



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

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[The Children, Young People and Education
Committee](#)

24/11/2016

[Agenda'r Cyfarfod](#)

[Meeting Agenda](#)

[Trawsgrifiadau'r Pwyllgor](#)

[Committee Transcripts](#)

Cynnwys Contents

- 4 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau
Introductions, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest
- 4 Gweithredu ‘Dyfodol Llwyddiannus: Adolygiad Annibynnol o’r
Cwricwlwm a Threfniadau Asesu yng Nghymru’—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 3
The Implementation of the Review ‘Successful Futures: Independent
Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales’—
Evidence Session 3
- 22 Gweithredu ‘Dyfodol Llwyddiannus: Adolygiad Annibynnol o’r
Cwricwlwm a Threfniadau Asesu yng Nghymru’—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 4
The Implementation of the Review ‘Successful Futures: Independent
Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales’—
Evidence Session 4
- 40 Ymchwiliad i Wasanaethau Eirioli Statudol: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 2
Inquiry into Statutory Advocacy Provision: Evidence Session 2
- 54 Papurau i’w Nodi
Papers to Note
- 55 Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o
Weddill y Cyfarfod
Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
from the Remainder of the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn
ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o’r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in
the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation
is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Mohammad Asghar Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Hefin David Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
John Griffiths Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Llyr Gruffydd Bywgraffiad Biography	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Darren Millar Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Julie Morgan Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Lynne Neagle Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Hywel Dafydd	Rheolwr Polisi a Materion Cyhoeddus, Comisiynydd Plant Cymru Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Children's Commissioner for Wales
Alan Edwards	Pennaeth Addysgu a Dysgu, Ein Rhianbarth ar Waith Head of Teaching and Learning, Education through Regional Working
Mair Herbert	Ysgol Bryn Elian, Conwy
Yr Athro/Professor Sally Holland	Comisiynydd Plant Cymru The Children's Commissioner for Wales
Rhys Howard Hughes	Cyfarwyddwr Cynorthwyol (Cefnogaeth a Broceru), GwE Assistant Director (Support and Brokerage), GwE
Huw Jones	Prifathro, Ysgol Gynradd Albert, Penarth Headteacher, Albert Primary School, Penarth
Barbara Lund	Swyddog Maes, ASCL Cymru Field Officer, ASCL Cymru
Dr Kevin Palmer	Cyfarwyddwr Cynorthwyol, Broceriaeth, Ymyrraeth a Chefnogaeth, Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg i Dde

	Ddwyrain Cymru Assistant Director, Brokerage, Intervention and Support, Education Achievement Service for South East Wales
Steven Richards– Downes	Uwch Ymgynghorydd, Consortiwm Canolbarth y De Gwasanaeth Addysg ar y Cyd Senior Strategic Adviser, Central South Consortium Joint Education Service
Rachel Thomas	Swyddog Polisi, Comisiynydd Plant Cymru Policy Adviser, Children’s Commissioner for Wales
Rob Williams	Cyfarwyddwr Polisi, NAHT Cymru Policy Director, NAHT Cymru

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

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Michael Dauncey	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Marc Wyn Jones	Clerc Clerk
Gareth Rogers	Ail Glerc Second Clerk
Sian Thomas	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 10:38.
The meeting began at 10:38.*

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

[1] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, can I welcome everyone to the public session of the Children, Young People and Education Committee? We have no apologies for absence. Are there any declarations of interest? No. Okay.

**Gweithredu ‘Dyfodol Llwyddiannus: Adolygiad Annibynnol o’r
Cwricwlwm a Threfniadau Asesu yng Nghymru’—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 3
The Implementation of the Review ‘Successful Futures: Independent
Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales’—
Evidence Session 3**

[2] **Lynne Neagle:** We will move on, then, to item 3, which is a further evidence session on ‘Successful Futures’. I’m really pleased to welcome Barbara Lund from the Association of School and College Leaders Cymru, Mair Herbert from Ysgol Bryn Eliau in Conwy, Rob Williams, policy director, National Association of Head Teachers Cymru, and Huw Jones from Albert Primary School, Penarth. Thank you very much for coming; we do appreciate it.

[3] If you’re happy, we’ll go straight into questions. Can I just start by asking the trade unions for your general observations on how successfully this new curriculum agenda has been taken forward in Wales?

[4] **Mr Williams:** Shall I start? In terms of the recommendations that came out of the review, our members were very much involved in the evidence gathering through the Great Debate, and when the recommendations came out we welcomed them very, very warmly indeed. They reflected lots of the conversations we had, and we were quite excited by the high-level vision that was in it.

[5] I guess where we are now, our concerns would be the way in which that’s now being articulated to the wider workforce; the differential between those who are in pioneer schools and those who are not in pioneer schools, and how involved and connected all those people feel; and just the fact that we’re drifting towards, certainly, the first date, which was 2018, and that’s not very far away in a school’s timetable, and yet that sort of clarity seems to be missing somewhat for many of the workforce and for school leaders particularly.

[6] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Barbara.

[7] **Ms Lund:** Well, the majority of our school members clearly welcomed the opportunities that the innovation in relation to ‘Successful Futures’ offered, and particularly within the pioneer school network, they’ve taken up those opportunities, they’ve invested a lot of time and a lot of resources into

that. But, as we move forward, I'd like to echo some of the concerns, really, that Rob has—rather than repeat everything—. It's really about the coherence of strategy, as we move forward. We don't want to lose the innovation, but it does now need to come together as a coherent strategy, with a clear timeline—with a clear timeline, milestones, particularly around the role of assessment, as we move forward, because at the moment, particularly at key stage 4 and stage 5, we have very robust accountability measures, which necessarily don't lend themselves to the wider curriculum, but which we believe, around the four moral purposes that are fundamental to Donaldson—and we do very passionately believe in those four moral purposes about how we're going to take that forward.

[8] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you very much. Julie.

[9] **Julie Morgan:** Do you feel that, when the process started, it was clear enough what the role of the pioneer schools was going to be?

[10] **Ms Lund:** Would you like me to answer that, or can I give that to Mair?

[11] **Julie Morgan:** Yes.

[12] **Ms Herbert:** I think it's taken a while for things to be clear, in terms of strategic direction and practical workings out of that. I think the fact that the regions have been able to direct their own schools—choose their own schools, and have their own selection criteria and to direct their workings quite independently—has, on the one hand, been a very graceful, I think, measure for us, in the sense that it shows trust in the profession and trust in the regions. However, it can—and possibly is—lead to some type of conflict in terms of what is being developed and how it's being developed and also potentially to some duplication. So, I think there is a moment here that we do need to take to take stock, really, of what is going on across the different regions, what the different schools in the pioneer network have been tasked to do. We need some type of pulling together now and some overview.

[13] **Julie Morgan:** Right, so you say that they are developing, possibly, in different ways in different areas.

[14] **Ms Herbert:** Potentially, I think—and again, I'm saying 'possibly' and 'potentially' because I think we need a communication strategy now that pulls together what has happened so far in the pioneer networks and what is presently being worked on and the directions forward. Another concern that

comes from that is that we are very proud to be a digital competency pioneer school, we're also a new deal, or professional standards, now, pioneer school. We don't know what the curriculum schools are doing, we don't know what's happening in terms of assessment, which is a major concern of mine personally, and I think we need at this point in time to be able to stop, pull together and rationalise. We need to produce, nationally, some type of documentation, I believe, to show people the progress so far and the practical steps that are to be taken. There's so much available to us about the vision that we buy into wholesale. We're getting close to 2018 now, and we need the practical outturnings to be more known.

[15] **Lynne Neagle:** Julie, shall we just see if Huw has got any comments as well?

[16] **Julie Morgan:** Yes.

[17] **Mr Jones:** Yes, I'm actually on the assessment pioneer aspect, and there's very much an assessment conundrum, in that, until we clarify the actual purpose and the role of assessment—and colleagues here alluded to key stage 4 and key stage 5—. So, we need to be very clear on what the assessment is going to be. What assessment model are we looking at? I raised the question with Professor Donaldson in January that if we are developing a curriculum that is aligned to the current assessment structures at age 16 and 18, then at least we know where we're going. But we're not entirely sure if that is what we're actually doing.

10:45

[18] The second thing is: as we know, assessment is used for making judgments on how good schools are. So, as a body that's working on that at the moment, we need clarification on whether that is going to be removed, so that we can actually develop what, really, assessment is all about. We want our children to be assessment-capable learners so they can themselves reflect on how to improve on their own learning. Assessment is actually very simple: it is children looking at their own work, the practitioners looking at the child's work, and the practitioner adapting their instruction to take the child forward. What we have done is we've created multi layers of assessment, which, in the end, has made schools being judged on it. So, we need clarification before we move forward. Personally—and this is my own view; this is not the committee's view—we need to know: are we going to remove those barriers that assessment is used as a tool for judging schools?

If it's not, then at least we know where we're going. But at the moment, there's a lot of uncertainty, and I think that's the fundamental problem: we're not sure and we're not constructively aligned. We're just not constructively aligned at the moment. That is my concern.

[19] **Lynne Neagle:** Julie.

[20] **Julie Morgan:** So, in terms of where you get this clarification from, would you see that this is something that should be coming from the Welsh Government?

[21] **Mr Jones:** Yes, I do. Fundamentally, we've been asking questions. We met at Cathays Park on Tuesday, asking what possibly could be done to make it easier for pioneer schools to go forward. We need clarification. We need to know: what is it that we're really aiming for? I applaud the four core purposes. There's been discussion—do we assess against that or do we assess against the areas of learning? So, unless we're very clear that we are developing a model where, ultimately, we assess children at 16, and then those who are fortunate at 18, fine. Let us have that message. Then we can develop a curriculum appropriately. But at the moment there is no clear message.

[22] **Julie Morgan:** And in terms of communication, you have been able to communicate these concerns to the Welsh Government.

[23] **Mr Jones:** Yes. Recently we've met. It's very difficult because when we—obviously, the Chatham House rules on Tuesday—. Basically, we've been told that then it will have to go to another body, then another body. What we need—time is running out. If we are really realistically going to meet that timetable, then we need to know, and we need to know quite quickly, because otherwise we're going to end up creating a model that I don't think will work, because it will be rushed. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the profession to shape something that I hope this country can be very proud of. But at the moment, we're not constructively aligned.

[24] **Julie Morgan:** Right. Any other comments on that?

[25] **Mr Williams:** It's kind of more fundamental than that in some respects. I think there is a sense that the current ways of holding schools to account, because of the way in which they use outcome-only assessment measures, are counter-productive, if you like. They would potentially present an

obstacle to drifting towards the way in which we think we should be working. If you look at the recommendations specifically about assessment and its core purpose being a formative one, as Huw's explained, that's not reflected in the way that schools are currently being measured. The picture I often use is that it's a little bit like a football game where you're 2-0 up and then, halfway through, they say, 'We're going to measure you on number of throw-ins'. You will start kicking the ball out of play. So, how you're measured is absolutely key for schools and it steers behaviour, if you like, at school level. At the moment, because we're looking at the curriculum, if you like, sometimes a little bit in isolation, and we're not looking at accountability and those other things that affect it, it's not going to have the benefits and the gains as quickly as we might, because we're being held back by other things.

[26] **Ms Lund:** Shall I just explain that a little bit further, really? It's in relation to what were called the new deal schools that were developing the pedagogy, and the formative assessment development sits within there, yet the areas of learning and the innovative approaches that could be developed within those lines of learning, and the wider skills, are being developed in isolation from pedagogy, or have been currently, within each of the four consortia. So that's why it all needs to come together now, very, very clearly. Again, we would concur completely with the views that have been shared around assessment, without repeating them all again. You've got that, and then you've got Estyn as well, with a very, very clear data set. Schools will always be driven by those behaviours. We do believe that this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for Wales to get it right for their learners. Unless we address those issues now, things aren't going to change.

[27] **Lynne Neagle:** Hefin then Llyr on this.

[28] **Hefin David:** Very quickly, just on something you said, Barbara. You said that the pedagogy is in isolation in each of the four consortia. Does that mean that the four consortia have their own individual cultures that are not helping the development of a Wales-wide framework? Is that what you're getting at?

[29] **Ms Lund:** Well, all the work's being developed within each consortium, yes. So, the consortia need to come together.

[30] **Hefin David:** Right.

[31] **Mr Jones:** I'd like to interject there. There is work going on within the

consortia that they are liaising on. I think they came on board slightly later than when we came together, but there is definitely work there going on within the consortia as well. Again, going back to the words I'm using, nothing is constructively aligned, from the Welsh Government all the way down to schools, and it all needs to be aligned.

[32] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr.

[33] **Llyr Gruffydd:** But was there not a plan? I mean, there are different strands in terms of the timetabling. Was this not articulated in terms of when all this would come together, and how and by whom?

[34] **Ms Herbert:** I think this is—as I was saying earlier—something that needs to be done now. Certainly, as a school involved in two of the pioneer networks from the early stages, there was no sense of the milestones by which we would be measured. We all have school improvement plans, and they're very robust documents by which we measure ourselves and evaluate ourselves constantly. I think, rather than rushing, as we feel we're doing at the moment, in a way that is potentially going to result in some conflict and duplication, there has got to be a sense of stopping now to measure our progress and to see what it looks like. Because I do fear that we are planning in pockets. We're planning in four pockets, and we're planning in very many more pockets within the schools and in the clusters. We have no firm view yet of the accountability to the new curriculum and the assessment outcomes. You need to know what it looks like at the end of the journey in order to plan for it. You need some sense of what that child looks like in terms of its success at those different milestones in the child's life. Those assessment outcomes do not seem to be firmed up yet at all.

[35] The other issue, I think, is to do with the areas of learning and experience. There has to be content. We do want our children to develop skills—transferable skills, skills that will make them into the type of citizen we're looking for, and the type of learner we're looking for—but we can't ignore knowledge. We can't ignore content. The last thing we want to do, also, is to duplicate content. We need to have a progression in terms of the knowledge, as well as the skills that the child will be learning. Certainly, there seems to me to be a dearth, really, of information or communication about how that will be prescribed, if it will be prescribed. If it's not going to be prescribed at all, is a child going to go through its whole education, from the age of three to six, learning only about the Tudors? You can see a way in which that would happen.

[36] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Yes, I hear clearly what you're saying and I think the message is clear, but is it not strange that this isn't coming back from the independent advisory group and the change board? I'm not sure that the consortia are actually saying this. It's just coming from yourselves.

[37] **Mr Jones:** I think, going back to it, what we should have had is a clear suggestion: what is going to be removed, or what is going to stay, and then you can build around it. That message has not come from the Welsh Government downwards, and that is fundamental. We don't know about the accountability, because assessment is used for accountability in the current structure. We don't know if the current assessment arrangements at 16 and 18 are going to stay. If we were told, 'They are staying', then we can develop an assessment system that will drive the curriculum. We've had no messages. So, therefore, unless we get those clear messages, we are—to use the word—going to stumble along. Yes, there is a timetable. The timetable is there. Then what will happen is we will rush, and I think we will make some very fundamental mistakes when we have got the most wonderful opportunity to develop a system to ensure that every child in Wales succeeds. And—this is only my own opinion—the current assessment procedures fail a lot of children because they are not designed for all children. This is our ideal opportunity to develop a system to ensure that all children succeed. We do not have that in Wales. In fact, it does not happen in many countries, but we could look to see what opportunities we can give for each and every child to leave at 16 feeling they're valued. At the moment, we're failing. Let's be honest: we are.

[38] **Lynne Neagle:** On this, Hefin, was it?

[39] **Hefin David:** Well, mine was on the curriculum and professional development.

[40] **Lynne Neagle:** No, no. We're going to come on to that.

[41] **Darren Millar:** Actually, can I have a follow-up, if that's okay? I know, Mair, you've been involved with the digital competency framework. One of the things that Professor Donaldson told us when he came before the committee was that the way that that digital competency framework had been developed gave him some confidence about the approach that they were taking towards the curriculum development. Now, you've said very clearly this morning—all of you—that, unless you know the final destination,

you can't develop a curriculum to get there. That is effectively what you're telling us. So, unless you know the final destination in terms of what's going to be assessed, what the outcomes are that you need to demonstrate in terms of how you measure progress with children and learners, you can't get there. How is that different in the digital competency framework development?

[42] **Ms Herbert:** Can I just say one thing? My personal view on that is that the digital competency framework is a fantastic model and it structurally used the literacy and numeracy framework as its basis in terms of the pattern that is followed. It really is an excellent product, because it started from scratch. What we're looking at now is huge amounts of excellent practice across Wales. We're very hard on ourselves, I think, in Wales. It's difficult to hear us talking about us, sometimes, because we're not always as bad as we've made ourselves out to be in these recent months of discussion. There are pockets of excellent development and innovation, researching schools and children who are leaving education with a fantastic skill set. So, we mustn't do ourselves down all the time.

[43] I think the DCF has been as successful as it has been to this stage because there have been fewer people involved at the actual chalkface of its development. I think it's been a much more constricted model of working. You have had fewer voices and you have had a cleaner sheet to work from, if that makes sense, because the IT curriculum and programmes of study that existed prior to this last year had long since been unfit for purpose. So, I think there was a sense of a cleaner sheet to work from. You're right: it's a very, very good model and framework that has been developed—very intuitive and very flexible, as well. It's something we were talking about earlier; the curriculum has got to be flexible, so that it can continually evolve with our changing world.

[44] **Mr Jones:** Darren, can I add to that? It's a very simple thing. There were no inhibitors. You can develop anything if there are no inhibitors or blocks in the way, because they were developing a strand; they were developing IT as a skill. We keep going back to it—the no accountability. So, yes, you can develop something like that. But when you've got aspects where we go back to assessment and where we're going—. That's the reason. So, I don't think it's fair, really, to compare implementing the DCF with a much bigger challenge, which is to make sure we have a curriculum that can also evolve as innovation. That's something—I was talking with colleagues here about it—that we need to look at very carefully; whatever we design, with

assessment and curriculum, that it has the capacity to develop, because innovation will impact on that. Otherwise, we will be revisiting it in five years, 10 years, 15 and 20. This is why I think, really, we mustn't rush everything to get to those dates that are already set. We've got to look to ensure that it has that flexibility to develop over time. The DCF is a simple strand to develop compared to a curriculum and assessment.

[45] **Darren Millar:** Can I follow up on timetables, if that's okay?

[46] **Mr Williams:** Can I just add something in terms of the DCF? Is that okay?

[47] **Darren Millar:** Yes, of course.

[48] **Mr Williams:** I think part of the reason why that has been more accessible to the profession is because we already had the literacy and numeracy frameworks and we were kind of used to the way we engaged with those, and it looked very familiar in that sense. So, I think that was partly it. I think, also, you had a direct connection with the experts, if you like, working directly with a small group of people to develop it. And, at the moment, in some of the other areas, those who maybe are experts, we're not having them directly work with the schools who are developing this, and I think we're losing an opportunity.

11:00

[49] **Darren Millar:** So, it's a more focused piece of work, with some clear outcomes that you were asked to try to achieve.

[50] **Mr Williams:** Yes.

[51] **Darren Millar:** Okay. I get that. You mentioned, Huw, there, the challenge of being able to implement the curriculum change by the timetable that's been set out by Professor Donaldson at the moment. Obviously, the digital competency framework was one element of the work that needed to be completed. But there's more of a big-bang approach when it comes to the curriculum development, isn't there? So, it's all going on at the same time, all over Wales, in different ways, in different parts of Wales, and it will all have to be implemented at the same time further down the line. Do you think that that is the right approach? I'm sensing that you don't at the moment, but if it isn't the right approach, what should be the right approach to getting there?

[52] **Ms Lund:** I think one of the key things is taking ownership of the agenda; for all professionals to take ownership of the agenda. And I think that's been one of the issues in relation to having pioneer schools and non-pioneer schools. But, secondly, that Welsh Government, when developing any further policy, is owning the four moral principles, because if you look at the new early years framework, you don't—. I'm sure the four moral principles are in there somewhere, but I felt that was a missed opportunity to start to develop those all the way through. If you look at the key skills there, they're not framed in the same reference.

[53] **Darren Millar:** I'm just looking at the timetable now, though. Do you think it's right that all the elements of the curriculum are being developed at the same time and are going to have to be introduced at the same time, rather than the more relaxed approach, if you like, with the digital competency framework, where it's been made available, you can try it out, work with it, see what might need to adapt before it becomes a compulsory thing?

[54] **Ms Lund:** Can I just respond? Sorry, Darren. That's why I was saying, though: the early years framework has just been published and it was an opportunity to capture the key heart of 'Successful Futures' there. That's just been published. So, we all need to own this within the profession. When we're coming out—. Any policy coming out of Welsh Government now needs to—

[55] **Darren Millar:** So, you're saying that the framework didn't reflect 'Successful Futures'.

[56] **Ms Lund:** It could have captured it in a more succinct way, yes, because that's the foundation on which 'Successful Futures' starts. And if you think about taking that further forward, we do need to understand what learners look like at five, seven, 11, 14 and 16, and agree that, because that's one of the key principles of Donaldson, and then, I think, you could move forward with your timeline.

[57] **Lynne Neagle:** Does anybody else have any comments on timescales?

[58] **Mr Williams:** Yes. I was just going to say, from the very outset, when the recommendations came out, NAHT Cymru were quite clear that this was about getting it right; not just getting it done. So, if that means being

pragmatic, and actually making a decision at a certain time, where you're coming close to maybe a deadline, if you like, but you're thinking, 'Do you know what? We're not entirely sure we're going to be 100 per cent ready to deliver this', from the profession, and from the children and young people's point of view, we think it's better to maybe delay it slightly and make sure we're properly prepared and able to deliver it. An example would be the foundation phase profile that was brought out. We first got to hear it six weeks before a summer holiday, and so, we first saw the profile and welcomed the profile because it was a far better replacement than what we'd had before, but we had the conversation, then, to say, 'Look, you've got six weeks before the summer term to train all the staff to be able to deliver this from September'. It would have been far more sensible—all schools were using baselines at the time—to say, 'Look, we'll do it for another year. We'll take the whole of that year coming to make sure all our schools are very, very well prepared', and in the following September, we'd have been in a better place.

[59] I think there needs to be that level of pragmatism in terms of timetables, and maybe doing everything all at once, which was your point, is something that needs to be reflected on. We're constantly told it's an iterative process, and I understand that, but, sometimes, I think we need to understand the scale of change that we're requiring. You've got a whole generation of teaching staff and others who've worked from 1988 onwards and have only known a national curriculum, and we're asking them to work in a completely different way, and that takes a lot of change in terms of the content they're going to deliver, but also, for them professionally.

[60] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you. Llyr.

[61] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Are you all in agreement that the timetable should be extended then? Is that what you're saying?

[62] **Mr Jones:** Basically, one of the things that I know New Zealand learned is that they implemented their new curriculum, and then, they produced their assessment progression online tools a couple of years later, which the heads and the leaders of their schools said that they wished it had been aligned at the same time. And what their model—it's very interesting—they actually have exemplar material online so that professionals can make judgments against that.

[63] This is where it would be an ideal opportunity, once we're quite clear

where we're going as far as assessment is concerned and the development of the curriculum, for the next stage—the pioneer schools—to develop those materials that can be then shared. So, when we're ready to hit that road and when we've finally launched, whatever it looks like, everybody has the materials, the support and, more importantly, the infrastructure. That's what we'll look at.

[64] We need to learn from other countries and their mistakes. We don't need to take their models, but we can learn from them. New Zealand learnt from that, and it's something that I shared with Rob recently, with their implementation of the progress and consistency tool, because it's online. Why categorisation came along—and we know one of the reasons why testing came in—was because there was a discrepancy of teacher assessment. But if we make it quite clear that this is what is expected, and if we set the expectations high, which I think we should, we will pull up the underperforming schools. We'll also pull up the coasting schools. Let's set a high benchmark by providing those materials. It'll take time and then we provide professional development.

[65] This is not just at teacher level; I think it's fundamentally at leadership level. We need to ensure that our leaders can then drive systems forward effectively from consortia and then within the school as well. So, yes, if we're going to do this properly, as long as we then explain the reasons why we're delaying it—. Because otherwise the cynics will say, 'Oh, here we go, something else has failed'. No, this is a wonderful opportunity, but we get the communication across that the reason we're doing it is because we're going to provide this, this and this and this. That's what the profession wants to know, but if we just say, 'We're delaying it', well, you know what'll happen.

[66] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr, do you want to ask about the pioneer schools?

[67] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Yes. We've had a few references to pioneer schools and non-pioneer schools, so maybe you could share with us your views on how effectively you think pioneer schools are communicating and collaborating with each other, initially, and the structures around that and whether that's working in your view, but also then—and maybe as importantly I'm sure, if not more importantly—how they're communicating and collaborating with non-pioneer schools.

[68] **Ms Herbert:** I think there are plans now for pioneer schools to be

pulling into their clusters with non-pioneer schools to try to communicate things to them about progress so far and next steps. But I think that's at consortia level rather than at national level and I think it needs to be at national level.

[69] The last thing we need to do here is to create a system that is divisive between those schools that are ahead of the game and those schools that are wondering what's happening, whether that's by choice or by design. That's something that we need to be very mindful of stopping, if that's already in the process. But I think your question is absolutely pertinent—that's exactly what needs to be happening now. I've probably bored you with this already today too much, but we need to stop for a minute and we need to take stock of what we're doing, how quickly we're doing it and who is working on what. I fear the conflict that might be being created through duplication. We're very busy, as you know, in secondary schools at the moment, implementing the final stages of the 2015 curriculums for key stage 4 and key stage 5. There are massive changes and significant issues that we're still dealing with with the readiness of those curriculums, which is not what today is about, so I'll stop there. But, we're talking about the same teacher in the classroom here who we're asking to develop the key stage 3 curriculum, cope with the key stage 4 and cope with the key stage 5, and public accountability does focus upon us, as secondary schools.

[70] So, to go back to your question and stop deviating: yes, we do need to do more now on a national level to make sure that all schools across Wales know what is happening and what the next steps are. I agree fully with colleagues saying that we need to have some type of staggering now in terms of what's being developed, because everything's being developed in pockets. I find it rather strange that some schools are developing a curriculum, others are developing a leadership model and others are developing an assessment framework, and they're not speaking to each other and they're not speaking to each other enough. So, how can you develop those things that are not individual and are not separate, but are part of a cohesive frame? How can you develop those separately? So, I think it's a good time in the whole process of pioneer schools.

[71] **Mr Jones:** Can I add something? What I think consortia could do in the interim is look at the capacity of all schools to improve. There's a nice analogy of the life cycle of the butterfly; the pioneers might be the butterflies, and then you've got the caterpillars who are reluctant, or whatever.

[72] But in fact, I think, prior to the implementation it would be prudent for the consortia to look at every school and their capacity to actually adopt and adapt to the new curriculum. That's something that the consortia can do, that is something that the pioneer schools working in clusters can do, to find out: what are you currently doing? Because I think one of the things we need to get the message across about is, in fact, in non-pioneer schools, they're doing a lot of things that actually dovetail into what Professor Donaldson has come up with as the four core purposes. So, ultimately, I think the part of the journey that the consortia can look at is the capacity for change. Look at every single school: are they a caterpillar, or are they in the cycle, or have they already reached the butterfly?

[73] **Llyr Gruffydd:** You've alluded to the practical challenges of doing all of this, as well as carrying on with the day job. Are you confident that pioneer schools have the necessary resource to carry out their roles effectively, let alone any additional resources required to engage with non-pioneer schools?

[74] **Lynne Neagle:** Can I ask for brief answers please, because we've got a few areas we need to cover?

[75] **Mr Williams:** One of the things that's quickly come up is actually exactly as you alluded to there, which is the ability of a school to deliver business as usual whilst doing all of this constructive work. The reality is, we have children and young people in this system at the moment who need to have that high-quality education, irrespective of the changes we're trying to make. So, that kind of pragmatism about implementing anything new is right, and there are risks. Nobody seems to be looking, necessarily, at whether there is a detrimental element of being too involved, and the capacity of certain schools to deliver those. If small schools, for example—. My school was a small school; we had four classes. If I had just two of my members of staff out of school, half of my teaching force were outside the school. So, the ability to deal with that is something that needs to be looked at to make sure that it's not detrimentally affecting those schools.

[76] **Llyr Gruffydd:** So, you're not saying whether it is an issue or not, you're saying that you don't know.

[77] **Mr Williams:** I think it potentially is, and I think for some schools, it's probably going to be bigger than for others.

[78] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Hefin.

[79] **Hefin David:** I had the chance to ask the First Minister a question on Tuesday, and the question was about the professional development of teachers in relation to this process. His answer was that we need

[80] ‘a workforce that embraces inclusive education and delivers for every learner...So, we will work with the teaching profession, of course, to make sure that the right level of support and training is available to them to ensure that that becomes a reality.’

[81] That’s specifically in the context of Donaldson. So, is that happening?

[82] **Ms Lund:** I think the introduction of the professional learning passport, which has been done under the Education Workforce Council, is an excellent way forward. In all learning, communication is key and the PLP provides that and it gives structure to people’s learning. So, yes, I think that, as a tool—. But then, having listened to John Furlong again this week, I think you’ve got the right people on the independent advisory board, if people like John Furlong can have an impact on changing the way that learning is done within schools. ASCL are firmly behind the concept of professional learning alliances and that a lot of good professional learning can be done peer to peer. I think you’ve got the tool, through the PLP, but also—to go back to Llyr—is the capacity there? That is where the capacity needs to be to allow all in the profession to develop, because within classrooms and within schools, often, is the best way to learn.

[83] **Mr Jones:** Can I pick up on that? Interestingly, when the foundation phase was rolled out, the training was provided, and one of the problems that I think was encountered was that sometimes the training was diluted because you get another tier delivering it. So, I think, however we progress in the professional development, it needs to be quite clear and explicit what we’re delivering. The support materials need to be there to ensure the message doesn’t deviate. That is something I know was encountered when the foundation phase was rolled out. Sometimes, the message was misinterpreted or was interpreted in different ways so that there were, perhaps, mixed messages. So, if we’re going to do it, let’s make sure that the professional development that’s there is clear and explicit and the support materials are there.

11:15

[84] **Mr Williams:** Just very quickly, the accessibility to that professional learning is quite critical and, for many schools, they're using their entire education improvement grant to sustain their staffing. So, they were given flexibility within the Welsh Government to do that because there was a recognition about challenges in budget. But that now means you've got schools who haven't got major issues with loss of pupil numbers, but they're using their entire budget just to sustain staff. They have nothing left in their training budget to support their staff to do it. So, how we can ensure that all staff do this, because all staff need access to that level of professional learning to get that systemic-wide change, when you've still got that difficulty in terms of resource to meet it?

[85] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you.

[86] **Hefin David:** Can I quickly—

[87] **Lynne Neagle:** Very briefly.

[88] **Hefin David:** Just two questions then emerged on Twitter—I posted the First Minister's answer, and thank you for the additional answers. First of all, one teacher said, 'Well, what are the consequences for my weekly planning, preparation and assessment?', and another said, 'Can you link me to a strategy to deliver this training?'

[89] **Mr Williams:** Can you repeat the second one, Hefin?

[90] **Hefin David:** Yes, 'Can you give me a link to a strategy that will help deliver this training?' I think perhaps that might be the professional learning passport.

[91] **Ms Lund:** Yes.

[92] **Hefin David:** So, what about PPA? Will that be affected by this?

[93] **Ms Herbert:** I think what the idea would look like here—because the issue is to do with money and to do with time, and those are always going to be our issues aren't they—is having more money so that we can employ more teachers so that each teacher teaches slightly less so they have dedicated professional development time built into their weekly timetable. What I don't want to do as a headteacher now is to send too many of my teachers on too

many courses because they're not then teaching their classes, and that is the major conflict there, isn't it? The ideal would look like—and I think we must always dream to the ideal—being able to employ more teachers who teach less because they have dedicated professional development time. The amount of training days we get is not enough. The PPA time is not enough. It is always going to come down to time. So, maybe the future profession looks different, in the fact that they are less at the chalkface as the teachers in the classroom, so that their professional development is being prioritised. This is a model that works very well in some other very successful countries. However, it comes down to money.

[94] **Mr Williams:** You see, the key thing is developing reflective pedagogy, and that's got to take place in the work day.

[95] **Hefin David:** Yes.

[96] **Mr Williams:** You can't go on a course about it. So, in my school, for example, we were lucky to have some money and so I would release staff to observe each other, to reflect on practice, look at a structure, develop it and move on that way. That's the way we want to do it. But that, as you exactly say, is quite resource rich.

[97] **Ms Herbert:** You don't want them out of the classroom, do you?

[98] **Mr Williams:** No.

[99] **Lynne Neagle:** John, have your questions been answered?

[100] **John Griffiths:** I think they have actually, Chair, yes.

[101] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thanks. Oscar?

[102] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you, Chair. I think alarm bells are ringing in my ears after listening to Huw. The thing is he isn't being clear about the model and he doesn't know what is to be removed and what is to stay. But the fact is that what the PISA results have been us telling us for the last so many years is that the educational standard of our children is going down and down. So, that's why I think the Minister needs to change things. It will probably be implemented in the next few years, and my question is—and I'm going to go in a different way rather than sticking to the same because we haven't got much time: by removing bureaucratic hurdles and encouraging

schools to act with increased autonomy and to access funding directly, pupils who require additional support will be better aided, and grants are currently paid via the regional consortia, who will be expected to work with the local authorities and their foundation phase advisory teacher to direct funding to non-maintained settings. Do you not agree that this is a rather complex way to fund our most economically vulnerable students in Wales?

[103] **Lynne Neagle:** Can I ask for brief answers?

[104] **Mr Jones:** Can I answer the first thing on the PISA reference? The recent report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on Ireland showed in fact that they improved their PISA results by looking at the well-being and support of children. So, it wasn't anything to do with actual direct learning, and we know now that Ireland are performing in the top 10 or top 12. So, in fact, sometimes it's very interesting that you don't actually have to use testing to improve results. So, Ireland have improved because they invested in their pupils and their well-being and pastoral support. That's an OECD report on PISA.

[105] **Lynne Neagle:** Barbara.

[106] **Ms Lund:** My response is that we have the full moral purpose, so let's lift them all.

[107] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. We have run out of time. So, can I thank you very much, all of you, for attending and for talking to us this morning and also for the written papers that you provided in advance? You will be sent a transcript of the session to check for accuracy. Thank you very much again for coming. The committee will now take a short break until 11.25 a.m. Thank you.

Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 11:20 ac 11:28.

The meeting adjourned between 11:20 and 11:28.

**Gweithredu 'Dyfodol Llwyddiannus: Adolygiad Annibynnol o'r
Cwricwlwm a Threfniadau Asesu yng Nghymru'—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 4
The Implementation of the Review 'Successful Futures: Independent
Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales'—
Evidence Session 4**

[108] **Lynne Neagle:** Can I welcome everyone back? Also, it was very remiss

of me earlier not to give apologies for Michelle Brown, so if we can place those on the record.

[109] We're having another evidence session now on 'Successful Futures'. I'm really pleased to welcome Kevin Palmer, Rhys Howard Hughes, Steven Richards-Downes and Alan Edwards from each of the consortia in Wales. Thank you very much for attending and for the paper that you provided in advance. We'll go straight to questions, if that's okay. Can I just begin by just asking each of you to give a very brief outline of how you feel progress is going in this area? Who would like to start?

[110] **Dr Palmer:** I'll start with that, if I may. I've been involved in the programme since the beginning, actually, since the ideas were developed. I'd describe progress as mixed. We have three strands of activity. For us—and we'll probably need to speak separately to this question, in the regions, because progress will probably vary across the regions—for us in south-east Wales, progress with the professional learning strand of the programme is probably most advanced, and that's because it came in on the back of a suite of activities we've been developing in professional learning already, and it dovetailed very nicely with that. Progress with the DCF side of it has been good, I think. We have a product, and that product is undergoing iterative consideration, as it should. And progress with the curriculum reform area has been mixed, and, in the very early days, halting. In the last, I think, four months, that's accelerated, and we look forward, actually, when we leave here, to having the position confirmed with colleagues in Welsh Government on how things are going to proceed from January.

11:30

[111] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Rhys.

[112] **Mr Hughes:** Mi fyddaf i'n siarad Cymraeg, os yw hynny'n dderbyniol, os gwelwch yn dda. Iawn, diolch yn fawr. Rwy'n cytuno efo lot o bethau roedd Kevin yn dweud. I fyny yn y gogledd, mae'r sefyllfa wedi dechrau'n araf efo ysgolion yn dod yn fwy ymwybodol o'r agenda. O ran dysgu proffesiynol, yn debyg iawn i beth roedd Kevin yn ei ddweud, mae

Mr Hughes: I'll be speaking Welsh, if that's acceptable. Thank you very much. I agree with what Kevin said there. Up in north Wales, the situation started slowly, with schools becoming more aware of the agenda. In terms of professional development, similar to what Kevin said, a lot of things and programmes have been established in north Wales,

lot o bethau a rhaglenni wedi cael eu sefydlu yn y gogledd, felly fe fyddwn ni mewn sefyllfa fwy effeithiol i fynd ymlaen yn gyflymach efo hynny. therefore we will be in a more effective position to proceed at an accelerated rate with that.

[113] Mae ochr y cwricwlwm yn datblygu, a'r ochr ddigidol yn amlwg, oherwydd bod yr agenda cenedlaethol wedi symud ymlaen yn gynt ac mae'n barod rwan i redeg y cynllun allan efo'r ysgolion i gyd. Wedyn, mae pob dim yn dod at ei gilydd. Mae wedi bod yn gam yn y cyfeiriad cywir i gael y tri i mewn i un rhwydwaith. The curriculum side is developing, and the digital side, because the national agenda has moved forward faster and is ready now to roll the scheme out to all schools. Everything is coming together. It has been a step in the right direction to have the three within one network.

[114] **Lynne Neagle:** Steven.

[115] **Mr Richards-Downes:** Okay. I'm going to speak in English. In central south, I agree that the progress that we've seen is mixed. Initially, we had strong development, particularly with the professional learning network, because, in our region, we already had a set of professional learning hubs that were starting to deliver regional programmes to improve teacher capacity. The DCF—again, we've got a product that is moving out into schools and being developed. We've had some things where our schools have asked us for some regional briefings, particularly for headteachers, so we have arranged for those to happen, and they'll be happening from January onwards.

[116] In terms of curriculum, the curriculum is mixed. We have had schools working on the four strands of the curriculum design at the current time, and one of the things we've been looking at there is how that work is disseminated to others. So, we have a regional network of deputies, and some of those are sharing that information with deputy networks, particularly in local authorities. Then, we've also had some sharing events that are held centrally in central south.

[117] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Alan.

[118] **Mr Edwards:** Yes, I'm going to be saying a similar thing really about the mixture. Professional learning is more advanced because, in the same

way, we already were working on that within the region, and the schools added capacity to that. The digital competence framework has been welcomed by schools, and they're very excited about supporting things they're receiving, to begin the implementation here.

[119] On the curriculum, it has been mixed. I think the positive side is that the schools involved with curriculum are trialling and are very positive about the process and being involved with it. So, it is helping, but, naturally, at this stage, it is going to be different across schools because different schools are in different positions with trialling what they're developing.

[120] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Julie.

[121] **Julie Morgan:** You've talked about the mixed nature of the development of the curriculum. What is the exact role of the consortia in developing the curriculum?

[122] **Dr Palmer:** I'll start on that one again, if I may—we'll probably end up doing this. If I do the narrative of how the regions have been involved, just as quickly as I can, in the initial inception of the project, we were involved in co-constructing the nature of the project, the purposes of the project, talking to Graham Donaldson, understanding and getting a broad sense of where this thing needed to go. When the pioneer school concept arose, we helped Welsh Government to determine the criteria for selection of those schools. Then, we all did the same thing, I think—we worked with all of our schools to publicise the opportunity to become a pioneer. What happened in the south-east was that we took applications, using the criteria set in the application pack. We filtered that. I think, numerically, we had about 55 or 60 applications, which went down to something in the order of 40. We then supported those schools in presenting their case to the panel that ultimately selected the pioneers, and all of our applicants became pioneer schools.

[123] **Dr Palmer:** Since then, we've been supporting them on a regional basis—one, in their involvement in the national strand work, but particularly with the curriculum pioneers in the early research and development phase of what it means to make a curriculum. I think you heard in earlier evidence that our workforce substantially comprises of professionals who have never done this work. So, since 1988, because of the existence of the national curriculum, the skill set of writing a curriculum, which I'm unfortunately old enough to still have, because I came through before that, is not there in the preponderance of our professional community. So, we've done a lot of work

with them on what does that mean. That's involved the use of the commissioning of academics to support that, and I know other colleagues have done the same thing. So, we now have a programme of support, some of which is academically accredited in the specific skill sets of curriculum development, in the specific skill set of relating curriculum development to pedagogy and practice, chapter 5, chapter 6, and then in the leadership of change question, and what happens when we make this change at institutional level. And I think you'll hear a similar story, but there'll be different flavours from colleagues in other regions.

[124] **Mr Edwards:** I think, as well, that our role is to support the schools involved in this, but also allowing them the space and the autonomy to develop what they feel works for them. And, as a consortia, that's important, isn't it, that we give them that space, so that they can trial and develop, because that's the only thing that will get the actual research that we need to inform future development.

[125] **Julie Morgan:** Anything else to add, or is it similar?

[126] **Mr Hughes:** Ie, byddwn yn hoffi dod i fewn yn y fan yna. Mewn ffordd, rwy'n cytuno gyda beth sydd wedi cael ei ddweud yn barod, ond hefyd, yn lleol, mi oedd o'n waith tîm, mewn ffordd, yn dod â'r ysgolion yma at ei gilydd, ac roedd o'n gytundeb rhwng y consortia, aelodau o'r awdurdodau lleol, y cyfarwyddwyr addysg ac yn y blaen. Ac yn union fel roedd Kevin yn sôn, nid yw pawb sydd wedi mynegi cais wedi llwyddo, oherwydd roeddem ni eisiau gwneud yn siŵr bod yr ysgolion gorau posib i fewn yn y rhwydwaith. Ac rydw i'n meddwl ei fod o hefyd yn ddealladwy bod yr ochr cwricwlwm wedi bod ychydig hirach yn datblygu, oherwydd dyma'r tro cyntaf i ni gynllunio cwricwlwm newydd o'r dechrau, yn fy mhrofiad i beth bynnag, a fyny yn y gogledd

Mr Hughes: If I may come in there, in a way, I'd agree with what has been said already, but, also, locally, it was because of team working, bringing these schools together, and it was agreement between the consortium, members of the local authority, the education directors and so forth. And, as Kevin talked about, not everybody who made an application succeeded, because we wanted to ensure that the best possible schools were in the network. And I think it's also understandable that the curriculum side has taken slightly longer to develop, because this is the first time that we've planned a curriculum from scratch, in my experience anyhow, and up in north Wales now, we have several schools that are now showing a desire to join in and to be part of the curriculum

rŵan mae gennym ni nifer o ysgolion sydd rŵan eisiau ymuno ac eisiau bod yn rhan o'r cynlluniau cwricwlwm, ac yn gweld y potensial, ac yn sylweddoli pa mor bwysig ydy hwn i ddyfodol addysg yng Nghymru. planning, and are seeing the potential that exists, and are realising how important this is to the future of education in Wales.

[127] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you.

[128] **Mr Richards-Downes:** The responses from central south would be, obviously, very similar to all the responses you've heard.

[129] **Julie Morgan:** Can I just ask one more question because I realise it's—? Do you feel you've had sufficient guidance from the Welsh Government?

[130] **Dr Palmer:** I'll take that, if I may. The answer is yes, sufficient guidance. If I just characterise the nature of that guidance, it's been quite an important part of the journey for us. Firstly, we have a high-level timeline. That's helpful, although we think that the timeline component of the programme can be significantly improved with better granularity. Welsh Government colleagues were very collaborative in the establishment of the criteria for selection. They've been more able to listen than any other Government I've worked with in the past. In the question of processes like selection, it's been a very collaborative programme. For me, the most important contribution they've made to my work, bearing in mind that I'm an educator—and, although I've been out in other parts of the professional world, not very much—is that they've brought an array of interest groups, and the perspectives of other interest groups, into the process of thinking about the curriculum, and they've often alerted us to how people in that part of the world would feel about things happening in such and such a way.

[131] And they—they could do this better, actually, but they have translated the view of the expert group that they work with directly into imperatives that we can pursue. And, of course, they provide the legislative and policy frame within which all this happens. And, so, two things: they are clear about what the legislative and policy frame means to what we want to do, and they're also clear, and I think you'll have heard this in previous evidence, that there are hindrances and blocks in the current legislative and policy frame that might halt progress, slow progress, or even stop it altogether, and they're very good at listening about that.

[132] **Julie Morgan:** That's very encouraging.

[133] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Darren on this.

[134] **Darren Millar:** Sorry, what are the blocks in the legislative processes that might hinder progress that you've just referred to?

[135] **Dr Palmer:** Sure. There's probably loads. When you really want to innovate a curriculum—. We haven't talked about what it means to innovate a curriculum. Let's do that very quickly. When you move, as Donaldson proposes we should, from a content, knowledge assessment at the end of key stage 4 led curriculum to a purposes-driven curriculum—I'm sure you've had the conversations about that with other colleagues—when you do that, you need to release some of those hindrances to thinking in that way in the profession. So, there'll be things like—you've heard about testing, you'll have heard about accountability and measures. It's the nature of the accountability that can be a hindrance to innovation in the school, say, at key stage 3. It's not that people don't want accountability. It's just that the accountability needs to change in a purposes-driven curriculum. What we assess needs to change, how we measure the assessment needs to change, and I think you heard in previous evidence that you've got two worlds going on. You've got an old world where the curriculum is like this, measurement is like this, and accountability is like this, and then you've got Donaldson's presentation of what—. And it happens in some countries. It happens a bit in Scotland. It happens a bit more in New Zealand and a little bit more again in the Netherlands, and those accountabilities differ. While colleagues—I'll stop very quickly—feel the pressure of this kind of accountability in the current system, they may be less likely or less able to innovate across the whole of the school piece.

[136] **Mr Edwards:** I think, adding to that, the legislative element is being investigated by Welsh Government, so it kind of answered both. But I know that they've discussed with us and with schools, 'How is that hindering progress?', and 'What could we do to change that?' I think that's important, that they are looking at that.

[137] **Darren Millar:** We were just told, as you will have seen if you were watching the evidence session, that the big barrier, or the big hindrance, they feel, is about this accountability and assessment framework, what does that look like, and, if we know what that is going to look like, then we can develop the curriculum that meets the measurements, as it were—the things

that we're going to be measured on in the future. Is that a correct assessment? What guidance have they been given by you as consortia about what things need to look like?

[138] **Dr Palmer:** It's not, in my view, a correct assessment, because a purposes-driven curriculum starts with purposes and proceeds. It doesn't start with purposes and then start again with assessment. That's where it didn't work in some other countries, particularly one to the north of us where things have been somewhat halting over the last 10 years. So, no—in my view, as a curriculum developer, that's not a correct assessment.

[139] The danger of saying, 'We start with the purposes—please give us an assessment regime', is that you predetermine everything that happens in between. It's really messy to not do that; it's the security that people want. But we call it—and this is not to be flippant—trying to solve a new problem with an older brain. The old brain was made in the national curriculum in 1988 and it says, 'You want me to develop a curriculum—give me the assessment criteria'. That's not what the new curriculum does. That's why it's actually quite hard, and quite frustrating sometimes, and that's why the curriculum reform piece of the three strands of work, in my view, has taken the time it's taken to get pioneer schools thinking from the purposes forward, not from assessment backwards. I saw evidence earlier on that doesn't reflect that.

[140] **Darren Millar:** Does it concern you as consortia that that mindset, if that's what we want to describe it as, is still out there amongst the pioneer schools that are actively supposed to be developing this new curriculum?

[141] **Mr Edwards:** I don't think it's a concern. I think it's a development opportunity for those schools, isn't it? Obviously, as Kevin said, it takes time to develop, and that's what strand 1 has been about, hasn't it: asking those questions—'How can it change?' I wouldn't feel it's a concern right now. We're still quite early in the process, and there's a way to go with that.

[142] **Darren Millar:** Okay.

[143] **Mr Hughes:** Rydw i'n meddwl **Mr Hughes:** I think it's ei fod o'n ddealladwy bod ysgolion understandable that schools feel this yn teimlo fel hyn. Mae ysgolion yn way. Schools are very busy places, llefydd prysur ofnadwy, efo lot o with a lot of things that they're bethau maen nhw'n ymwneud â nhw. involved in. It's a balance, at present,

Mae yn falans ar hyn o bryd, onid ydy, rhwng paratoi ar gyfer rŵan a datblygu ar gyfer y dyfodol. Mewn ffordd, dyna un rheswm pam mae'n hollbwysig bod yr ymarferwyr mwyaf effeithiol yn rhan o'r broses yma. Nid ydy o yn hawdd. Mae o'n rhywbeth newydd i ni i gyd, ac rydym ni i gyd yn dysgu wrth i ni ddatblygu. Felly, mae'n ddealladwy bod ysgolion yn teimlo fel hyn. Ond rwy'n cytuno efo'r sylwadau sydd wedi cael eu gwneud. Mae o'n gyfle da i symud ymlaen.

isn't it, between preparing for now and developing for the future. In a way, that's one of the reasons why it's vital that the most effective practitioners are part of this process, because it's not easy, and it is a new thing for all of us. We're all learning as we're developing. So, it is understandable that the schools do feel this way, but I agree with the comments that have been made—it is a good opportunity to move forward.

[144] **Darren Millar:** And just in terms of the national picture, if you like, again, one of the other things that we've heard is that, in terms of the national co-ordination of the curriculum development, yes, there's stuff going on locally within the regional consortia, the regional consortia are obviously talking to each other, but there's not always that feedback from a national level right down to the schools at the coalface doing the curriculum development. Is that a thing that you recognise needs to improve?

11:45

[145] **Dr Palmer:** Yes.

[146] **Darren Millar:** And how do you think it should be improved?

[147] **Dr Palmer:** Okay, I'll start again. Having a consistent, common, universal understanding of the relative roles and functions of the agencies—what they call alignment; having those things aligned—has not yet been achieved. It can be achieved. I think we're making steps to achieve alignment even as we speak, even literally this week and going into next week. So, a more common understanding of the relative roles of the agencies. Then—. Actually, Donaldson uses the word 'subsidiarity', doesn't he? Then understanding the principles of subsidiarity as they apply to the relationship between Welsh Government, the regions, our schools and our practitioners. That's a big shift. It's a paradigmatic shift for the system to make. That's why these things sometimes look like they look for a bit and then that happens. So, I'd say that we're not there yet. I think we can be there. I think we can be

there by Christmas, actually, but what we need is to get that alignment clear.

[148] **Darren Millar:** Okay, so—

[149] **Lynne Neagle:** Darren, can you be very brief now, please?

[150] **Darren Millar:** Yes, I just want to know how you get that alignment—how you get that alignment and how you make sure that the schools at the coalface, developing the curriculum, know what's going on elsewhere in Wales, so they can learn from one another and avoid duplication. I think that was one of the comments that were made.

[151] **Lynne Neagle:** Brief answers, please.

[152] **Darren Millar:** Just from anybody.

[153] **Mr Richards–Downes:** I think one of the things that we need there is for each of the strands of the work—while people are going through that work and doing it, it's thinking about the implications for others as it happens. That's probably something we haven't done well enough up to now, but it's something that could be accomplished quite quickly.

[154] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Hefin on this.

[155] **Hefin David:** Subsidiarity refers to the concept of taking a decision at the level at which that decision is most relevant, and particularly in this context. So, that's a kind of layered issue, isn't it? One of the problems that was identified in the previous evidence session, particularly by the primary school teacher and by the headteachers trade union was that pedagogy has been developed in isolation in each of the four consortia because you came on board a little bit later in the process, and there doesn't seem to be what he called 'constructive alignment'. So, subsidiarity is one thing, but what about the constructive alignment?

[156] **Mr Edwards:** I think there are going to be regional differences with areas of certain development because they need to be, because each of the four consortia are slightly different in their make-up. I think we have to accept that that may happen. But I think, in terms of alignment, our strength so far has been the way that we work as four with the Welsh Government to develop the implementation of this. So, I think, as we're moving forward—and, as Kevin said, that's happening quite rapidly at the moment—actually,

that alignment then can naturally happen because of the way that we're working together as four.

[157] **Hefin David:** But, at this point in time, it doesn't look like it's happening from the teachers' perspective.

[158] **Mr Edwards:** No, possibly not completely from a teacher's perspective at the moment, but, as we said, with curriculum design, it is still early days. So, I think we're at a point where schools are still trialling things. We're probably not ready to start training yet on pedagogy because we're not quite sure yet what the final thing will look like. So, I think, at this stage, that's okay.

[159] **Hefin David:** Okay. And, in relation to that, and I don't know whether you meant this in relation to that, but Dr Palmer said that the timeline of the programme can be improved with more granularity. I just wondered, does that relate to this issue, and what does that actually mean?

[160] **Dr Palmer:** It means having narrower frequencies between the deliverables of the programme.

[161] **Hefin David:** Right.

[162] **Dr Palmer:** So, like with any programme, you've got a very big timeline and then you go down to a year, which is what we've got. Then we typically would go down to a term, and down to a month, in order to ensure that the project had that set of deliverables in it. That's what we're talking about now. As I said earlier on, progress is being made. We expect that to be one of the outcomes.

[163] **Hefin David:** So, it's all on target.

[164] **Dr Palmer:** When you don't have granularity in a project, it's hard to say whether it's on target or not because you don't have that target expressed at that level of granularity. So, I can't tell you that. What I want to get to is understanding what the targets are at a term-by-term and month-by-month basis.

[165] **Hefin David:** Okay. Thank you. [*Inaudible.*]

[166] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr.

[167] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Diolch yn fawr. Mae Cyngor y Gweithlu Addysg wedi rhybuddio eu bod nhw'n poeni bod yna system dwy haen yn datblygu rhwng ysgolion sydd yn ysgolion arloesi a rhai sydd ddim. Mae llawer o'r dystiolaeth yr ydym ni wedi'i chael yn mynegi consŷrn efallai nad yw ysgolion sydd ddim yn ysgolion arloesi yn teimlo eu bod nhw'n rhan o'r symudiad yma, os liciwch chi, i ddiwylliant a chwricwlwm newydd. Beth ydych chi'n ei wneud, fel consortia, i sicrhau bod yr ysgolion sydd ddim yn ysgolion arloesi yn teimlo eu bod nhw yn cael perchnogaeth o'r broses yma?

[168] **Mr Hughes:** Gwnaf i ddechrau efo hwnnw. Mae hynny'n rhywbeth rydym ni'n yn ymwybodol ohono. Mae'n sefyllfa rydym ni wedi ei thrafod ac mae'r cydweithredu rhwng y pedwar consortiwm yn effeithiol iawn wrth symud y prosiect yma ymlaen. Rhywbeth y mae'r ysgolion arloesi rŵan yn rhoi blaenoriaeth iddo ydy sut rydym ni yn gwneud yn siŵr bod y negeseuon a'r gwaith sydd yn cael ei ddatblygu'n cael eu rhannu efo pawb. Nid ydym ni eisiau gadael neb allan ac mae yna ysgolion effeithiol iawn allan yn y system sydd, efallai, ddim yn rhan o'r ysgolion arloesi oherwydd gwahanol resymau, ond mae'n bwysig ein bod ni'n gwneud yn siŵr bod pob ysgol trwy Gymru'n ymwybodol o'r datblygiadau ac yn rhan ohonyn nhw hefyd. Mae hynny'n un o'r

Llyr Gruffydd: Thank you very much. The Education Workforce Council has warned that they are concerned that there might be a two-tier system developing between the pioneer schools and the non-pioneer schools. Much of the evidence that we've received does express concern perhaps that schools that are non-pioneer schools may not feel that they are part of this movement, if you like, to a new curriculum and culture. So, what are you are doing, as consortia, to ensure that the schools that are not pioneer schools do feel that they have ownership of this process?

Mr Hughes: I'll start with this one. That's something that we're aware of. It's a situation that we've discussed and the collaboration between the four consortia is very effective in moving this project forward. Something that the pioneer schools are giving priority to is how we make sure that the messages and the work that's being developed is shared with everyone. We don't want to leave anyone out and there are very effective schools out in the system, which maybe aren't pioneer schools for different reasons, but it's important that we ensure that every school throughout Wales is aware of the developments and is also part of them. That's one of the priorities as we move forward.

blaenoriaethau wrth inni symud
ymlaen rŵan.

[169] **Dr Palmer:** I'll take the next point, if I may. We sometimes—and I hear this from my schools sometimes; I work closely with all my pioneers, and you sometimes hear non-pioneers expressing their frustration about not being part of the process. Well, that's the design of the process. We use the word 'pioneer' deliberately. Not everybody on a journey is a pioneer on that journey. Pioneers have a very specific function and that's the function they're fulfilling. So, we couldn't afford to have every school a pioneer; we wouldn't want every school to be a pioneer. So, the message we convey to our schools is, 'There's a lot of stuff happening that you don't know about, because the pioneers are doing it. That's okay. You don't need to worry about that right now. What you need to worry about is the fruits of their labour, when it's appropriate for you to know about them'. We help them to make that judgment. So, I think it's important for us to neutralise that frustration. I think it's also important for us to have a programme; we all have programmes, which commence this term, or early next term, in awareness raising and bringing non-pioneer schools to a place where they can understand and implement the work of the pioneers.

[170] **Mr Edwards:** And it will develop then to more of a 'Successful Futures' network, where pioneer schools work with those schools to bring them up to speed with developments so that they feel involved and feel like they own it.

[171] **Llyr Gruffydd:** But there must be an element of that along the journey. You can't just say, 'Wait until it appears and then we'll—'

[172] **Mr Edwards:** No. And that's starting. It's not something that we—

[173] **Mr Hughes:** Mae'n bwysig **Mr Hughes:** It's important to note, nodi, onid ydy, bod hynny wedi isn't it, that that has started; it's not dechrau; nid yw jest yn mynd i just going to happen. There are a ddigwydd. Mae yna nifer o number of meetings and gyfarfodydd a rhannu gwybodaeth ac information-sharing sessions that yn y blaen wedi digwydd mewn ffyrdd have happened in different ways gwahanol yn y pedwar consortiwm across the four consortia, with efo ysgolion yn cymryd yr arweiniad, schools taking the lead, with the efo consortia'n cymryd arweiniad neu consortia taking the lead or a mixture gymysgedd ac efo pobl fel yr Athro of the two and with people such as Donaldson ei hun yn siarad â Professor Donaldson speaking with

rhanddeiliaid i fyny yn y Gogledd ac yn y blaen, ac yng nghonsortia eraill. Rydym ni wedi dechrau, ond rydym ni'n cydnabod mai dim ond wedi dechrau ydym ni ac ein bod ni angen gwneud mwy o hyn.

stakeholders up in north Wales and so forth, and in other consortia. We have started, but we do recognise that we've only just started on this and that we need to do more.

[174] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Ond rydych chi, fel consortia, yn rhoi arweiniad digon cryf, rydych chi'n teimlo, i ysgolion arloesi ynglŷn â sut y gallan nhw fod yn rhyngweithio gydag ysgolion.

Llyr Gruffydd: But you, as consortia, are offering strong enough leadership, you feel, to the pioneer schools about how they can interact with non-pioneer schools.

[175] **Mr Hughes:** Rydw i'n meddwl mai'r peth pwysig fan hyn ydy mai partneriaeth ydy hi rhwng y consortia, ysgolion, Llywodraeth Cymru a'r awdurdodau lleol—nid yw un yn arwain y llall, mewn ffordd; gweithio mewn cydweithrediad efo'n gilydd ydym ni ac rydym ni'n datblygu hynny. Rydym ni'n gyfforddus ein bod ni'n symud ymlaen yn effeithiol efo'r mater yna.

Mr Hughes: I think the important thing here is that this is a partnership between the consortia, schools, Welsh Government and local authorities—one is not leading the other, in a way; we are collaborating with each other and we are developing that. We are comfortable that we are moving forward effectively with this issue.

[176] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Ac mae'r adnoddau'n gallu bod yn *issue* hefyd, wrth gwrs, onid ydynt, o safbwynt rhyddhau athrawon i wneud llawer o'r gwaith yma. Rwy'n siŵr eich bod chi'n ymwybodol o hynny. A ydych chi'n teimlo ei fod yn cyrraedd pwynt lle mae angen gofidio am hynny, neu a ydych chi'n weddol gyfforddus ei fod o fewn capasiti presennol ysgolion i gyflawni'r gwaith?

Llyr Gruffydd: And resources can be an issue as well, can't they, in terms of freeing up teachers to do much of this work? I'm sure that you are aware of that issue. Do you feel that it is reaching a point where we need to be concerned about that, or are you quite comfortable that it is within the schools' current capacity to complete the work?

[177] **Dr Palmer:** Can I come back on that? Just to add a layer of detail to the previous question as a way of answering this one, all of our pioneer schools have school-level pioneer work plans. Those work plans for the curriculum pioneers and professional learning, statutorily, always include a degree of

engagement with their clusters and with adjacent clusters. So, not only do we know it's happening, we use it as a way of monitoring how they spend the money. So that's a kind of comfort, I hope, for you. That also tells us where capacity is beginning to squeak or where schools are beginning to come under some degree of pressure from the work we expect them to do. For that reason—I think this is true for all of us—schools come into and go out of pioneer status. We've suspended schools from pioneer status where we've felt there's a degree of risk in continuing in that role. We're very active about that—we work with challenge advisers, we work with our own leadership team, to say, literally once a month, 'Is everything okay there? Is there any risk in front of us?'—not just at critical moments.

[178] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you.

[179] **Mr Edwards:** Can I just add that I think, in terms of the regional consortia providing the leadership, as I said before, we need to also give schools autonomy? So, the balance of that is crucial. So, part of us in leading it is allowing them to make those decisions in the way that they feel best suits their setting for trialling it there. So, I think that's also an element we've got to make sure we do.

[180] **Llyr Gruffydd:** There's a question then about where all that comes together, which is something that was touched upon earlier, but maybe we'll pick it up in other questions.

[181] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes, okay. Thank you. Oscar.

[182] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair, and again thank you very much to the panel. I am concerned about our results in the past, with children not achieving. We are an orthodox country; we are conservative. From 1988 until today, we had only one curriculum and change is happening. I think our teachers need to be trained and come to a certain level before they teach children with the modern teaching. Otherwise, we'll be behind again in terms of what we are actually facing at the moment with the world education system. So, my question to the panel is: how can we achieve with our children's development and with the new system that the Government is going to implement, as in the Donaldson review, by 2021? So, how quickly can we achieve our standard of education to go with the other devolved nations or to equal them rather than still be behind others?

[183] **Mr Edwards:** I'll take that. I think, with that, we can—. At the moment,

as consortia, we are working with teachers to develop pedagogy and effective practice and I think the key is that we know, within all four consortia, there are schools with very effective practice. So, what we can do is share that effective practice, across the regions and across Wales, to make sure that we can bring teachers up to that level.

[184] **Lynne Neagle:** Anything to add, anybody?

[185] **Mr Hughes:** Yn amlwg, mae datblygu sgiliau addysgeg ar lawr dosbarth yn flaenoriaeth ar draws Cymru, ac mae nifer o'r rhaglenni datblygu rydym ni wedi eu rhoi yn eu lle dros y flwyddyn a hanner neu ddwy flynedd diwethaf yn rhoi ffocws penodol ar addysgeg a sgiliau addysgeg. Mae gwella addysgeg a chael y bobl fwyaf effeithiol â phosibl ar lawr dosbarth yn gweithio efo plant yn flaenoriaeth gennym ni i gyd. Fel mae rhaglenni yn aeddfedu a'r effaith wedyn ar lawr dosbarth yn parhau, gobeithio y byddwn ni yn gallu gwneud y pwynt roeddech chi yn ei godi yn fanna er mwyn gwneud yn siŵr ein bod ni yn y lle gorau posibl a'r lle mwyaf effeithiol i symud i gwricwlwm newydd.

Mr Hughes: Obviously, developing pedagogy skills in the classroom is a priority throughout Wales, and many of the development programmes that we've put in place over the past year and a half or two years do put a specific focus on pedagogy skills. Improving pedagogy and getting the most effective people possible working in the classroom working with children is a priority for all of us. As programmes do mature and the impact then in the classroom continues, we hope that we will be able to carry out the point that you raised there in order to ensure that we're in the best possible position and in the most effective position to move to a new curriculum.

[186] **Mr Edwards:** Can I just add as well—

[187] **Lynne Neagle:** Very briefly.

[188] **Mr Edwards:** Sorry. Evidence of that as well is, where we've had support for the new GCSEs, where we've worked with schools to help improve that, actually, what we've seen is an improvement in standards as a result. So, I think there's evidence that it can work.

[189] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Okay—

[190] **Mohammad Asghar:** Sorry, Chair, but my concern is about the

transition phase of these four years and what happens to these children. They might not be on this side or the other side of the curriculum. So, how can their attainment in education be equal to those children who have done it in the past, or are going to do it after? So, this generation of four years.

[191] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, go on, then.

[192] **Dr Palmer:** As quickly as I can, that isn't a function of staff development or teacher skills; that's a function of what we measure when we deliver the curriculum. What we can be confident about is the three key skills that will be required of the workforce as a consequence of 'Successful Futures', which are curriculum design, pedagogy and leadership. We can address that. We all have programmes with a high level of minimal entitlement for our practitioners. There's not a practitioner in Wales who can't get access to that. That actually isn't the risk; the risk is in the transition phase itself. So, I perceive the risk, but I don't think it's a staff skills risk, not from our work with schools.

[193] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you. Last question, John.

[194] **John Griffiths:** We've heard previously that initial teacher training and continuous professional development have to be aligned with the new curriculum, and they have to proceed at the same pace as much as possible. Are you content that that is the case? I just wonder if you could reference physical literacy, because we had a really important report, I think, from Tanni Grey-Thompson that talked about the need to make that much more central and consistent, and it was about ITT, CPD and the inspection regime. In the areas of learning, are we seeing the sort of progress that we should be in terms of the necessary alignment?

[195] **Lynne Neagle:** Briefly, if possible, please.

12:00

[196] **Dr Palmer:** Briefly, and I can speak only for my region on this one, we work closely with our initial teacher education providers to ensure—. And the answer to the question is in the new standards; it's in the new professional standards for teachers being fundamental to the curriculum of ITE as well as fundamental to the curriculum of lifelong professional learning across us. I'm having very close conversations with our three ITE providers, and I'm comfortable that the work we're doing with them—. I'm sorry I haven't

referenced physical literacy, but it applies to physical literacy; it applies to the work with lead creative schools and to all those areas of learning and experience that need that pedagogic change to be embedded therein. So, I'm comfortable about my own relationship with my ITEs and about the relationship between the region, the schools and the ITEs, as the proposals that have emerged from Furlong develop.

[197] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr, have you got a supplementary?

[198] **Llyr Gruffydd:** I was just going to ask whether you felt that the Welsh Government has actually earmarked sufficient resources to achieve what is a very high ambition in what is a very tight timescale.

[199] **Dr Palmer:** Me again?

[200] **Llyr Gruffydd:** 'Yes' or 'no' will be—

[201] **Dr Palmer:** Yes.

[202] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Diolch.

[203] **Lynne Neagle:** And nobody's got anything else to add to John's question? No.

[204] **Mr Richards–Downes:** I just think, similarly, in central south, as Kevin says, we work very strongly with our ITE providers, and we've developed good relationships with them. I think the work that's been done around the teacher standards, particularly, where there are minimum thresholds in the standards as they're developing for ITE, gives a strong basis from which to work, and then there's a set of end-of-induction standards, so those are the minimum expectations of any teacher. So, I think we've got it very strongly in the work that's developing.

[205] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you.

[206] **Mr Hughes:** Rwy'n meddwl bod hynny'n wir ar draws y pedwar consortiwm ac mae'n bwynt teg iawn ein bod ni angen cydweithredu a chydweithio efo'r sector yma i wneud yn siŵr bod y bobl sydd yn dod i

Mr Hughes: I think that's true across the four consortia. It's a very fair point that we need collaboration and co-operation with the sector to ensure that the people who come into the education sphere do so with

mewn i'r byd addysg efo'r sgiliau the necessary skills to move forward
angenrheidiol i symud ymlaen efo'r with the new curriculum. That's
cwrwclwm newydd. Rwy'n meddwl ei something that we all emphasise.
fod o'n rhywbeth rydym ni i gyd yn
rhoi pwyslais arno.

[207] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Well, can I thank you all for attending and for giving evidence this morning? It's very much appreciated. You will receive a written transcript of the session for you to check for accuracy, but thank you very much for attending. The committee will now break until 1 p.m. Thank you.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 12:02 ac 13:01.
The meeting adjourned between 12:02 and 13:01.*

Ymchwiliad i Wasanaethau Eirioli Statudol: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 2 Inquiry into Statutory Advocacy Provision: Evidence Session 2

[208] **Lynne Neagle:** Good afternoon, everyone. Can I welcome you all back to this afternoon's session of the Children, Young People and Education Committee for our third evidence session on statutory advocacy provision? I'm really pleased to welcome the children's commissioner, Professor Sally Holland, to our meeting today and also Hywel Dafydd, policy and public affairs manager, and Rachel Thomas, policy adviser. Thank you all for coming.

[209] Did you want to make any opening remarks or should I—?

[210] **Professor Holland:** I'm happy to go straight into questions.

[211] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. If I can just start, then. Obviously, the committee understands the importance of advocacy. Can you just outline where the problem is as far as you see it in terms of the provision that we've currently got in Wales at the moment?

[212] **Professor Holland:** Where we've got to in Wales at the moment is, I hope, towards the end of a very long journey on advocacy, which my office has been working on consistently, really, since it started, but particularly since its first report on advocacy in 2003. I want to emphasise, really, how important advocacy is to my office and to vulnerable children in Wales. I think it's no accident that the legislation underpinning my role specifically

mentions advocacy—along with whistleblowing and complaints—as one of the three key areas that the commissioner should be concerned with, along with all aspects of children’s welfare. I want to emphasise that, really, it’s not an optional extra; it’s an absolute necessary safeguard for our most vulnerable children in Wales. I think we’ve seen from Waterhouse through many inquiries—Rotherham is another one—where children’s voices have really been overshadowed when they’ve been at their most vulnerable. So, it’s certainly not an optional extra. Of course, it’s a required and statutory element of our social services provision.

[213] My office has been concerned for many years about availability and access to advocacy and a lack of consistency across Wales. I think we’ve seen a real range of provision from local authorities. A series of reports, driven in particular by my predecessors as commissioners, have really highlighted some of the problems with provision—problems with inconsistent commissioning criteria and having no mechanism to really actively monitor delivery across Wales. Children have reported to my office over a number of years that they don’t all know what advocacy is and don’t all know how to access it and that they’re not reminded at the right times that they have the right to an advocate.

[214] So, we’ve been concerned about consistency, about availability and mechanisms to monitor it, and particularly access being given to all children who are eligible. It seems to be that there’s more awareness and active offering of advocacy to children at the very sharpest end of vulnerability, I suppose—children who are having real difficulties and who are looked after. But, as you’ll be aware, committee, advocacy is statutory and there is eligibility for children who are in need and living at home as well. It includes children on the child protection register. I think that awareness and availability to those children has been very inconsistent. My office, under my predecessor, recommended an approach similar to the national approach that is on the table now, ready for Wales to take up actively, and I’m very, very keen to see that implemented as soon as possible, and have been—as you know from my report—quite frustrated at the progress since I came into post as commissioner.

[215] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay. Thank you very much. Julie Morgan.

[216] **Julie Morgan:** In your evidence—and obviously, what you said now sounds more optimistic, really—I think you said that taking forward the national approach to advocacy services has reached stalemate.

[217] **Professor Holland:** Yes.

[218] **Julie Morgan:** Do you want to expand on that?

[219] **Professor Holland:** Okay. Well, certainly, when I submitted my evidence, it was an absolute stalemate. There has been some progress this week, including today, which I will update you on, as a committee. But just to explain why I used the word 'stalemate', as you'll be aware, I hope, a business case seemed to be agreed by all relevant parties at the end of 2015 and was certainly signed off by the strategic leadership group in January this year. I feel quite frustrated that we still seemed to be discussing whether that was going to be implemented properly in November. Despite the fact there was a bit of a break for elections and purdah, I still would have expected much more progress to have been made by November of this year. In January, I would have been considering the positivity around the agreement over the end of last year and the beginning of this year, and I think it's fair to say I would have been surprised to have known that we would not have reached a more positive conclusion by November of this year. It's with some frustration, therefore, that I reported to this committee that I felt we had reached a stalemate. There has been a little bit of progress since I submitted my paper. Would you like me to update you on that now?

[220] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes, please.

[221] **Professor Holland:** In September, after I approached the Government to say I was unhappy with progress—or the lack of progress—the Cabinet Secretary did write to the Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Social Services and asked for an implementation plan to be sent in. That implementation plan had not been received by the time I submitted my evidence. I have now seen a draft copy of the implementation plan, which I believe is going to be submitted to this committee by the end of this week. It was still in draft until it was agreed this morning at a meeting called by the Cabinet Secretary with the chief executive of the WLGA, the Chair of ADSS and myself—this morning—when it was agreed, with some amendments. I believe it's going to be submitted to you tomorrow.

[222] **Julie Morgan:** Can I just ask where the delay was? Who was that with? Was it the Government or the WLGA?

[223] **Professor Holland:** Okay, where does the delay come? I think it's been mainly in implementing at a local authority level or co-ordinating the local authorities at a national level. The delay has been in—. To some surprise, really, I've been regularly informed that there's been a delay in getting a consistent agreement right across Wales. I say 'some surprise' because local authorities have been represented throughout the process last year. There has been a constant message that there's still a political process going forward to reach agreement. Now, of course, that has to happen, and local democracy is important in that way. The Government needs to allow that process to go forward locally. However, it was like it was started afresh in the spring when, in fact, the agreement—the national approach—was known about at the end of last year. The Welsh Government has played some role, I think, in trying to push it forward, but I do feel that the whole process lost some momentum, really, between January and about August or September this year when I tried to intervene and get it moving again. There was some activity throughout that period, but it has felt very, very slow throughout. I've attended meetings that have felt very positive and very optimistic over the last year, where everyone seems to be in agreement that the national approach is a good approach and that it will happen. I've come away feeling quite optimistic and then there's been very little progress and implementation.

[224] Where we reached this morning—. The implementation plan suggests that the national approach will go forward at a regional level and that it will be possible to have it completely in place—so, not just a commissioning process going out, but actually in place—by June 2017, which is when the last commissioned service in one of the regions will have ended. I have pressed the point this week, including this morning, that I would like to see evidence of active sign-up by every local authority on that. So, I've been informed, with some confidence—and I hope that confidence is warranted—by the WLGA and ADSS that there's no dissent from any local authorities in taking this forward, but I would like to see an active sign-up. The Cabinet Secretary did ask for that today, and said that he would be actively pursuing that if it wasn't forthcoming. I believe you will be hearing from both ADSS and the Cabinet Secretary, so you'll be able to ask for more details when you've had the plan.

[225] So, I think, as of today, I feel we have made some progress. I do think that, actually, the whole process of having this inquiry by the committee has triggered some movement in the last few weeks, so I'm grateful for that. I still feel quite cautious, until I actually see that written reassurance that

everyone is going forward. We cannot have a national approach unless every local authority is actively signed up to it and committed to working on a regional level to commission that. We cannot have a situation where children in one local authority are getting a different kind of service to others, so we absolutely have to have every local authority signed up, or the Government will have to take a different tack.

[226] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Hefin.

[227] **Hefin David:** You've been very honest about the fact that there's a stalemate and there are these differences, but I still don't think the committee has a full understanding of what those differences are. So, what is the nature of these differences? Is it how things are done on the ground? Is it financial? Is it a difference of opinion between individual leaders in local authorities? Can we be more specific about precisely what those differences are?

[228] **Professor Holland:** Do you mean differences in provision?

[229] **Hefin David:** No. Differences in opinion—the stalemate. Where does the stalemate come from?

[230] **Professor Holland:** Of going forward?

[231] **Hefin David:** Yes. I don't think we're clear on what the differences are.

[232] **Lynne Neagle:** I think what Hefin is asking is: why has it been difficult to get local government to move on it?

[233] **Hefin David:** Yes, and where the divisions are.

[234] **Professor Holland:** I think, historically, we have seen a very varied service. So, if you look at spend per looked-after child—or eligible child, rather—there's been a huge range by the local authorities, which means that, in moving towards this national approach, each of them has got a different journey to go on. So, some actually were already spending more than the national approach would suggest and some will have to spend considerably more. So, my understanding has been that there's been quite a political process to go through in the different local authorities to reach the point when they're all ready to sign up.

[235] What we've been having is general feedback, let's say, from ADSS and the WLGA to say that nearly everyone's on board, or it's looking positive. It's been quite hard to really get down to detail on which local authorities are actively signed up or not, and that's what I've been asking for absolutely in black and white, in writing: is every local authority now signed up?

13:15

[236] **Lynne Neagle:** And in terms of the legislation, obviously there's a statutory duty to provide advocacy, and that's been reinforced by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Is there anything deficient, then, in the legislation that has contributed to these delays in your view, or is that something that we need to look at, to drive this forward?

[237] **Professor Holland:** Overall in the legislation I think that the social services and well-being Act and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 strengthen the position on advocacy. It will be a regulated activity under the regulation and inspection Act. Of course, the social services and well-being Act's Part 10 repeats the eligibility criteria. There are some issues with the code of practice that still need to be clarified. Rachel, will I ask you to come in, because you've been working on some of the technical side on this?

[238] **Ms Thomas:** Yes, that's fine. So, the office was involved in tandem as observers to both the task and finish group on the national approach and, alongside that, a technical group on Part 10. In the development of Part 10, obviously because of the person-centred approach of the Act, there are a lot of different types of advocacy to include in that. It was felt that it was a real shame that the national approach and children's statutory advocacy wasn't reflected more strongly in the code of practice. There were a lot of discussions around that. At the time, when we responded to the Part 10 consultation, we were asking for the work of the national approach to be incorporated into that code of practice. What we've ended up with when the codes are laid is there's a chapter that sets out advocacy for looked-after and entitled children, and it says, 'Following in this chapter are more of the details about this', and then it just moves on to the next chapter. So, there's a gap there where the work of the national approach needs to be inserted, but, of course, it hasn't been able to because that work hasn't been finalised and agreed. So, the statutory duty in the Act is strong on the duty on local authorities, but that detail behind how you deliver and achieve positive outcomes for children is what's missing in the code of practice.

[239] **Mr Dafydd:** Just to add to that, Chair, in terms of filling the gap, the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 enables Welsh Government to amend existing guidance and legislation in order to give further effect to children's rights. Therefore, there is the opportunity and the ability for Welsh Government to do that. I think it's also worth noting in terms of legislation that the rights Measure and the social services Act have within them the duty of due regard to the UNCRC. So, working towards access for children and young people to statutory advocacy is, in essence, fulfilling that duty of due regard. I think we should frame this discussion in that way, because I think, looking back on the 'Missing Voices' report and the reviews that were undertaken by our office, up to that point, if that duty was in place, I think our assessment would be that both local government and Welsh Government's exercise of their duties would have been inadequate. So, the national approach provides an opportunity for us to truly deliver on children's rights and to make that a reality for those with eligibility.

[240] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you.

[241] **Professor Holland:** And Part 10 of the Act says that there's a mandatory duty from local authorities to ensure that all individuals are aware of and are able to access advocacy. Now, for the vulnerable children who are eligible for advocacy, that has to be given real meaning, not just an advert that it's available, or a leaflet about it. That's where we feel the active offer is particularly important, because it's a meaningful way to implement that mandatory duty under Part 10, to ensure that all eligible individuals are able to access advocacy.

[242] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Can I just ask why you weren't full members of the group looking at it? You said you were observers.

[243] **Professor Holland:** That would be a standard way for us to engage with Government bodies like that. It means that we still would take a full part in discussion et cetera, but knowing that we have a right to scrutinise the work of the Government, we keep an observer status on all those kinds of groups.

[244] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Oscar.

[245] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair. My question is direct to Sally. Thanks, Sally, for telling us all this about statutory advocacy provisions. Have you fully assessed the impact of successive Welsh

Government policies on advocacy, and what do you perceive to be the priority areas for the Welsh Government to address in this field?

[246] **Professor Holland:** Could you just repeat the first bit of that question?

[247] **Mohammad Asghar:** Have you fully assessed the impact of successive Welsh Government policies on advocacy, and what do you perceive to be the priority areas for the Welsh Government to address?

[248] **Professor Holland:** Okay. So, as I said at the beginning, this has been a long time coming, and successive Welsh Governments have been involved in responding to my office on advocacy. Government has—and particularly the last Government, which, of course, was the first Government I was engaged with as commissioner, they have accepted all of the recommendations in my predecessor's reports on advocacy and accepted the principles behind them. What's happened has been that progress has been very slow. So there's been a positive in terms of agreeing the principle behind it, but progress has tended to be very slow in implementation: what children actually receive. There has been progress in terms of legislation, as we've just laid out, including making it a regulated activity, which again I would see as positive progress. So, there's been some good progress at a high level; what has been the frustration, I think, for many parties involved, including me, has been that we just haven't reached a point where all children are receiving advocacy in a way recommended by my office on many occasions.

[249] In terms of priorities for now, it is to absolutely ensure that the national approach is implemented as swiftly as possible. I think that today's meeting was a significant one in that the Cabinet Secretary did lay down his expectation that there would be progress made as swiftly as possible. I would be hoping to see, or I would be expecting to see Welsh Government following that through in a very active manner in the next few weeks and months.

[250] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Darren, then Llyr.

[251] **Darren Millar:** I just wanted to ask a little bit about the implementation plan. Obviously, we haven't seen that at the moment, but you've suggested that it's going to be done on a regional basis, rather than an individual local authority basis.

[252] **Professor Holland:** Yes.

[253] **Darren Millar:** Obviously, some local authorities have got very good advocacy provision, and it might be a very small organisation that's providing that excellent, top-quality advocacy, and those organisations don't always have a regional reach or a national reach. Is there a risk that some of the good provision, some of the good work that's being done, might be lost if there's a regional approach to some of this work?

[254] **Professor Holland:** I think a regional approach would be, for me, the right level to pitch it at. The plan B would be a national approach, which, again, might be difficult for smaller providers to provide. But I think it's something the Government would need to consider, if we can't get a consistent approach across Wales. I think that what we've seen with the voluntary sector and other areas is that they've been able to form coalitions and partnerships with others in order to extend their reach. We've seen that in a number of other services, such as adoption support, for example, and I think that would be a positive way forward for smaller organisations.

[255] **Darren Millar:** And is that actively encouraged in the implementation plan—you know, the draft one? Is there an expectation that some of the smaller ones might work together?

[256] **Professor Holland:** I don't think that's mentioned in the implementation plan itself.

[257] **Darren Millar:** Okay. And in terms of ensuring the quality of the provision now, rather than just the procurement of the provision, you're content with the safeguards to ensure quality in the new implementation plan that has been drafted.

[258] **Professor Holland:** Well, what we'll need to see alongside the national approach is the standards and outcomes framework to be implemented as well. It's ready, it's written, it needs to go out to consultation and implemented as part of this national approach. There's nothing in that that should make any of this be held up, but quality as well as quantity must be monitored, I quite agree with you there, and we need a framework to do that, but there is one written and ready.

[259] **Darren Millar:** The one service that is national, if you like, is the non-statutory helpline that's available, the Meic helpline. To what extent does that feature in this national approach? I understand there was some concern

that it didn't really feature in the business plan that was published last year.

[260] **Professor Holland:** That's right. The national helpline, Meic, has an important role to play, obviously, in providing an important service to children. The national approach is particularly concerned with the commissioning of and provision of statutory advocacy to eligible children, which is not something that that helpline provides. So, I believe that's why it's not part of the national approach. Is there anything you want to add on that, Rachel?

[261] **Ms Thomas:** Just in general, when we talk about the national approach, I think it's important to put the marker down that there are a number of component parts to that, and they're all interlinked. So, the delivery of the active offer would be part of it. There's a service specification that sets out exactly what you're offering to provide, and I think that's where the bids from partnerships and things would sit within—whether you can meet the service specification. There's also a range and level tool that works out the capacity of service that's needed, and then there are the reporting requirements, so performance management and reporting against the standards and outcomes framework. So, there's a lot of different aspects to that, which all need to be taken together, and, again, that's something that a service like Meic wouldn't necessarily be able to sign up to, because they wouldn't be able to report against things that they don't actively deliver themselves. But, certainly, there's a wider role for Meic under the umbrella of Part 10, and the overall provision of advocacy.

[262] **Darren Millar:** You said that the code will need to be updated to incorporate the new model, as it were, going forward. It seems to me that the stalemate was quite easy to overcome, once your intervention had taken place with the Welsh Government, in terms of trying to get the Welsh Government just to nudge everybody in the right direction. I mean, do you think—? I know that you said earlier on that local authorities perhaps were not giving it the priority that it deserved, or weren't really getting their acts together in terms of trying to sort an implementation plan out, but to what extent do you think that the Welsh Government could have been doing a little bit more to nudge things forward, given that it's been relatively easy to move things forward, now that we're doing this inquiry, and that you've had your discussion with the rest of the Ministers?

[263] **Professor Holland:** When we say 'relatively easy', I'm still slightly reserving judgment until we actually see it happen. I think that—. Could they

have done more at any point? We did have a period of purdah as well. I think, perhaps, between January and the period of purdah, there perhaps could have been a bit of checking as to whether the process of gathering the active sign-up from every local authority had taken place in that period. But I do feel that, on this occasion, Welsh Government have proactively supported this approach and put up money, which hasn't been taken up, which has been quite disappointing. There's been money in the pot for this, this year, which hasn't yet been taken up by local government. I think local government might counter with the fact that they've not been quite clear about how much that is, and how to access it, but it's been clear for a number of months now that there's been money available to fund the active offer this year.

[264] **Darren Millar:** What sort of sum of money was that?

[265] **Professor Holland:** I think £0.5 million was mentioned this morning, wasn't it, in the meeting?

[266] **Mr Dafydd:** I think it's around £1 million in total.¹

[267] **Darren Millar:** So, they've had that available and just haven't tapped into it.

[268] **Professor Holland:** Yes, because they've been waiting to have sign-up and to have the political will to move forward, really.

[269] **Darren Millar:** Okay, thanks.

[270] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Llyr.

[271] **Llyr Gruffydd:** I'm just wondering, really, I know you're cautious, and I think that's probably right, given the history of this—what is it, three reports from the committee, and four from previous children's commissioners? So, there we are. But how soon do you think we could be seeing change on the ground as a result of this?

¹ Eglurhad/Clarification: WG have put £500–550k forward to assist with the implementation of the active offer but the implementation of the national approach has been costed between £1 million and £1.1 million, with the expectation that local authorities meet the rest of the cost.

[272] **Professor Holland:** So, we heard today from the chief executive of the Welsh Local Government Association that all the leaders of the councils are meeting for a routine meeting tomorrow, and he pledged to get commitment from all the leaders at that meeting tomorrow. And I again asked for an active sign-up from all the local authorities, rather than an absence of dissent, because I felt that that would give me more reassurance, and the Minister asked for that. They agreed that all the national partnership boards would be written to, and they would ask for that active sign-up from the national partnership boards. The Minister said that if that wasn't forthcoming by January, we would all be round the table again. I did check, by the way, I was able to share all these details from the meeting today, and everyone was happy for me to do that; it wasn't a confidential meeting. And so, I would expect by January to have that active sign-up and, as I say, the current contracts with providers have to end, and my clear understanding from ADSS is that they will have ended and new ones will have started by June. So, that's when I would expect to see it, and I really will be very disappointed if we don't have the national approach implemented by June in 2017.

13:30

[273] **Llyr Gruffydd:** And that would include, then, all the additional work in terms of the code being written, or various bits being inserted—the whole package needs to be replaced, really, doesn't it?

[274] **Professor Holland:** The standards and outcomes framework, I think, could be consulted on and approved in that time frame. I think you'll have to ask Government about how long it would take to make the additions to the code of practice.

[275] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Just on another issue, you touched very early on on the lack of consistency with regard to the availability and access to services across Wales. Now, there's a geographical context to that. I presume there's a linguistic one as well—you know, availability of services in the language of choice. I don't know what the situation is, actually, at the moment; maybe you could tell us, but also how you expect that to improve.

[276] **Professor Holland:** Yes, the language issue is very important in all services and, I think, particularly in services where we may have vulnerable people in crisis. It's very important that they can access that service in their most natural language to express those concerns in. Of course, going forward, local authorities will be subject to Welsh language standards and

will be obliged under the Welsh language standards, but also under the actual service specification for this national approach, to offer services to children in their language of choice. Previous reports from my office have identified the need in some areas, really, for all advocates to be bilingual speakers, in the north-west of Wales in particular. I think it's, as I say, particularly important in this area that that choice is very actively given to children and young people who may be used to or expect to engage with professionals and others in English, but who may have difficulty expressing their emotions or things close to their heart in English. An experience I had earlier this summer was that we were doing some filming with looked-after children about their experiences and their ambitions for the future, and we were offering them to do that filming in English or Welsh, and a young woman said, 'Oh, I'd like to do it in English', and she did most of the interview in English, but when she came to talk about a difficult experience, she said, 'I'm going to have to switch to Welsh now.' So, she may have actively chosen to have an advocacy service in English, but, in fact, when it came to it, she did need to and wanted to switch to Welsh. I think it's about proactively offering the service, rather than saying, you know, 'on request' or whatever.

[277] **Ms Thomas:** And just in terms of the geographical implications, the range and level tool also includes factors like rurality and the necessity of travel in calculating the capacity and the cost that would be needed to provide that. So, that should all be included in the full approach as well.

[278] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Thank you.

[279] **Professor Holland:** And, of course, a range of other languages may be needed as well—

[280] **Llyr Gruffydd:** As well. Of course. Absolutely.

[281] **Professor Holland:** —especially with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

[282] **Lynne Neagle:** In your paper, you said that it wouldn't be good enough for local authorities to take a pick-and-choose approach, but that they had to opt in to the whole thing. How confident are you, now that things seem to be moving in the right direction, that that is going to happen? And, secondly, if the Cabinet Secretary has said that, by January, things really need to be on the right track, you've also said in your paper that if sufficient progress is

made, the Welsh Government should move to commissioning its own national model. What happens in January if we're not there? Are we then at the point where we say, 'Right, we've had enough of this wrangling with local government now; let's crack on with doing our own thing, like the national adoption service'?

[283] **Professor Holland:** Okay. There are two aspects to that. The first one is that, yes, the whole approach is needed in order to fulfil Part 10 of the Act and in order that local authorities can fulfil their due regard to children's rights. So, a pick-and-choose approach is not acceptable and, to be fair, we've not heard anything, including today, from local authorities to suggest that they wish to take that approach. The discussion is about the whole package.

[284] In the implementation plan, which you'll be receiving tomorrow, the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru plan to second an expert in this area to help oversee the progress and they're confident that that individual will keep a very close eye on the detail of the commissioning to make sure that it does fit with the national approach and they're keen to do that. That gave me some confidence as well.

[285] In terms of the Government, if we get to a point—and I've said I don't want to hear this in June, we must hear this earlier than June—early next year when any of the regions or local authorities are not signing up to the full approach, then I would be pressing the Government to exercise its powers in an appropriate way to make sure that happens. There are a range of ways in which they could do that including requiring the regions to move forward in this direction or move into a national commissioning service.

[286] **Lynne Neagle:** Okay, thank you very much. Are there any other questions? Oscar?

[287] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Chair. I think my question is to just Sally. I think Dr Mike Shooter said that there is a lot of resistance in Government and local authorities. Who is the worst, Government or the local authority, or both?

[288] **Professor Holland:** Yes, he did say that, didn't he? I think that, over the years, there has been some resistance to moving forward in this active way. My sense is that the argument about, or the case for the active offer, for example, which is an area where I think there's probably been the most

concern in terms of implications for local authorities; my view is that the case for the active offer has been accepted now by local authorities and Welsh Government. I really hope we will be moving forward positively.

[289] As I say, a slight caveat is that I did feel we were at this stage in January, but it does feel really serious now. The meeting this morning did feel like everyone's put their cards on the table and it must happen. So, with cautious optimism I would say that any previous resistance seems to have been overcome and people have accepted that this is the right thing to do for our most vulnerable children in Wales.

[290] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you. Julie.

[291] **Julie Morgan:** It is surprising that there may have been any resistance in view of the fact about all the historical child abuse. It seems to come out daily, doesn't it, with the footballers this week? What effect does that sort of public revelation have on the work that you're doing in terms of trying to move advocacy forward?

[292] **Professor Holland:** I think it gives an extra momentum to the work really. Of course, not every time, but sometimes when there are public cases like that, my office receives further calls in from individuals who may have suffered in different ways from abuse. But I think it does give an extra momentum and argument for this case. Of course, some would argue and have argued in the past that other professionals can carry out this duty of advocacy, and certainly as a former social work educator I would hope that I would always have taught social work students that it is an important part of their role to be an advocate. However, it's really important that we remember that they're unable to provide independent advocacy when it is needed on the occasions that it is needed because they have a duty of due regard to the child's best interests at the heart of what they do and sometimes, of course, that will not coincide with the express wishes of the child. An independent advocate is there to neutrally and objectively help the child express those views. So, I think it's so important that people remember that that's their role. It's not just because other people don't care or can't speak out. It actually is a very important, independent role. We need to remind people of that, people who think it's because social workers aren't adequate to do it or something like that. It is a separate role that is necessary on some occasions.

[293] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you very much. Are there are other questions from Members? No. Okay, can I thank the commissioner and her team for

attending today on this very important issue? We look forward with interest to some positive developments. You will, as is normal practice, be sent a transcript of the meeting to check for accuracy. Thank you very much for coming.

[294] **Professor Holland:** Thank you very much.

13:40

Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note

[295] **Lynne Neagle:** Item 6 is papers to note. Paper to note 6 is additional information from the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language following the meeting on 12 October. Paper to note 7 is the letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Education in response to our letter in relation to Diamond. Paper to note 8 is the letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children about the draft budget from us. Paper to note 9 is our letter on the budget to the Cabinet Secretary for Education. Paper to note 10 is a letter from the Minister for lifelong learning on Welsh in education strategic plans. And paper to note 11 is a letter from the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on the draft budget for our information, given the potential crossover. Are Members happy to note those papers? Thank you very much.

13:41

Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o Weddill y Cyfarfod

Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Remainder of the Meeting

Cynnig:

Motion:

bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.42(vi).

that the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(vi).

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[296] **Lynne Neagle:** Item 7 is a motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of this meeting. Is everybody content? Thank you very much.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 13:41.

The public part of the meeting ended at 13:41.