation will cover a range of areas. Obviously, we are working towards a single Equality Act within the lifetime of this Parliament to modernise and simplify legislation. It becomes meaningless if there is no means by which people can enforce their rights. So, we expect the commission to look carefully at how it will work with organisations that deliver services on the ground in localities. This is one of the aspects of the new commission, to which I have already referred, which I see as enormously important. It is required to be present in the regions and to be more available than the existing commissions have been able to be, given their size.

11.40 a.m.

[212] Therefore, it is a key issue to look at the partnership arrangements that they would want in terms of advice-giving and support in localities, and the steering group that has existed until now has given much thought to the matter. All the work that has been done on that is available for the new commission to take forward.

[213] It would be wrong to say that the commission will be able to do everything; it will

not. There will be huge expectations of it, but, for me, I am clear that that is an important aspect of its work, and so I will want to see how it proposes to take that forward in localities.

[214] **Lorraine Barrett:** Before I ask my question, there is no need for you to apologise for not being able to be here in person, Meg, although you have been to the Assembly previously. We are quite proud of using these video links, as they save on the environment and on costs. We had a link-up with an official in Brussels last week during one of our committee meetings, which was a first for us. So, you are very welcome on the video link as well as in person.

[215] Can you give us any more information on when the Wales commissioner will be appointed? With regard to the committee, I know that you have already said that you will be more hands-off now, but will it then be up to the commissioner to organise the appointment of the committee, and do you have any idea how big that committee might be? Are you keen to ensure that the committee will reflect the wider society in Wales, covering at least all the equality strands, but also the geographical spread?

[216] **Ms Munn:** We are keen to appoint the Wales commissioner as quickly as possible, and we have always said as much. We will make the first round, and it is likely that we will need to advertise to get the full balance of that, but we are really confident that we should be able to appoint a commissioner for Wales as part of this first process. Ultimately, it is up to the Secretary of State to make that decision, but I am reasonably confident that we will fill the post. So, hopefully, you will know who that person is, and he or she will be in place within a short time. I say 'a short time' because I cannot give you the exact timetable for that, but I am talking about weeks rather than months. We are hopeful about that, and we certainly want to get moving, because of the timetable issues that I spoke about earlier.

[217] On the appointment of the committee, these are issues for the new commission, and so it is not really for me to be specific on how it wants to take that forward. However, on the responsibilities that I described before, it is for me to ensure that the new commission delivers what Parliament expected, and I would certainly want to see proper representation on that committee. Again, I am always a bit wary of using the term 'representation', because we have gone for a model that is not about saying that we want representatives of particular communities, but rather that we want experience that covers all interested parties. However, we really want people to be able to think outside the traditional boxes, as it were. So, instead of saying, 'Okay, my issue is raised', they will say, 'Equality, going across strands, and multiple identities are important', because this is about trying to deliver equality for everybody. So, within that general framework of the philosophical vision for the commission, if it is to command the confidence of the people of Wales, it will need to have a wide representation.

[218] **Mark Isherwood:** Sitting here, it is quite refreshing to hear you remind us of the advantages of having organisations that are at arm's length from the Government, sometimes, allowing you to comment on Government and represent your own client groups first.

[219] You mentioned the dichotomy, or debate, in integration and federation, but should the issue not be adding value to the process and seeing whether that actually improves the representation of the client groups in all the strands—seven strands, in our case? We have seen a trend in all sorts of areas. We are seeing a move towards 'consumerwatch', with Postwatch and Energywatch and so on, being merged with central organisations. We saw the police mergers suspended and the same debates over integration versus federation or co-operation. What assurance can you give us that this is not really driven by financial pressures, and that it will deliver synergy and better outcomes?

[220] You referred to organisation design and stakeholder involvement, but what assurance can you give us that the stakeholders in each area will be represented? There is clearly a lot of



commonality between them in terms of equal rights, the law and public awareness, but there are also a lot of specialisms in each area, which we cannot afford to lose through a process of integration. Sitting around the table here, you will see representatives of four of the strands. They work very well together and they have a lot of common ground, but they each also bring something unique to our discussions here. So, rather than general aspirations, what particular systems and structures are you considering to ensure that each of these strands and the others will be represented on the basis of parity?

[221] **Ms Munn:** This issue about integration as opposed to federation goes back to the philosophical underpinning, which is precisely the issue that you have raised about how this adds value to what we deliver in equality. I see it adding value because there are commonalities, although there are also differences, and coming together in one body will enable the issues around equality to have a higher profile. I recently visited the south-west, where the organisations have been brought together into one body called Equality South West, whose strap-line is 'Stronger together'. By doing that, those organisations have been able to demonstrate that some of the areas that get less attention, such as transgender issues, get the support of other people who are interested in equality, which they would not otherwise get because their numbers are relatively small. So, that is the issue.

[222] In terms of organisational development and stakeholder involvement, I am not ducking this, but I cannot tell you what the commission will ultimately decide as to how it approaches that, because it is for it to decide those particular structures and systems. I will be looking to see that it has a system that has the individual expertise and specialities, precisely for the reasons that you have raised, namely that you need expertise in relation to disability, race and so on, because people experience discrimination in different ways. However, we also need to get over the problem that we have at present. For example, the Equal Opportunities Commission has been working closely with the CRE on work about black and minority ethnic women in the workplace. Initially, however, there could always be the situation where you ask, 'Is this issue for the Equal Opportunities Commission or for the Commission for Racial Equality?', and then, once you start looking at the characteristics of women and the fact that they get treated differently, you might also end up saying, 'There is also a faith issue there, because Muslim women are being discriminated against if they wear a headscarf', or whatever. So, those issues will be dealt with far more easily because all the relevant people will be in one place.

[223] I am aware that I have not dealt with the issue of financial pressures, and that is not down to the usual Government reluctance to enter into those issues; it is just that I was moving through. This commission, collectively, has more money going into it than the existing three commissions. It has to deal with a greater range of issues but, because of that, it can have a stronger regional presence throughout England, Scotland and Wales than the existing commissions have been able to have. I see that as a positive for it.

[224] **Ms Bennett:** I am Kate Bennett, director of the Equal Opportunities Commission in Wales and I want to refer back to your earlier comments about the need to see through the Government's intentions when the Act was passed. Along with colleagues here from the other equality commissions and many equality organisations, we fed into the Green Paper and the White Paper, and we were pleased with how the Act finally turned out in relation to Wales, particularly in relation to the powers that were delegated to the commissioner and the Wales committee.

11.50 a.m.

[225] We were also pleased with the wording in the Act that talked about sufficient resources to carry forward the work of the commission in Wales, as well as the promise that there would be an ability for the commission in Wales to set priorities relevant to the

circumstances of Wales, particularly with regard to the legal and policy differences that arise from the Assembly's legal responsibility to promote equality across the public sector. All of that was pleasing.

[226] With a gap of less than a year between the first meeting of the board and the opening of the doors, there are some things that we are particularly concerned about, and we hope that they will not slip in the meantime. There are about three or four things, which I will just mention.

[227] We have talked about the Wales committee, and we see that as being incredibly important. We have taken the view that it would be helpful if the members of the Wales committee were appointed using a formalised process, with some kind of independent assessment and some input from Wales, which may or may not be from the Assembly, rather than its simply being the decision of board members and of commissioners. We have also taken the view, as has the Assembly, that public appointments of this nature should be paid positions because, if you do not pay people, you will exclude an awfully large number of people who may otherwise wish to participate. So, those are my comments on the process and the timetable for the Wales committee.

[228] Secondly, I know that the early work on the budget and the design of the organisation has been set aside for the moment, but that work did not—in the view of the equality organisations in Wales, including the commissioners and others—give adequate responsibility for the budget to be able to meet the requirement of being relevant to the needs of Wales, and nor did it give confidence that we would have access to resources without being involved in a continual battle when trying to get the necessary resources to address specific issues that might be important in Wales, which, I am sorry to say, has been the experience of the three commissions that are here. For example, there might be an issue about looking at homophobia in rural areas, which might be far more significant in a nation like Wales than it is across the whole of GB. Similarly, the early models of organisational design did not give the autonomy that we had expected on the management of staff. It suggested that staff based in the Wales office would be managed from elsewhere and, again, that raised doubts about the ability to deliver a devolved agenda for Wales.

[229] Finally, relating to the question that Helen Mary raised on the advice desert, for a long time, the Equal Opportunities Commission has been able to take only strategic cases and has encouraged other organisations to take what we consider to be the cases that do not raise legal precedents, but which nevertheless can be very distressing to individuals. However, the situation in Wales is that there are very few organisations that we can hand those cases on to. We have worked hard with citizens advice bureaux and trade unions, and have persuaded two universities to sponsor courses to train advisers, but there is not sufficient capacity for us to hand cases over. One thing that we are particularly keen on—and I would be interested in your comments on this—is having a legal department with greater clout than any of the commissions have at the moment. That department would have two roles: to ensure advice to individuals and support for ongoing cases, and to support the work of advising the Assembly in relation to its unique duty to promote equality of opportunity for all people in its functions and policy-making, and to assist in the scrutiny of that work.

[230] **Ms Munn:** There were a lot of questions there and, unfortunately, the answer to a lot of them is that they are decisions for the commission and the board. However, I will just run through them and be clear about where I have particular expectations in relation to that. On the formalised process and what should happen on that, there needs to be a transparent process that is clear to everyone. However, what that process will be, whether appointments will be paid, and what the timetable will be, are matters for the new board. I am sure that it will be looking to the Welsh commissioner to take a view on that and to have an input.

[231] On the subject of access to adequate resources for Wales, one of the aspects of the new commission that is different from the existing commissions is that I expect, and the Government expects, it to have a presence in all the regions of England as well as in Wales and Scotland. Linked to your final point about advice deserts and how facilities are provided on the ground—and I am well aware of the situation in Wales—this will be a question that the commission needs to look at for all regions, as well as for Scotland and Wales. In that sense, it is an issue that you will not be fighting in just Wales and Scotland. I hope that you will not be fighting at all; I hope that you will be coming to a co-operative resolution. It is about how the facilities are provided on the ground. The Government's expectation is that it will have a presence in all regions, but whether that is done by having several staff based in each or through partnership working with other local and regional organisations is a matter that the commission and the board will have to decide. However, that is clearly Government's expectation.

[232] On organisational development, I was very aware that the difficulty with all of this, when we set in place the work to be done, is that, ultimately, organisational design is enormously important and something that the commission would have strong views on. Therefore, the early work was to set out what the realistic options were and where the commission might be looking to with regard to the arrangements for the balance of issues that we spoke about earlier—generalist and specialist, such as legal advice. We tried to grapple with some of those big issues. Whether there needs to be autonomy within regions, within Wales or within Scotland on management and how the management structures work is an issue that must be dealt with as the organisational development work progresses. I cannot tell you what the structure will be, because that level of detail is for the commission to determine. We are talking about the means to deliver what Government expects, and I think that that is a matter for the commission.

[233] **Gwenda Thomas:** I see that there are no more comments from Members. Minister, do you wish to say something at this point?

[234] **Jane Hutt:** I thank Meg Munn for being so open and clear in responding to the questions. I wish to respond to Mark to say that we have a very good track record on understanding and respecting arm's-length commissioners, such as the children's commissioner. We know that that must be the way forward. I know that Meg has been very impressed by our preparations, in terms of the existing commissions, and the way that they have worked together, as in the south west, to form a Wales equality reference group. That started many years ago with a Green Paper and then a White Paper. It scrutinises us and challenges Government here and in Westminster as and when appropriate to answer questions.

[235] We can contribute, not only in Wales but at GB level, for example with our multi-strand modelling project. I met Meg Munn last year when promoting the opportunity for Wales in taking that project forward, and I was delighted that we got the funding for it. Alison Parkin has been seconded from Stonewall Cymru to undertake that work, which will be important for us, in understanding the multi-strand model, and for the rest of GB. We also have our transition team, and Voirrey Manson, working hard to represent our interests. So, there are safeguards, and preparation.

12.00 p.m.

[236] I want to assure committee members that I have talked to Trevor Phillips about all the points raised today when I met him, particularly in relation to the Wales committee and its role and independence and the opportunity afforded by that committee to ensure that we help to reach out and get people from across the whole of Wales to apply to sit on that committee. I also talked about the importance of access, as well as the Welsh language scheme. We want

a presence in north Wales, and we need to ensure that those messages are passed on. I wanted to assure the committee of that.

[237] On advice giving, I recently met the head of Citizens Advice in Wales, and I know that work is also being undertaken with the trade unions and the universities, so we are playing our part in partnership. Today's meeting has provided a useful opportunity to share that.

[238] **Gwenda Thomas:** I will take one last question from Jenny.

[239] **Jenny Randerson:** My question relates to our Minister's paper and links with the UK Government Minister's point on arm's-length operation and the importance of the perception of independence and the reality of independence. Jane said that she had had discussions about the north Wales office being co-located with Government in the buildings in Llandudno Junction. Is there not a danger that people seeking advice from the commission will not perceive it as being independent, but as yet another bit of Government? When you talk to ordinary people who are not well-versed in the ways of Government, commissions and institutions and so on, where they are located is terribly important to their perception of them. I understand that there could be logistical advantages and that you might save some money by co-locating, but, if it is co-located with Government and in the same building, that will have a symbolic importance.

[240] **Jane Hutt:** That is a valid point. On the new building in Llandudno Junction, we may have jumped a few hurdles by suggesting that there could be a co-location, but there is an opportunity there, and we know that you can have separate entrances and access to a building of that kind. I hope that the people of north Wales will see it as a building for them with regard to the Assembly. However, I take your point and I am sure that the Wales committee and the commissioner will bear that in mind, and will consult existing commissions, commissioners and their staff on what they feel the people of Wales would find most appropriate, because there are advantages to this as long as it is recognised that there is an arm's-length relationship.

[241] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you, Minister. Meg, would you like to have the last word?

[242] **Ms Munn:** It is always nice to have the last word. On this issue, we must also recognise that for many people these days, their access to organisations is not through a building and while I do not, in any way, underestimate the importance of the point that was just raised, which needs to be considered, many people will access this information in other ways, through websites, or through other organisations that provide advice. So, this has to be a balanced discussion, because sometimes there are advantages in co-location. It may be less of an issue in Wales, but it will certainly arise in some of our regions, where the commission's staff might be small, because much more of the regional advice-giving may be done through partner organisations. So, people may not necessarily access the organisation by walking into a building with a name on it. I think that there are other ways in which that would be dealt with.

[243] The final point to make on this is that the commission will establish its independence through the stances it takes, the issues it takes up and how it works. Also, while I do not wish this to come about quickly, in any way, I have no doubt that at some point the commission will have occasion to criticise the Government. At that point its independence will be firmly established in the minds of the public in Wales and in the rest of the United Kingdom.

[244] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you for joining us, and I hope that we can invite you again in the future.

[245] **Ms Munn:** I would very much like that.

[246] **Gwenda Thomas:** I also thank the committee and the Minister, who is supported by Helen Thomas. Thank you again for those comprehensive answers.

**Cynnig Trefniadol  
Procedural Motion**

[247] **Gwenda Thomas:** I want to go into private session for the last item, which is on the policy review of service revision for disabled young people. I therefore propose that

*the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 8.24 (vi).*

[248] The reason for my proposing that we do this in private is to protect the content of the report and to recognise the position of the young people; I would like the report to be protected until it is launched in their presence.

[249] **Helen Mary Jones:** I would like to register that I am generally not content for committees to meet in private but, in this case, I will not make an objection.

[250] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.  
Motion carried.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 12.07 p.m.  
The public part of the meeting ended at 12.07 p.m.*