



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

Y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc **The Children and Young People Committee**

Dydd Iau, 26 Ionawr 2012
Thursday, 26 January 2012

Cynnwys

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

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.

In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol

Committee members in attendance

Angela Burns	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Jocelyn Davies	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Keith Davies	Llafur Labour
Suzu Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Julie Morgan	Llafur Labour

Lynne Neagle	Llafur Labour
Jenny Rathbone	Llafur Labour
Aled Roberts	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Simon Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

**Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance**

Leighton Andrews	Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau Minister for Education and Skills
Jeff Cuthbert	Y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau Deputy Minister for Skills
John Pugsley	Pennaeth y Gangen Llywbrau Dysgu 14-19, Llywodraeth Cymru Head of 14-19 Learning Pathways Branch, Welsh Government
Martin Swain	Pennaeth Is-adran y Strategaeth Plant a Phobl Ifanc, Llywodraeth Cymru Head of 14-19 Learning Pathways Division, Welsh Government
Gwenda Thomas	Y Dirprwy Weinidog Plant a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services
Jo Trott	Pennaeth Dechrau'n Deg, Llywodraeth Cymru Head of Flying Start, Welsh Government
Chris Tweedale	Cyfarwyddwr y Grŵp Ysgolion a Phobl Ifanc, Llywodraeth Cymru Director, Schools and Young People Group, Welsh Government

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

Claire Griffiths	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk
Anne Thomas	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Siân Thomas	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.15 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.15 a.m.*

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

[1] **Christine Chapman:** Good morning, and welcome to the Children and Young People Committee. I remind you that all mobile phones, BlackBerrys and pagers should be switched off. We have not received any apologies this morning, but I understand that Julie Morgan may be slightly late.

**Gweithredu Mesur Dysgu a Sgiliau (Cymru) 2009: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth
Implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009: Evidence
Session**

[2] **Christine Chapman:** This is our final evidence session for the committee's inquiry into the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009. I welcome Leighton Andrews, Minister for Education and Skills, Jeff Cuthbert, Deputy Minister for Skills, Chris Tweedale, Director, Children, Young People and School Effectiveness, and John Pugsley, head of the 14-19 learning pathways branch. I welcome you all to the meeting. Thank you for your paper, which Members will have read. We will go straight into questions if you are happy with that.

[3] I will start. We have taken quite a lot of evidence and I want to start with a broad question. Looking at the statutory requirement to offer 30 courses, including five vocational courses, what are your comments on the progress on that? We have, for example, discussed with people certain subjects, such as modern foreign languages, Welsh as a second language and science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Do you feel that things are going as smoothly as possible?

[4] **The Minister for Education and Skills (Leighton Andrews):** The evidence that we have and the evidence that has been given to you as a committee demonstrates that the statutory requirement that we introduced in the Measure to offer 30 courses, including five vocational ones, is being successfully delivered. All maintained schools and further education colleges in Wales met their September 2011 statutory responsibilities under the Measure at both key stage 4 and post-16 level and many are already meeting or even exceeding the full September 2011 requirement for that local curriculum, including a minimum of 30 courses and at least five vocational courses. To illustrate progress, in 2008, only 15% of schools indicated that they offered 30 or more choices. By the time of the formation of the first local curriculum under the requirements of the Measure in September 2010, that figure had risen to 88% of schools and, by September this year, it will be 100% of schools. So, it is an example of successful legislation by the Assembly.

[5] On the specific subjects to which you referred, there is no evidence that the Measure itself has contributed to a decline in respect of modern foreign languages. The evidence shows that there has been a decline across other nations in the UK and that that was taking place before the Measure was introduced. Obviously we have taken steps ourselves to address the decline and to encourage more learners. We have some examples of where the Measure has encouraged provision in modern foreign languages, for example, in the Vale of Glamorgan, where Cowbridge Comprehensive School and Llantwit Major Comprehensive School are collaborating to deliver a German A-level course, with two sessions per week in Cowbridge and a third delivered via video-conferencing. We are told that the course could not have run at the individual schools because of insufficient learner demand. I understand that they are also looking to offer a similar arrangement in respect of A-level French from this September.

[6] With regard to STEM, the Measure requires that the post-16 local curriculum must contain at least one course within the domain covering STEM subjects so that they are available after 16. Of course, at key stage 4, maths and science are mandatory subjects that must be followed by all learners.

[7] You asked about Welsh as a second language. It is compulsory up to the age of 16 and approximately 80% of pupils follow the Welsh as a second language programme of study. We are managing overall to maintain entry. There is a marginal decline in entry for GCSE Welsh as a second language between 2010 and 2011, but I do not think that there is any

evidence that the Measure is responsible for that.

[8] **Christine Chapman:** It is great that there has been an increase and that is commendable, but we have heard evidence about young people in rural areas, for example—we know that some young people are not confident about travelling. As a Minister, are you able to pick up on that with local authorities?

[9] **Leighton Andrews:** As you say, there is some evidence in that regard, but there is some evidence to the contrary. What we have managed to do through the support that we put in place in the transition period, through the Measure, is to assist local authorities in planning the curriculum and planning travel. We want to minimise the number of young people who have to travel. We have evidence that, in some areas, particular institutions are less able to offer the full range than others. That is the case in my constituency. You are never going to get every institution in Wales offering the same number and range of courses; I am not even sure that that would be desirable.

[10] **Aled Roberts:** Weinidog, a ydych wedi ystyried y sefyllfa yn yr Alban? Deallaf fod y gostyngiad yn y niferoedd sy'n astudio ieithoedd modern lawer yn llai yn yr Alban nag yng Nghymru. A oes gennych unrhyw dystiolaeth ynghylch faint o ysgolion sydd ond yn cynnig gwersi ieithoedd modern ar ôl ysgol, yn hytrach na fel rhan o'r cwricwlwm? Mae hynny hefyd yn cyfrannu tuag at y gostyngiad. Beth yw eich barn am gwrs byr Cymraeg fel ail iaith? Mae nifer o ysgolion yn ardal y gogledd ddwyrain yn cynnig cwrs byr yn unig. Mae hynny'n achosi problemau o ran yr safon yn yr iaith mae'r plant yn ei gyrraedd.

Aled Roberts: Minister, have you considered the situation in Scotland? I understand that the reduction in the numbers studying modern languages is much smaller in Scotland than in Wales. Do you have any evidence with regard to how many schools only offer modern language lessons after school hours, rather than as part of the curriculum? That also contributes to the reduction. What is your opinion on a short course for Welsh as a second language? A number of schools in the north-east offer only a short course. That causes problems with regard to the standard that the children attain in the language.

[11] **Leighton Andrews:** The issue that you raised with regard to a short course for Welsh as a second language is of concern to us. There has been an increase in the numbers of pupils being entered for that. We discussed the issue in the department last week. We are keeping that under review. The Welsh-medium education strategy was only launched in April 2010, so it would be premature to make any fundamental changes to it. There is a legitimate debate to be had on whether the short course fulfils our objectives for learning Welsh. At this stage, I do not have any proposals to bring forward. With regard to modern foreign languages, we acknowledge the decline that has taken place. We have taken significant steps to seek to improve the investment that we are making and to encourage young people to undertake modern foreign languages. Some schools have reported an increase in recent years. We give significant support to the National Centre for Languages, CILT Cymru, to support the teaching of modern foreign languages; I think that it had a presence in the Assembly in the autumn. We will continue to work with it. The changes that happened to the curriculum in England and Wales some years ago may well have contributed to the decline in the numbers taking modern foreign languages. There is also an issue there about to what extent a modern foreign language should be compulsory. We will need to look at that, and it will be covered in the qualifications review that the Deputy Minister is undertaking.

[12] **Angela Burns:** Thank you for your paper. I want to address the funding for the programme. As the Chair said earlier, we have had an awful lot of evidence over the last number of sessions. A substantial number of organisations have raised concerns about the continuation of the funding for the programme. The Finance Committee of the third Assembly was concerned about the long-term sustainability of it. We received the following

evidence from the Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales with reference to rural areas:

[13] ‘The 14-19 grant has been absolutely essential in securing the necessary transport to be able to expand provision. It is not unusual for schools to have to arrange buses, mini buses and even taxis for learners, as public transport is not convenient in terms of travel times or locations.’

[14] A second commentator said:

[15] ‘The funding issue is critical to the implementation of the Measure...for the pre-16 vocational courses in particular, without additionality they will collapse like a pack of cards’.

[16] Do you believe that local authorities have the funding capacity in the current settlement to be able to carry on and support this Measure as it should be supported?

[17] **Leighton Andrews:** We put money in to support this programme from the outset, and we have continued to provide that funding year on year. However, as the then Deputy Minister for Skills said in, I think, 2008, this was intended to be pump-priming money. In the long term, I do not think that we would anticipate continuing that funding stream in the way that it currently operates.

[18] **Angela Burns:** I accept that it is seen as pump-priming money, but given the extraordinary costs associated with some elements of this and given the rurality of some schools, do you feel that we need to consider any additional moneys to underpin certain key issues such as transport, particularly given such diverse delivery?

[19] **Leighton Andrews:** There are clearly transport issues in some rural areas just as there are transport issues in some Valleys areas. That is understood. We would need to see a great deal more evidence of that from local authorities before I would be willing to make any further commitment in this area.

[20] **Angela Burns:** Do you intend to look at whether the successes of the collaborative delivery agenda are actually achieving savings? Earlier, you alluded to the fact that we cannot expect all institutions to offer all courses to all pupils all the time, but some institutions are crying foul, saying that it is creating a marketplace in which they cannot compete. Therefore, the courses they deliver are becoming more costly because they are getting fewer and fewer pupils because they do not have the ability to offer that breadth of course options and are therefore losing their pupils to other places.

[21] **Leighton Andrews:** Having read your evidence, my understanding is that that argument is made in respect of the national planning and funding system, which was a unit-based method of funding. Clearly, those offering more units of learning did so partly, I think, in order to play the system and earn additional sums. That is why I have suspended the national planning and funding system and moved to a three-year funding mechanism while we review the system. I want a system that genuinely plans as well as funds and which drives out unnecessary competition of the kind to which you refer. With regard to the Measure, there are examples we can point to where greater collaboration has made specific savings. Take for example Bryn Tawe-Gŵyr partnership in Swansea, where the provision of 20 courses being offered collaboratively between two schools has resulted in savings of around £83,000 per year for each school even after the additional costs of travel have been taken into account.

[22] **Angela Burns:** May we see some of that evidence so that it can help to inform our deliberations?

- [23] **Leighton Andrews:** I have just given you some, but I am very happy to share more.
- [24] **Angela Burns:** No, I mean the detail of it please, Minister, if that would be possible—not now but in a paper.
- [25] **Leighton Andrews:** I am not going to pretend that I have comprehensive data on every learning partnership across the whole of Wales on this, but we have examples.
- [26] **Angela Burns:** I am not asking for comprehensive data, just for some examples of best practice so that we can inform—
- [27] **Christine Chapman:** That will now be on the record from the Minister anyway.
- [28] **Jocelyn Davies:** Minister, do you think that the example that you just gave us is typical?
- [29] **Leighton Andrews:** I do not know whether it is typical, but we have evidence of collaboration between a wide range of institutions that have moved to work with other schools or between schools and further education colleges in the delivery of particular subjects, which means that they have larger classes than they would have had otherwise. I have examples in my constituency where certain subjects are being delivered in Ferndale, and pupils from Porth travel there and vice versa. That is the result not only of the Measure but the approach that was put in place in the build-up to the Measure, which the Chair is very familiar with as she was the Deputy Minister responsible at the time. It encouraged schools and colleges to look to work together with a real understanding that, at some stage, legislation would come down the line.

9.30 a.m.

- [30] **Jocelyn Davies:** I can see how it works, and I can see that there are probably savings to be made, as you quite rightly point out. Your officials obviously provide you with briefings; I do not suppose that the schools have given you that information directly, and I am wondering whether the figure that you gave us is typical.
- [31] **Leighton Andrews:** I doubt that the figure is typical.
- [32] **Jenny Rathbone:** You rightly point out in your paper that innovative solutions are required to ensure that these partnerships are working effectively with regard to joint timetabling and transport for pupils and so on. We have had some concerns from witnesses that the joint timetabling and blocking of subject delivery is also impacting on the key stage 3 learners and that it is often unsuitable to give particular subjects in blocks of two or three hours. Are you aware of concerns in that regard?
- [33] **Leighton Andrews:** I have read the bulk of the evidence that has come to the committee and I have seen that concern expressed. I would expect people to minimise that at a local level.
- [34] **Jenny Rathbone:** The teachers have to teach key stages 3 and 4, so is that practical?
- [35] **Leighton Andrews:** It is a matter for leadership at a local level. We either believe in local delivery of education or we believe that the Minister should set the timetable, which mythologically is usually said to have happened under Napoleon in France. I have been accused of being Napoleonic in the past, but I am not sure whether anyone has asked me to go that far.

[36] **Jenny Rathbone:** I raised a specific issue in Plenary yesterday about the science, technology, engineering, mathematics initiative, which offers STEM teachers the possibility of being linked to a university in order to enhance the curriculum in the schools. Only two teachers came forward, only one of whom works full time in a school, because schools are so reluctant to lose their scarce teacher resources and could not find mechanisms for sharing their science or engineering teachers to enable this to happen. It is the sort of thing that needs to happen if we are going to up the game in the STEM subjects. Is there anything that you can do to encourage that?

[37] **Leighton Andrews:** Predecessor committees have looked in detail at the STEM subjects, and we have responded in detail in the previous Assembly on these points. We make a significant investment through the National Science Academy and a number of schemes that enable scientists in higher education to work with science teachers. There are number of schemes to encourage young children in primary schools to take up science subjects. We have a range of approaches in place to develop the commitment to STEM, and what has been seen in recent years has been encouraging. We have seen an increase in entries at certain levels for STEM subjects.

[38] The difficulty is that there will always be anecdotes about particular problems here and there. I am always happy to look at the anecdotes to see whether they are evidence of a more general problem, but I would need to hear the real details before I could say that it was. On the basis of the work that we have in place, especially through the National Science Academy work, I think that we have an extensive programme.

[39] **Suzy Davies:** One knock-on effect of the Measure has been the creation of joint timetables across individual schools in an area. Evidence that we have had here, which is backed up by the experience of at least one school in my area, is that, even though modern languages were struggling before the Measure came in, there is still a problem with them falling into the same columns as attractive subjects such as drama and media. Even though the Measure may not be ultimately responsible for a decline in modern languages, it may not necessarily be helping across the board either. I would be interested to know whether you could mention something about the action plan that you have for modern languages.

[40] More significantly, in my view, the common timetabling situation has given rise in some schools to children not being able to get access to their core subjects during the school day, especially in schools where there is a high take-up of vocational courses and children are leaving the school to go to other schools or to further education colleges. Is it a worry for you that an inadvertent result of this may be that some schools have to deliver their core subjects outside the daily timetable?

[41] **Leighton Andrews:** I would hope that schools were not delivering their core subjects outside their core timetables, and I would want to hear examples of where that is happening—

[42] **Suzy Davies:** It is not universal, I admit, but there are some examples.

[43] **Leighton Andrews:** I certainly do not think that it is universal. Nobody is saying that there are not challenges in this. One of the debates I embarked on in the previous Assembly soon after becoming, as I was then, the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, was on the question of how much choice we really needed in the system and whether choice was really the answer. My focus has always been more on quality. Choice is necessarily limited by a range of factors, and we need to be honest about that. At the end of the day, it is important that there is an effective, good and meaningful choice available to pupils and students, but I do not think that we can pretend that there is an absolute choice of the entire marketplace of subjects. I am more concerned—and this is why we have embarked on the qualifications review—that we are giving young people a range of subjects from which

to choose which are meaningful in the context of employment and of progression to further learning. That is why we have embarked on that approach.

[44] **Christine Chapman:** We heard some evidence that some subjects were being offered outside the timetable, but we will get that to you. Although choice has increased, our concern is for the person who is experiencing that, because their time in school is quite limited. So, we will get that evidence to you, and we would be grateful if you could look at that.

[45] **Jocelyn Davies:** Before I come on to my question on regional working, it is obvious, is it not, that this is no utopia and you cannot give an infinite number of choices and expect the timetable to work perfectly for everyone? We also heard evidence that some schools were offering tokenistic choices that they knew pupils would not take just to tick the box about the number. I imagine that you have been reading the transcripts of what has been going on here, so you will have seen that it was raised with us on the record that, even though schools knew students would not take them, some choices were being offered just so that they could tick the box about the number.

[46] **Leighton Andrews:** When I hear that kind of allegation, I always want the names to be named. [*Laughter.*]

[47] **Jocelyn Davies:** It was on the record, and I think that it was headteachers who told us.

[48] **Leighton Andrews:** The real issue underlying that is unnecessary competition between institutions. I think that that is still an issue and the previous funding system, to a degree, contributed to it. To be fair to that funding system, it was never intended to solve this issue. We have some evidence of schools moving into areas of vocational study that might be better provided at further education institutions. There is less evidence of FE institutions moving into academic subjects. Indeed, I have evidence of some having withdrawn from those. It is important that we have a meaningful range of choices and that things are not put on the curriculum for the sake of it. We have looked in some detail over the last few months at the size of classes for particular courses. It is hard to get a real grip on the data, because, between year 12 and year 13, some people will move out of a subject or change subjects, but we have significant evidence of class sizes for post-16 subjects in particular that are simply not viable and that you might well argue would be better shared through a variety of institutions. It concerns me that we may see examples of that happening in too many places across Wales, and if it is happening in too many places that probably means that money is being stripped out of pre-16 provision in order to fund post-16 teaching.

[49] **Jocelyn Davies:** Thank you for that. You mentioned funding and, looking at regional working, you seem to use grant funding to encourage collaboration. Do you always have to use offers of money to encourage collaboration between local authorities?

[50] **Leighton Andrews:** More often than not.

[51] **Jocelyn Davies:** Even though it ends up using resources.

[52] **Leighton Andrews:** There is an issue here, which is that people around this table are well aware that I would not have invented 22 local authorities responsible for education. I think that the evidence provided to us by the Welsh Local Government Association—and I have said this before—has shown that there was a switch after local government reorganisation in the 1990s to an expansion of people working in back offices, school improvement services, and so on. That was a direct result of the changes in local government organisation. That inevitably means that you create structures where people have an interest

in preserving and protecting the structures going forward. Our interest as a Government—and you will have heard this repeatedly from me and the Minister for Local Government and Communities—has to be that, if collaboration does not take place, then we will have to take steps to move it forward. I am reasonably encouraged by the progress that has been made in establishing the regional consortia. There is some genuine work going on there, particularly the decision that they have all made to start the school improvement services. Excellent progress is being made in the south-west of Wales and now in south-east Wales. There was originally good progress being made in north Wales, but they have slipped back, and south-central is only just coming together as a consortium because Cardiff has just joined it. So, they have a bit of a way to go. However, on the whole, the message has got across, but again, I started this process a year ago by saying that local authorities that did not collaborate in consortia would lose school effectiveness funding, so I am afraid that the stick and the carrot always seem to be needed.

[53] **Aled Roberts:** Rydym wedi trafod problemau gyda chostau teithio. Cafwyd tystiolaeth wythnos diwethaf gan Gyngor Sir Ceredigion bod y costau ar hyn o bryd yn syrthio ar y cyngor sir a'r ysgolion. A oes gennych bryder ynglŷn â'r ffaith y bydd y costau teithio hyn yn amharu ar y Mesur yn y tymor hir?

Aled Roberts: We have discussed problems with travel costs. We heard evidence last week from Ceredigion County Council that the costs at the moment fall on the county council and the schools. Are you concerned about the fact that these travel costs will impact on the Measure in the long term?

[54] **Leighton Andrews:** I do not have major concerns that they will impact on the Measure, because the Measure is clearly being delivered. There are issues around the cost of fuel and the rising costs of travel at a local level; we understand that. However, I would want a lot more evidence that there is a major problem before seeking to do anything about it.

[55] **Aled Roberts:** Rwy'n ymwybodol bod nifer bach iawn o blant yn yr ysgolion hynny yn sir Wrecsam sy'n darparu addysg ôl-16—efallai pedwar neu bump o ddisgyblion—yn costio £6,000 neu £7,000 y flwyddyn, a bod hynny'n dod o'r gyllideb ganolog. A oes gennych unrhyw dystiolaeth o hynny?

Aled Roberts: I am aware that a very small number of children in the schools that provide post-16 education in Wrexham county—some four or five pupils—costing about £6,000 or £7,000 a year, and that that comes out of the central budget. Do you have any evidence of that?

[56] **Leighton Andrews:** That is a matter for the local authority to sort out.

[57] **Suzu Davies:** Minister, I have a question on digital learning. We have heard quite a lot of evidence about how various institutions use digital learning, primarily from the schools. I understand that you want it to play a bigger part in delivering education in the future. We heard evidence from one school that it was interested in developing an ICT-based learning culture, where every learner has access to course content in a learning environment from any part of the school or from home or at any time of day, which is a great ambition. Unfortunately, it was a representative of Ceredigion who gave that information, who also raised the point that they had problems with the speed and accessibility of broadband. Will you be talking to the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science to try to persuade her that the roll-out of new broadband should be targeted at areas where schools will be relying on ICT for more of their educational provision?

[58] **Leighton Andrews:** I will start by declaring an interest, as my wife is the director of BT in Wales.

9.45 a.m.

[59] There are schools that are already providing the kind of resource that you were talking about. I visited Olchfa Comprehensive School in Swansea just last week. Pupils effectively have access to a virtual learning environment—almost an intranet, if you like—in which, as I understand it, they and their parents can access information on their performance, on the deadlines that they have, on course materials and so on. It is clear that that is going to play an ever bigger part in the future.

[60] This is a challenge, let me say, for schools and others in education, in that there is very high-quality content available, produced by some of the world's leading universities on a variety of platforms, such as YouTube, iTunes and others, which can now be accessed by learners. It really does mean that, if we are to ensure that Welsh-developed material is available, it has to be just as attractively presented.

[61] I think that it is great that young people can access materials in video format, or any other format, from some of the world's great universities, which is something that we would certainly want to encourage. Equally, however, we have to look at what that means in context for our own education system. That is why I have established the digital classroom teaching group, which will report to me towards the end of March. On that group, we have some of the headteachers from schools that are at the leading edge in delivery in this regard.

[62] In respect of the question that you asked specifically on broadband, our target is to ensure that all residential and business premises have access to next-generation broadband by 2015. There is currently a tender out, which the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science is leading on, and our next-generation broadband Wales project is the mechanism by which we will seek to meet this target. As part of the project, infrastructure will also be made available to public sector buildings, including schools.

[63] What is important here is that, through the collaboration that goes on between local authorities and us as a Government, we ensure that that is made available. Equally, however, I think that it is important that local authorities are sensitive to the specific needs of schools. I am not convinced that the central chief information officers in local authorities necessarily understand the needs of schools. Evidence has been given to me of schools not being able to access sites such as YouTube and so on, because of the restrictions placed on council employees generally with regard to what they can use the internet for during the day. I do not know whether that is widespread, but it has certainly come up in the context of the work of the digital classroom teaching group, and I have no doubt that the group will have more to say on it when it reports.

[64] **Suzy Davies:** So, in the roll-out, you say that residential and business premises will receive the new broadband, and that public buildings will get it as well, including schools. It is still not clear to me whether schools would be a priority in that roll-out.

[65] The other thing that I want to ask you is—

[66] **Leighton Andrews:** This is a tendering process. Clearly, there will be bidders who will bring forward proposals. I am not sure that I am in a position to comment on that.

[67] **Christine Chapman:** I think that we will leave that.

[68] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. I will go to the other thing that I wanted to ask about.

[69] You are quite right; ICT is more useful for some subjects than for others. Do you have a view on where you think such things as video-conferencing between schools are useful for particular subjects? Are there some subjects for which ICT video links would perhaps not

be hugely useful?

[70] **Leighton Andrews:** Let us be clear: digital technology is not expected to replace classroom teaching; it has to sit alongside it. I think that you have taken evidence from some headteachers of where it has worked very well indeed and where it has not worked. I would rather leave those judgments to the people on the ground who are implementing the programmes.

[71] **Simon Thomas:** Weinidog, mae'n anodd i weision sifil yn Llywodraeth Cymru weld YouTube, os cofiaf yn iawn.

Simon Thomas: Minister, it is hard for civil servants in the Welsh Government to see YouTube, if I remember rightly.

[72] O droi at ddysgu yn y dosbarth, gwir yw dweud bod cwmnïau yng Nghymru yn datblygu meddalwedd. Deuthum ar draws un yr wythnos diwethaf o'r enw YmarfWe, sef cwmni sy'n datblygu meddalwedd ar gyfer ymarfer cerddoriaeth ar y we. Mae potensial yna, ac, yn sicr, rwyf yn mynd i fwydo'r wybodaeth i'r gweithgor rydych wedi ei sefydlu.

Turning to classroom teaching, it is true to say that there are companies in Wales that are developing software. I came across an example just last week called YmarfWe; a company that develops software for web-based music practice. There is potential there, and I will certainly feed the information to the working group that you have established.

[73] Fodd bynnag, beth am y cyswllt digidol rhwng y dosbarth a'r cartref? Un o'ch penderfyniadau cyntaf fel Gweinidog oedd dod â'r cynllun gliniaduron ar gyfer rhai dosbarthiadau o blant i ben. Ers hynny, rwyf wedi clywed sawl enghraifft—gan gynnwys cwmni Gaia ym Mangor—o gwmnïau sy'n cydweithio gydag ysgolion, yn enwedig o ran helpu plant difreintiedig i gael gliniaduron. Mae athrawon yn poeni oherwydd, er bod y plant yn dysgu drwy ddefnyddio offer digidol yn y dosbarth, efallai nad oes cefnogaeth mewn cartrefi mwy tlawd os nad oes gan y plentyn fynediad at offer digidol yn y cartref. A oes rhywbeth y gallwch ei wneud i adolygu unrhyw lwyddiant yn y cynllun gliniaduron? Beth ydych yn bwriadu ei wneud i gryfhau'r agwedd honno wrth symud ymlaen?

However, what about the digital link between the classroom and the home? One of your first decisions as Minister was to bring the laptop scheme for some classes of children to an end. Since then, I have heard several examples—including a company named Gaia in Bangor—of companies collaborating with schools, particularly in helping disadvantaged children to have laptops. Teachers are concerned because, although the children are learning through the use of digital equipment in the classroom, there may be no support in poorer households if the child does not have access to digital equipment at home. Is there anything you can do to review any success with regard to the laptops scheme? What do you intend to do to strengthen that aspect going forward?

[74] **Leighton Andrews:** It is true that I ended the laptop pilot scheme, but I was also the Minister who implemented the pilot scheme in the first place. We have drawn together the evidence on that. There has been some good success in some areas, and I am very happy to supply a note to the committee on that if it is of use to you. However, I am more interested, in a sense, in what we are doing through the digital classroom teaching group to take this forward. This is a group of people who are using technologies in schools. The laptop pilot scheme came from a policy position that did not necessarily reflect the most up to date practice in schools. I visited a primary school last week—Casllwchwr Primary School in Swansea—where young people were using laptops, but they were also using iPads, iPod Touch and a whole series of different devices. The school has a policy that allows pupils to bring in their own mobile devices to use within certain guidelines. I think that it has probably developed the most extensive guidance on working with technology in a primary school in Wales. It has won a UK award for the work that it has been doing. I think that I am right in

saying that a significant number of schools have contacted it about the approach that it has adopted. It is a leader and it was certainly suggested to me that I go to the school by the members of the digital classroom teaching group.

[75] We have to be prepared for a more dynamic environment than an environment based on laptops. It has to be an environment in which mobile devices have an important role to play. When we launch the work of the digital classroom teaching group, we will see some of the exciting work that is being done, and that school will be one of those featured when we launch that work.

[76] The school acknowledges the issue that you have raised. It is an issue that I have sought to address in the past in this role, and previously in my role as the Minister responsible for digital inclusion. There are some young people who will not have access to digital technologies at home. In the secondary school environment, quite a lot of schools seek to address that through having provision through the school library. Some primary schools take a similar approach, so that young people can, in an organised way, make use of the school facilities for their needs. The issue of how we address that access to learning from home is more complicated than simply the provision of hardware by us. There is no point in providing hardware if the home does not have a broadband connection, for example. So, there is a series of quite complex issues for resolution here. I am not sure that we will reach a perfect solution.

[77] **Christine Chapman:** I will just take one final question or comment from Simon and then I want to move on.

[78] **Simon Thomas:** I would just like to emphasise that the important thing—I agree with you here, Minister—is that we do not focus on the delivery mechanism, as this will change as the technology changes. However, we need to be aware that there is a digital divide, sometimes, and equity is very important to ensure that children have access to this. The work that you are doing with the task force is very important, but we need to ensure that that reaches all parts of Wales and all parts of our communities as well.

[79] **Jocelyn Davies:** We ought to say that there are video platforms other than YouTube available. [*Laughter.*]

[80] **Lynne Neagle:** Moving on to vocational qualifications, to what extent is the Measure helping to achieve parity of esteem between vocational and academic courses?

[81] **The Deputy Minister for Skills (Jeff Cuthbert):** The promotion of equality of opportunity is a central strand of the careers education programme delivered in secondary schools, as it is part of the requirements of the learning core of 14-19 learning pathways. However, you are right; there are still very apparent gender differences in subject choices, with some subjects more likely to contain female than male students, and vice versa. That tends to be more marked at advanced level and higher education level than at GCSE level.

[82] In terms of the offer of vocational courses more generally, better labour market intelligence is crucial here. We will be doing our best to ensure that the development of the labour market intelligence unit plays a key role in redressing some of this imbalance; that is, helping to shape young people's understanding and choices at key stage 4 and post-16. Learner support advice and guidance can have a significant impact on this.

[83] Broadly speaking, there is no doubt that vocational courses are improving the position, but there is more to be done. There is a key role here for sector skills councils in raising awareness of the needs of their sectors. I know that you recently had evidence from the Care Council for Wales on the work that it is doing to tackle the perception that carers and the care service are the preserve of women. However, as the local AM, I welcomed a group of

students from The College Ystrad Mynach here yesterday, aged 14 to 50, who were following a health and social care vocational route through the Welsh baccalaureate, and they were all girls. So, there is a lot of work to be done, but vocational courses are an aspect that will assist with that situation.

[84] **Leighton Andrews:** As a general point, the Measure has had a significant impact on the delivery of vocational courses. The evidence that you have had bears that out. We have also been able to double the number of vocational courses from 1,000 to 2,000 over the last couple of years, so there is significant progress overall in this area.

[85] **Lynne Neagle:** We had a very interesting session with the sector skills councils last week. One thing that was apparent—which is borne out by my experience in Torfaen—is that there is not the communication that there should be between employers, educational institutions and the sector skills councils. Do you have any plans to try to address that directly?

[86] **Jeff Cuthbert:** There is no doubt that this needs to be improved, because employers have a crucial role to play in ensuring the success of the pathways. Employers can be prime beneficiaries of this system if we get it right, and that demands communication in both directions. So, your comments are not untypical in that regard. Sector skills councils have a much stronger role to play in helping to bring about that situation.

[87] One of the roles of the reformed Wales employment and skills board, which I will chair from now on, will be to make itself far more aware of the qualifications network in Wales and the way in which it can collaborate with educational providers, and advise the Government on employers' needs. So, it is a matter that we are taking very seriously.

[88] **Aled Roberts:** Deputy Minister, you said that you were not satisfied with the current arrangements. You talk about labour market intelligence, but another issue that worried us was the relatively few 14-19 partnerships that appeared to have any members from, or, as Lynne mentioned, any communication with, large employers in their areas or, more importantly, with the sector skills council. Do you have any intention to raise that issue with the partnerships regarding the degree of communication? We heard that there are large areas of Wales where it is clearly the case that the partnerships appear to be taking little notice in their forward planning of the demands of manufacturing in their areas.

10.00 a.m.

[89] **Jeff Cuthbert:** That is a shame, and it must improve. I read the evidence provided by National Training Federation Wales, which stated that quite a number of its providers were now engaging directly with the partnerships and were sitting on their boards, depending on how large they were and when they could release people to do so. However, you are right that there must be a better engagement between employers at all levels with the partnerships. We will be looking at that matter closely.

[90] **Suzy Davies:** The entire committee has been concerned about the position of employers in terms of designing courses that will be relevant for Wales's needs in future. Could the Measure be amended to ensure that there is provision of up-to-date market information? Does it need statutory amendment or are you relying simply on hope? You said that things must be better, but I am not sure how you plan to make them better.

[91] **Jeff Cuthbert:** We are not relying on hope; we do need to drive this. As I said, the reformed Wales Employment and Skills Board will take a careful look at this, as will—and we are due to talk about this later—the qualifications review in terms of what we provide and offer to young people. These things have to be joined together. I am not sure whether the

Measure needs to be amended to take account of that; I do not think that we necessarily need to change the law.

[92] **Leighton Andrews:** We have to be careful about what we legislate for. There are certain areas where legislation can play a useful role. However, I am not convinced that it can in the area of labour market intelligence. We have established a labour market intelligence unit within the department. I hope that that will provide a better understanding of the needs of employers across Wales. Clearly, we are working with employers' organisations and others on this. I have great confidence in the fact that our director of skills, higher education and lifelong learning is the former director of Business in the Community in Wales, has worked in industry and has good links across the piece with people in industry. Even when you have good labour market intelligence, it does not necessarily follow that you are able to produce the right courses at the right time. I go back to my experience as Deputy Minister for regeneration when I was being told that we did not have enough courses—I think that I am right in saying this—on construction and for electricians at the time. Rapidly, virtually every FE college seemed to develop a construction skills centre, usually with Welsh Government money. They started to produce more students at the very moment that we entered the worst slump in construction for possibly 30 years. These things are extraordinarily difficult to plan. Previous committees have considered these issues in some detail. We want to ensure that there is more effective intelligence out there, which is why we have established a labour market intelligence unit.

[93] **Christine Chapman:** I want to move on to another area now and Keith Davies has the next question.

[94] **Keith Davies:** Hoffwn sôn am gymorth i ddysgwyr. Mewn arolwg diweddar gan swyddogion y Cynulliad, mae'n debyg mai dim ond 43% o fyfyrwyr sydd â chynllun llwybr dysgu. Efallai mai un o'n problemau yw gwybod pwy sy'n cefnogi'r myfyrwyr, p'un ai anogwyr dysgu, swyddogion gyrfaoedd neu diwtoriaid personol. Darllenais yn ddiweddar fod dewis yn cosbi'r plant llai galluog a bod angen cymorth arnynt gan fod amrywiaeth yn gallu cymysgu pobl lan. Er enghraifft, nid ydynt yn gwybod lle i fynd i gael y cymorth iawn. A ddylem fod wedi pennu rhyw ddull ar y cychwyn o ran pwy fyddai'n rhoi pa gyngor i fyfyrwyr?

Keith Davies: I would like to talk about learning support. In a recent survey by Assembly officials, apparently only 43% of students have a learning pathways plan. Perhaps one of our problems is knowing who is supporting the students; it may be learning coaches, careers officers or personal tutors. I read recently that choice penalises less-able children and that they need support because variety can confuse people. For example, they do not know where to go to get the right support. Should we have specified a method from the outset in terms of who was to provide what advice to students?

[95] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I am surprised to hear that. There is a requirement on schools and colleges to ensure that all pupils and learners have a learning pathway document. As a minimum, the document must contain details of the learner's course of study and the learning support with which they will be provided. Although, that can contain far more information about their learning and their future life and career aspirations and how those could be met. So, it is concerning for us to hear that.

[96] On learning support more generally, there were strong arguments for the development of a new profession of learning coach. There are many benefits to having all the functions of a learning coach in an individual, but that would be costly. Therefore, it was decided that learning coaching should be a function that could either be delivered by individuals or a team of people. We think that there have been enormous benefits in that process, but from the first part of that question, there is more to be achieved in this area.

[97] **Aled Roberts:** A ydy'r partneriaethau eu hunain yn casglu tystiolaeth ynglŷn â faint o bobl ifanc ymhob ardal sydd â chynllun o'r fath? Roeddwn yn synnu wrth glywed tystiolaeth y bobl ifanc eu hunain cyn lleied ohonynt oedd â chynllun neu a oedd yn ymwybodol eu bod wedi cwblhau un.

Aled Roberts: Do the partnerships themselves collect evidence relating to how many young people in each area have such a plan? I was surprised when listening to the evidence of the young people themselves that so few of them had a plan or were aware that they had completed one.

[98] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I cannot comment on what was said except to reiterate the surprise that we have expressed and to say that it should be there. Our own indications, based on returns from schools and colleges was that over 80% of learners already had a learning pathway document by September of last year. There is still a gap and we need to fill it. However, maybe it is not quite as bad as the perception.

[99] **Leighton Andrews:** I think you have to treat the evidence you have on this with a dollop of salt, in the sense that it was a survey undertaken by the National Assembly education outreach teams. There may be issues here about terminology. It may be that the learning pathway plan is not described as that at a local level. There may be a different name for it. Without seeing the actual survey that was done, it is hard for us to reconcile what we are being told through that survey with our own evidence, which suggests it is a lot higher.

[100] **Christine Chapman:** I will mention that there were 790 responses out of 1,000 to the survey, but we will obviously take your comment on that.

[101] **Keith Davies:** Fel tad i ddisgybl ym mlwyddyn 11, nid wyf i wedi gweld unrhyw gynllun.

Keith Davies: As the father of a pupil in year 11, I have not seen any plan.

[102] **Aled Roberts:** Na minnau ychwaith.

Aled Roberts: Neither have I.

[103] **Leighton Andrews:** Even if it is 790 responses, let me say, if the school calls the document a different thing, a young person may not recognise in a bald question the document that they have been given by their school. As I say, our evidence is that it is around 80%.

[104] **Simon Thomas:** Weinidog, a ydych yn cytuno â'r dystiolaeth rydym wedi ei derbyn gan bobl eraill mai rhieni yw'r dylanwad mwyaf o hyd ar ddewisiadau pobl ifanc wrth symud i'r cyfnod hwn?

Simon Thomas: Minister, do you agree with the evidence that we have received from other people that parents remain the greatest influence on young people's choices as they move into this phase?

[105] **Leighton Andrews:** I suspect that that is the case and I think that it is probably always likely to be a major influence. I am not necessarily sure that that is the issue. I think the issue is should there be, and is there, objective impartial advice available to young people in school. We have put in place steps such as learning coaches and we can talk more about that aspect. We have Careers Wales in operation as well. I think that there is a need for the networks to ensure at a local level that young people are getting that objective advice. There is evidence to suggest, and you have also heard it, that there is quite a lot of encouragement from some institutions for learners to stay on at that institution rather than to look more widely at provision in institutions that are not so far away. One of the ways in which we can address that is by resolving some of the funding issues in the national planning and funding system. However, I think that provision of objective advice is a key part of this.

[106] There are some good examples of good practice. In Swansea, for example, there is an online resource to which young people have access. I have looked at it myself. I do not think

it is perfect, but it is a good start that illustrates the range of courses that they can follow and the range of institutions that provide those courses. It gives them some meaningful understanding of what is really out there beyond the immediate confines of the institution in which they are currently situated.

[107] **Jeff Cuthbert:** The Minister is quite right, but I will just add that Careers Wales is working hard to ensure that parents, as well as learners, are aware of the choices that are available to young people. It comes down to the importance of making the right decision based on good information, and that is also linked to labour market intelligence.

[108] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch am y sylwadau. Wrth gwrs, un o'r rheini a roddodd y dystiolaeth honno oedd Estyn, a oedd yn dweud bod cystadlu o hyd. Rydych wedi dweud y bore yma, Weinidog, eich bod yn meddwl bod cystadlu diangen o hyd. Rydych wedi sôn am yr arbrawf yn Abertawe, ond a oes rhywbeth pellach y gellid ei annog yn y maes hwn, megis prospectws ar y cyd rhwng colegau ac ysgolion, fel nad yw dysgwr yn gweld bod sefydliad yn cystadlu amdano neu amdani a bod dewisiadau ar gael yn gwbl ddiuedd? Rydym yn derbyn bod agweddau rhieni—rwy'n siarad fel rhiant sy'n mynd drwy'r broses hon, felly efallai bod hyn yn wir amdanaf i—dipyn bach ar ei hôl hi. Nid oes gennym afael ar y ffeithiau diweddaraf. Fodd bynnag, mae pobl ddiuedd sy'n gallu rhoi'r dystiolaeth a'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf. A ydych yn pryderu, fel rwyf i, bod gormod o gystadlu rhwng sefydliadau o hyd?

Simon Thomas: Thank you for your comments. Of course, one of those who gave that evidence was Estyn, which said there is still competition. You have said this morning, Minister, that you think that there is still unnecessary competition. You have talked about the experiment in Swansea, but is there anything further that could be encouraged in this area, such as a joint prospectus between colleges and schools, so that the learner does not see an establishment as competing for him or her and sees that choices are available in a completely impartial way? We accept that parents' attitudes—I speak as a parent who is going through this process, so perhaps this is true of me—are slightly behind the times. We may not have the latest facts. However, there are impartial people who can give the latest evidence and information. Are you concerned, as I am, that there is still too much competition between institutions?

[109] **Keith Davies:** Ar yr un pwynt, pan ddaeth Estyn o'n blaen, gofynnais i'r prif arolygydd am ddyddiau Addysg Dechnegol a Galwedigaethol, pan oedd yn orfodol i'r consortia gadw prospectws am y coleg a phob ysgol yn y consortiwm. Oni allwch wneud yr un peth ag a wnaed yn nyddiau ADAG, achos chi sy'n ariannu'r consortia, mewn ffordd? Gallwch ddweud wrthynt eich bod yn erbyn arnynt i gael un prospectws.

Keith Davies: On the same point, when Estyn came before us, I asked the chief inspector about the days of ADAG, the body that dealt with technical and vocational education, when it was compulsory for the consortia to have a prospectus about the college and every school in the consortium. Can you not do the same thing as was done the days of ADAG, as you fund the consortia, in a way? You can tell them that you are insisting that they have one prospectus.

[110] **Leighton Andrews:** That is a very interesting idea, and I hope that the committee will give it due consideration among its recommendations. *[Laughter.]*

[111] **Jocelyn Davies:** May I make a point based on other evidence that we have had? If schools allowed colleges to attend their parents' evening, at the least there would be a bit of a showcase, giving the parents access to that information. If parents are influencing the children, it appears to me that a little collaboration there—we may give that consideration too, Minister.

[112] **Leighton Andrews:** All good ideas will be welcome.

[113] **Jeff Cuthbert:** A number of schools and colleges are providing joint prospectuses. I understand that you have seen a number so far, including those of Prestatyn and Rhyl sixth form partnerships that contain the courses being offered by both the schools and the local colleges. So, there are examples out there.

[114] **Jocelyn Davies:** Good practice does not travel well unless someone is pushing it.

[115] To concentrate on vulnerable learners, the Deputy Minister chaired the committee that scrutinised this Measure before it became law, and you will know that one of the committee's recommendations was that special consideration should be given to vulnerable learners, because the committee was not convinced that they would benefit from the Measure. We have certainly heard evidence since from Careers Wales especially, but also from young people that they have not. Parents' expectations have been raised, but they have not been met, and that has caused considerable distress to them and the children. So, what would you say about having an evaluation of the experience of vulnerable learners in relation to this particular legislation?

[116] **Jeff Cuthbert:** There is no objection at all to an evaluation. We need to see where there are problem areas, take that evidence, look at it and see what we can do to improve matters. Special schools fall outside of the Measure. You are quite right; only the Chair and I were present during Stage 1 of this Measure, four years ago now—it is remarkable how time flies—and I remember that discussion. Setting aside the issue of special schools, which are not included within the Measure, as we indicated in our written evidence to the committee, all learners in mainstream secondary schools and further education institutions, including those with additional needs, will have the same entitlement to wider choice. Learners who are able to follow courses of study within mainstream settings already have access to wider choice through dual registration arrangements. Those learners whose particular circumstances mean that they are unable to follow a course of study in a mainstream setting will already receive individualised learning tailored to their individual learning needs. Where that is not happening, and I infer from your question that there are examples of where that is not being done in the way that we want, we would be pleased to have information about it and we would pursue it.

10.15 a.m.

[117] **Jocelyn Davies:** We heard evidence from Careers Wales and young people, and it was obvious that some of these children had a chaotic background, but they had not had the advantage that the Measure offers. I am not able to provide you with that evidence, but if we go back to Careers Wales we might be able to, but it was a concern that the committee had at the time of the legislation and perhaps it is something that you could look at. It may be early days yet, but perhaps it is something that you could look at.

[118] **Christine Chapman:** It will be on the record.

[119] **Leighton Andrews:** Some of the responsibility lies with Careers Wales, whose job it is to provide the evaluation of an individual young person at particular stages, especially young people with additional learning needs. We will look at what was said and discuss that with Careers Wales.

[120] **Jeff Cuthbert:** We know that special schools are outside the scope of the Measure. Nevertheless, there are good examples of work that has been done for young people in helping them to prepare for employment, such as the promoting independence scheme at a school in my consistency—Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre special school, of which I used to be a governor. That work is highlighted and promoted in Wales as good

practice.

[121] **Aled Roberts:** Mae darpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg a dwyieithog wedi cynyddu, yn arbennig ar gyfer cyrsiau galwedigaethol. Mae'n bosibl bod llawer o'r cynnydd hwn yn deillio o grantiau penodol neu arian a glustnodwyd. A oes gennych bryder ynglŷn â sut caiff y cynnydd hwn ei gynnal ar ôl i'r grantiau penodol ddog i ben?

Aled Roberts: Welsh-medium and bilingual provision has increased, especially for vocational courses. It could be that some of the increase is down to specific grants or ring-fenced funding. Do you have concerns about how this increase will be maintained once the specific grants come to an end?

[122] **Leighton Andrews:** We have ring-fenced funding for Welsh-medium and bilingual vocational courses for the next two years. Through the Welsh-medium education strategy, we have put additional resources into training the trainers, which is an important element that ensures that more provision can be rolled out. I am pleased with the progress that is being made now by the further education sector in establishing bilingual champions. There are a number of measures in place. I do not anticipate us wanting to reduce the investment that we are making in Welsh-medium provision and, therefore, I do not anticipate us wanting to reduce the grants that we are making in this area.

[123] **Aled Roberts:** Rydym wedi derbyn tystiolaeth ynglŷn ag ysgolion gwledig dwy ffrwd lle mae dosbarthiadau yn y ddwy iaith yn fach iawn. A ydych yn credu bod achos i ystyried cyflwyno rhyw fath o grantiau ychwanegol i ddiogelu'r ddarpariaeth mewn ysgolion o'r fath? A oes gennych unrhyw bryder ynglŷn â'r sefyllfa?

Aled Roberts: We have received evidence about dual-stream rural schools that have very small classes in both languages. Do you believe that there is a case for considering whether we should have additional grants to safeguard the provision in such schools? Do you have any concerns about the situation?

[124] **Leighton Andrews:** I do not see any evidence for additional grants. We must be clear that people are using every opportunity to collaborate. If we are talking about very small class sizes, I am not sure how sustainable those would be in the long term. It is much more important that we have a decent range and quality of provision that is sustainable. Continually putting special grants in place to support very small class sizes is not sustainable in the long term.

[125] **Keith Davies:** Yn eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig—ac rydych wedi sôn rhywfaint amdano nawr—rydych yn cyfeirio at y ffaith bod problemau mewn colegau addysg bellach o ran cyrsiau dwyieithog. Mae problem genedlaethol o ran plant sy'n gadael ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg yn 16 oed ac sydd am fynd ati i ddilyn cyrsiau galwedigaethol neu academaidd drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn y colegau. Beth ydych chi'n ei wneud am hynny?

Keith Davies: In your written evidence—and you have talked a little about it now—you refer to the fact that there are problems in further education colleges with regard to bilingual courses. There is a national problem with regard to children who leave Welsh-medium schools at 16 and who want to study vocational or academic courses through the medium of Welsh in the colleges. What are you doing about that?

[126] **Leighton Andrews:** We are currently supporting eight bilingual champions in colleges. Over the next two years, the remaining colleges will be supported with a bilingual champion. I am pleased that ColegauCymru has appointed a Welsh language officer. There is a commitment within the sector to support this. The role of the bilingual champion is to create effective structures for colleges to improve their capacity to deliver Welsh-medium and bilingual courses, as well as providing additional modules and courses to learners, and giving support to them. They obviously need to work alongside Welsh-medium and bilingual

secondary schools in their areas, and, in many cases, colleges are already providing elements of vocational courses to 14-16 and 16-19 learners.

[127] The Welsh-medium fora that have been established play an important role in facilitating partnerships. Additionally, we have Sgiliaith, the specialist centre that supports all FE colleges to plan for growth in Welsh-medium and bilingual provision. It provides tailored advice, a mentoring programme and bilingual methodology training for lecturers. To be fair, I think that we have put a fair amount of provision in place here.

[128] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I would just add that there is more work to be done by sector skills councils, to ensure that linked training and vocational programmes can be delivered fully through the medium of Welsh, including assessment systems.

[129] **Simon Thomas:** Ar gefn cwestiwn Keith Davies, hoffwn bwysleisio, er y camau clodwiw yr ydych chi wedi eu hamlinellu, Weinidog, rydym ni wedi derbyn digon o dystiolaeth yn ystod yr ymchwiliad hwn nad yw'r dewis hwn eto'n realiti mewn nifer o sefydliadau addysg bellach. I gryfhau'r pwynt sydd wedi cael ei wneud, mae camau gwerthfawr yn cael eu cymryd, ond mae eto ddiffyg, ac mae'n bwysig nad yw'r ffocws yn cael ei symud ymaith gan feddwl y caiff y pethau sydd ar y gweill yr effaith a fwriedir.

Simon Thomas: On the back of Keith Davies's question, I would like to emphasise that, despite the commendable actions that you have set out, Minister, we have received plenty of evidence during this inquiry that this choice is not yet reality in several further education organisations. To support the point that has been made, worthwhile steps are being taken, but there is still a deficiency, and it is important that the focus is not deflected by the thought that these things that are in motion will have their intended effect.

[130] **Leighton Andrews:** Rwy'n derbyn hynny. **Leighton Andrews:** I accept that.

[131] **Angela Burns:** Minister, you will know that the levels of pastoral care for our younger people are a concern for people—I am looking in particular at the 14 to 16 age bracket. Could you comment on the disconnect that there can be in the case of a lecturer in a college of further education who is used to dealing with 16 to 18-year-olds now trying to deliver a course to 14 to 15-year-olds?

[132] **Leighton Andrews:** Clearly, further education colleges have been involved in this process for some time now. I thought that the evidence to you from Bridgend College, among others, gave a good account of what is being undertaken in further education colleges, as did some of the evidence from UCU. There are differences of approach. It is important that there is effective collaboration between FE colleges and the base school, as it were, in the provision of support.

[133] I hear the general point being made, but I have very little evidence on absolute specifics of where this has become a problem. I am therefore rather reluctant to expand at length on it, simply because I have very little evidence that there is a major problem in this matter.

[134] **Angela Burns:** I raised the subject because ATL Cymru and AMiE have raised it, and UCU, which you have just quoted, has also talked about it. They talk about it in all sorts of different ways. ATL states:

[135] 'There are still unresolved problems regarding pastoral care. Colleges usually refer issues back to the home school to be dealt with.'

[136] UCU Wales said that it believes that the Measure has led to increased pressure on

lecturers with regard to professional practice, adding that

[137] ‘learners at 14 years of age require more supervision in a workshop environment than that an older learner would, and this impairs the quality of lecture being delivered as a higher percentage of the teaching session is spent on supervising rather than educating.’

[138] I am not saying that I agree with these comments, but I do want to raise the concern that I have, as I have done with you in many other instances, about the pastoral care of these younger people. So, do you think that we should have stronger, firmer guidance for lecturers about how they should deal with this age bracket? I do not like to hear of lecturers complaining that they have to supervise rather than educate, because with 14, 15 and 16-year-olds, that is all part of the job description. Should we change the professional qualification needed by a lecturer to teach that particular age group? Do they need to be registered as a teacher or to have elements of the whole teaching qualification behind them? I know that you are looking at the teaching side of it and at the Masters degree. However, I am just worried about the here and now and the potential for this disconnect. We always talk about disengagement and losing people and the fact that, once they are lost, it is so difficult to get them back.

[139] **Leighton Andrews:** In 2008-09, there were 3,730 staff at further education institutions with qualified teacher status. More than 3,300 of those were current teaching staff. That is 47% of total teaching staff at further education institutions with parity with schoolteachers. There are staff development programmes in place at all further education institutions, which seek to equip staff with the skills they need to tackle the challenges they face. There are also opportunities for additional training. I am not sure that this is something I need to attend to.

[140] **Angela Burns:** I am sorry, Minister, but I think that that is a complete brush-off—

[141] **Leighton Andrews:** No it is not.

[142] **Angela Burns:** I support the pathway system, but this is about ensuring appropriate provision for the children we are sending out to be educated in a great variety of different places. We all accept that, at 16, an awful lot of them have the maturity to go into a very different environment, to learn by themselves and to access their reference books themselves, but there is the younger cohort, which is going into that same environment. We have professionals and lecturers who are not professional teachers per se who may have come in from industry or a specialist field to deliver training, and, if they do not have the equipment at their fingertips to enable them to impart education to those children, we are not serving the children well. Surely that is something that should concern us.

[143] **Leighton Andrews:** You asked me three specific questions, and my answers are: ‘no’, ‘no’ and ‘I’m not convinced’. I have read the evidence that has been submitted to the committee and the evidence that has been given around this table, and I am not convinced that we need to do the things you have suggested. If I am convinced at some stage I will bring forward proposals, but, at this stage, I am not.

[144] **Christine Chapman:** Suzy, do you want to add anything?

[145] **Suzy Davies:** No, not really; it was dealt with earlier. Thank you.

[146] **Jenny Rathbone:** The Measure focuses very much on school and college-based provision. Could the Measure be amended to include more emphasis on work-based learning opportunities?

[147] **Jeff Cuthbert:** The Chair and I have the advantage of having been on the Stage 1 committee four years ago. The issue of work-based learning providers was raised then, and the legal advice we were given at that time was that they could not be included in the Measure because, in the main, they are private companies. That is why they are not included explicitly. However, as part of the recent tender process for all work-based learning providers offering apprenticeships, all providers were asked to confirm that they would do their utmost to engage with the 14-19 learning networks. I understand that many are doing that in a very direct way by participating with the partnerships. It may not be possible to put this formally within the Measure, but, linked with FE colleges, we see work-based learning providers as having a very important role to play, particularly given that they can offer some of the most realistic work-based experiences. The indications are that they are working with us well.

[148] **Jenny Rathbone:** That is excellent news because some of the evidence we heard was from people who were saying that the employers were locked out of the whole dialogue. However, if that is being rectified—

[149] **Jeff Cuthbert:** That is not to say that more cannot be done. As I said in my response to earlier questions, yes, employers, through their organisations or directly, could engage a lot more with us. We are certainly going to encourage the maximum level of engagement.

[150] **Simon Thomas:** This is a question for the Deputy Minister. I think that you were chairing the committee when the Measure went through—

[151] **Jeff Cuthbert:** It was four years ago. Do not test my memory too much. [*Laughter.*]

[152] **Simon Thomas:** Has the advice given at the time that private companies could not be included in the Measure itself changed, particularly since the referendum and devolution of further powers to the Assembly?

[153] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I would have to seek legal guidance on that.

[154] **Leighton Andrews:** We have not looked at that because we do not have any current plans to make that change. I am not a lawyer but I am not sure why it would change as a result of the referendum. I suspect that it was an issue about hybridity, but I would have to check.

10.30 a.m.

[155] **Simon Thomas:** To be clear, it is just because many workplace providers seem to be willing to be included in the scope of the Measure. The National Training Federation Wales was certainly willing to see that happen. I met someone yesterday who is very keen to get involved with the Measure. So, there is definite willingness to create a level playing field so that work-based training is equal to other opportunities for 14-19 year olds.

[156] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I share that aspiration, but it may not be possible to include it on the face of the Measure. However, that does not mean that the partnerships will not continue. They play a very valuable role.

[157] **Keith Davies:** Ar y cychwyn, pan ddechreuodd y llwybrau dysgu, roeddent yn seiliedig ar waith, ac roedd pobl ifanc rhwng 14 a 19 oed yn mynd allan i ddiwydiant—i'r gweithle—am 50 diwrnod dros gyfnod o ddwy flynedd. A yw'r llwybrau dysgu hynny'n parhau? **Keith Davies:** At the beginning, when the learning pathways were first implemented, they were based on work, and young people aged between 14 and 19 went out to industry—to the workplace—for 50 days over a period of two years. Are the learning pathways continuing?

[158] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I believe that you have asked me this question before. The pathways must be planned provision and I do not think that we would rule anything in or out in terms of the type of experiences that young people could have. However, I do not think that the historic point that you are making necessarily applies now.

[159] **Aled Roberts:** Deputy Minister, the evidence that we received from the National Training Federation Wales suggested that the situation had improved very slightly since the engagement strand of the traineeship programme was implemented. While we recognise that, as is the case with the joint prospectus, there are examples of good practice, the federation said provision is very patchy and varies in different parts of Wales. We have had evidence that those work-based providers who were, perhaps, attached to further education institutions or from the public sector appeared to be more able to engage with the partnerships than the private sector. We were concerned by the suggestion that we have some kind of postcode lottery within Wales, and that provision depends upon the attitude that has been taken by the partnership.

[160] **Jeff Cuthbert:** You received additional written evidence from the National Training Federation Wales that illustrated with figures where it was engaged with partnerships. However, it made the point that where providers are small and perhaps do not have the resources to engage, there needs to be more work to ensure that what they have to offer can be properly used. I take that point. We have a very good relationship with the national training federation and I will certainly pursue that in discussions with it to see how we can better serve the needs of young people in that regard.

[161] **Christine Chapman:** Jocelyn, did you have a question?

[162] **Jocelyn Davies:** I just wanted to make the point that sitting on the network is the important thing. It does not matter whether it is a statutory right, as long as you are at the table. That is the point that I wanted to make.

[163] **Lynne Neagle:** The written evidence that you submitted highlights the improvements that have been made in reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training that you feel have come about as a result of the Measure. We had evidence from Careers Wales that there are differing levels of engagement in supporting the NEETs agenda by the different networks and that some have left this matter to the children and young people partnerships and do not have substantive strategies. Do you have any plans to tackle that issue to ensure a more uniform compliance with that?

[164] **Leighton Andrews:** There are a number of observations that I would like to make about that. The Measure has contributed in part to the number of young people staying on in education, but, as some of your witnesses have said, so has our decision to retain the education maintenance allowance in Wales, and I am pleased that we have been able to do that. We have put in place a programme called the youth engagement strategy, which was designed to address the issue of young people not in education, employment or training. That involved a holistic look across the department at the issues involved, because young people do not suddenly become young people who are likely to become NEET, as it were, in their teens; very often, you can identify some of the factors that will lead to their becoming NEET a lot earlier.

[165] Therefore, it is important that we begin in the early years and follow this through, which is why we have put a renewed emphasis on literacy and numeracy in our approach. One of the things that is of great concern to me is that we have a large number of support agencies and a significant amount of funding that goes into the system to enable organisations, in some cases, to reach out to young people who have become NEET, and to

work with young people to prevent them becoming NEET in the first place. Think of the investment that we make in Careers Wales, where we have about 1,000 people working in the system, and in the youth service, and in third sector organisations—which have given evidence to predecessor committees that the issue for them is not funding; they have plenty of funding, but they are all chasing the same young people. What that says to me is that we have a system that is not really addressing the NEET issue effectively at present, and we need to develop a more personalised approach to young people who are in danger of becoming NEET. I have officials in the department working on what that might look like at present. It is arguable, for example, that there may need to be more of a focus in Careers Wales precisely on young people who are in danger of becoming NEET, rather than on generalised support. It is a debate that we need to have. When I look at the evidence, I am not convinced that much has really changed regarding the overall percentage of young people who are NEET—and this may relate to those beyond school age now—than the state of the UK economy and the size of the age cohort.

[166] **Aled Roberts:** I support very much what you have said. We had a task group in Wrexham dealing with NEETs because it was a particular problem for us, and I remember going along to meet a group of youngsters, some of whom had actually been given apprenticeships by the council. I thought that I was going to have a pat on the back, but I spoke to a number of youngsters who had been on about three or four different training programmes, and was told by one lad that he had had exactly the same experience on those programmes, all of which were funded by Government money. So, there is very much an issue there, Minister.

[167] **Jenny Rathbone:** I agree with everything that you said, and I think that it is all important stuff, but how much emphasis will you be giving to the importance of continuity of carer? Some of these people are very troubled and, if they are just getting different people chasing them, then—. Building up trust is a crucial issue for some of these people.

[168] **Leighton Andrews:** Whether it is a carer or a person supporting them through, that is an important point. One of the issues—and this is a general issue in more troubled families as well, not just for young people who are NEET—is that we seem to expect to design the individual around the service, rather than the service around the individual. We have to get better at that, and it is a challenge for existing agencies. Some of these issues have become more acute in the last two decades, but whether the services themselves have changed in respect of the challenges, I am not convinced.

[169] **Christine Chapman:** We have finished our questions. Are there any other points that the Minister or Deputy Minister want to add? We have a few minutes.

[170] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I have one point. I was anticipating being asked about the qualifications review explicitly; that did not happen, but I want to assure the committee that it will look at all qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds in Wales, and that most certainly includes vocational qualifications, because we need to ensure that what is offered to young people is relevant to their needs and to the needs of the economy to help them into employment. Indeed, an early meeting of the Wales Employment and Skills Board will hear from Huw Evans OBE, who is chairing the review on my behalf, so that there is a better understanding between employers and the qualifications being offered.

[171] **Leighton Andrews:** I have nothing to add.

[172] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you for your evidence this morning; it has been a very comprehensive session. Obviously, progress has been made in this very important policy area, but I ask the Minister and the Deputy Minister to look at the evidence, because we have tried to take evidence from a wide range of people, including young people. Some of the evidence

will be anecdotal, but I am sure that you will be looking at areas where it has been said that things are not happening. As I said, there has been a lot of progress, but we need to see further progress in some areas. Thank you very much for attending; a transcript will be available.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.41 a.m. a 11.02 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.41 a.m. and 11.02 a.m.*

Dechrau'n Deg Flying Start

[173] **Christine Chapman:** Welcome back to the Children and Young People Committee. The next item is on Flying Start. I welcome Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services, Martin Swain, head of children, young people and families division and Jo Trott, head of Flying Start. Thank you, Deputy Minister for attending and for providing a paper in advance. Members will have read the paper, so would you be happy for us to move straight to questions?

[174] **The Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services (Gwenda Thomas):** I was going to say a few words, reflecting on the Plenary debate and bringing some clarity on that. A few words on that could help our discussions. I welcome last week's debate on early years provision. I thank you for this opportunity to bring some clarity on that. It will also help us to make more productive use of our time this morning.

[175] First, I am absolutely committed to learning from all of the evaluation work that has been undertaken to date and am equally determined that Flying Start will benefit from the experience of local stakeholders who are delivering on the ground. The survey report shows that the programme is already starting to make a difference in key areas, but it is clear that there is still work to be done. We must redouble our efforts to engage with the most disadvantaged families, because we want them to benefit fully from the support that Flying Start can offer. That said, it is important that we recognise that, as the evaluation reports themselves suggest, Flying Start is trying to reach some of the very hardest to reach. I wish to emphasise that this will take time and patience.

[176] **Christine Chapman:** You have mentioned that one of the challenges is to reach those families who most need it. However, what specific changes are being made to the Flying Start programme to take into account the findings of the evaluation?

[177] **Gwenda Thomas:** We have had the national evaluation and the first phase survey and we also need to link that to the interim report of 2010. The evaluation report points to very positive developments and effects on families, but there is more to do. I am keen to look at some variable performance by local authorities. I am not talking about the discretion that local authorities must have to respond to needs in their areas—I am talking about variances in performance on important issues such as where childcare is limited. We need to develop that steady state of delivery. We will look at the evaluation, as we know that there are issues that we need to develop with breastfeeding and weaning. However, as I have said, we are trying to reach very hard-to-reach people, but it is important to use that evaluation in the interim report and also to use evidence from professionals on the ground to develop our thinking and, if need be, to review the Flying Start programme. We are open to do that. That is how we are looking to learn from what the report tells us.

[178] **Jenny Rathbone:** You mentioned that some core issues are not being delivered by local authorities, which is surprising given that the guidance was first issued in 2006, which is some years ago. Can you explain why some local authorities are not implementing the core offer, such as childcare for two-year-olds, as you mentioned?

[179] **Gwenda Thomas:** Local authorities are expected to adhere to the criteria and terms of the guidance. I have already explained that I am not happy that there is variation in the delivery. We are working hard with local authorities, and each local authority has a co-ordinator. Those co-ordinators meet on a quarterly basis to share good practice and to look at things that are not so good. We must rely on evaluation and the evidence must be continuous. I have commissioned a review of evidence with regard to the family support aspect of Flying Start, and that work is already in progress.

[180] **Jenny Rathbone:** That is excellent. I note your commitment to developing the new Flying Start programmes based on best practice in the existing programme, which is excellent. However, how are we going to do it, given that the evaluations that we have already had are limited by the timescale of the children involved, in terms of the short length of time that they have benefitted from Flying Start? How will we disseminate best practice, particularly as the evaluations are anonymised—we do not know, although you may, where the examples of excellence are? How do you plan to get that across?

[181] **Gwenda Thomas:** I will bring Martin in on this, but the first phase was limited in that it looked at children aged seven months to 20 months. My intention is that we revisit those same children aged 31 months to 44 months. We will only know when we are able to measure the effects on children, as many children in that first phase, if not all of them, had not benefitted from childcare. So, it did not give us a full picture of where we are in any way. However, the intention is to revisit the same children and to develop this continuous evaluation; evaluation has to be continuous, and we have to learn from it. We also have to learn from the parents that are involved in this programme. I do not know if Martin wants to add to that.

[182] **Mr Swain:** In terms of the cross-learning between teams, it relies upon us to be more proactive in looking at where Flying Start is making the most difference, and looking at the way in which those programmes are delivered. There is variance in the structure of Flying Start teams—there are different professionals involved. It is also worth reflecting on where some areas have come from. The starting point for some local authorities was ahead of some others; it took a while to get the infrastructure in place, particularly for childcare, as nothing previously existed in some disadvantaged communities. So, it relies upon us, but it also relies upon how we track how well teams are doing, and that takes us more into the way in which they are making a difference. So, we will move from service monitoring to what difference the teams are making for young children and families.

[183] **Jenny Rathbone:** I still feel that we are not clear on how this will be done. Let us take the issue of breastfeeding, which is acknowledged in the evaluation as being difficult; it is still seen as an innovative idea. How do we know where the breastfeeding initiative is working best, based on the analysis that you have available to you?

[184] **Mr Swain:** It relies upon the data that we collect, so where we see rates of breastfeeding increasing in the Flying Start areas, we go into those areas and try to understand why. Is it because of professional practice? Is it because of the culture of the community? Breastfeeding is an interesting example, because it normally takes a huge amount of cultural change over a long period of time, but if we were seeing really big spikes of increases in the levels of breastfeeding in Flying Start areas through our monitoring data, we could go in to find out why, and then take that best practice into other areas and challenge them as to why they cannot do the same thing.

[185] **Jenny Rathbone:** How are we as a committee going to be able to find out where these examples of good practice are?

[186] **Gwenda Thomas:** We have monitoring systems in place right across Wales. Perhaps we can say a bit more about that, and whether we can make available information from these systems as that develops.

[187] **Christine Chapman:** That would be useful.

[188] **Jocelyn Davies:** Would you actually speak to mothers who had decided to breastfeed where, traditionally, that has not been the case, to find out what was the thing that persuaded them to do it? Then you could try to replicate it in other areas where the breastfeeding rates were low.

[189] **Mr Swain:** That is the kind of approach that we would take in the next wave of the survey. We are also going to do that with the childcare offer, because the families that we survey next will have had the childcare offer. We will be asking them what difference that made to them as a family. Did it give them space to do other things? Did it help them to deal with other family issues? Did it help with breastfeeding rates? Is that because they were accessing parenting support at childcare settings? That is the value of doing that survey work with families; it has to be a key part of evaluation.

[190] **Jocelyn Davies:** Yes, because the reasons for making that choice in that community or in those circumstances might be entirely different.

[191] **Mr Swain:** Yes, they might be nothing to do with Flying Start.

[192] **Jocelyn Davies:** However, it could be something that you could replicate. So, the outcome would be advantageous. Rather than professionals telling young mothers that they should be breastfeeding, you could find out what ticks the box for the young mother.

[193] **Gwenda Thomas:** That is important, and I have done that myself: sat down with a group of mothers who were also learning how to massage their babies in—no, it was not Llanelli, it was one of the Cardiff programmes—and I spoke with a young mother who told me that breastfeeding was something that she had not even dreamed about, and the programme had encouraged that, and had taken away some of her fear. I was impressed in talking to those young mothers. That is how we will learn the most—by getting to know and understand how individuals and groups see themselves benefitting from this programme, and what has meant most to them.

[194] **Simon Thomas:** Mention was made of things outside your control in Flying Start areas, specifically breastfeeding, and the enormous benefits that it can bring. I noted with some concern that the National Childbirth Trust has taken a more neutral stance on breastfeeding, and that seems to me to send out the wrong signals. I have noticed elsewhere as well that there seem to be sign of a less proactive approach to this by some third sector organisations. It is too early to evaluate that, but people in Flying Start areas will be picking up messages from the media and these organisations. Could the Government take an even more proactive lead, not just in Flying Start areas, so that we do not lose the ground that we have made and are trying to improve upon?

[195] **Gwenda Thomas:** I have not seen that report.

[196] **Simon Thomas:** It was about two days ago.

11.15 a.m.

[197] **Gwenda Thomas:** I would be pleased to look at that.

[198] **Simon Thomas:** I wanted to raise that with you. Thank you for looking at that. I hope that the Government will look at how we might need to tailor our messages. The message from the National Childbirth Trust is that it will not be as proactive, but it will simply support the choice of the mother. That is acceptable. However, there are so many pressures and so much selling of formula milk that you want that extra bit there so that the choices are genuine.

[199] **Aled Roberts:** Rydych wedi sôn y byddwch yn ehangu arfer da, ond mae'n anodd deall beth sydd wedi mynd o'i le. Pam nad yw'r rhwydweithiau cydlyneddion wedi dosbarthu arfer da hyd yn hyn? Mae cymaint o wahaniaethau ar draws Cymru.

Aled Roberts: You have mentioned that you will disseminate good practice, but it is difficult to understand what has gone wrong. Why have the networks of co-ordinators not disseminated good practice until now? There are so many differences across Wales.

[200] **Gwenda Thomas:** Nid yw'n wir i ddweud nad ydynt wedi rhannu arfer da o gwbl. Maent wedi gwneud. Mae hynny'n un o'r pethau rydym yn erfyn arnynt i wneud. Fodd bynnag, nid yw wedi bod yn ddigon da. Nid ydynt wedi cael digon o amser i dyfu mewn i'r gwaith, ond mae'n rhaid symud hwn ymlaen ar frys er mwyn sicrhau bod rhannu arfer da yn rhan hollbwysig o'r ffordd ymlaen ar gyfer y rhaglen hon. Mae esiamplau sy'n dangos bod arfer da yn cael ei rannu, ond nid yw wedi'i wneud yn ddigon da. Yn bendant, byddwn yn gyrru'r agenda hwn ymlaen.

Gwenda Thomas: It is not true to say that they have not disseminated good practice at all. They have done so. That is one of the things that we ask them to do. However, it has not been good enough. They have not had sufficient time to grow into the work, but this must be urgently progressed to ensure that the sharing of good practice is a fundamental part of the way forward for this programme. There are examples of the dissemination of good practice, but it has not been good enough. We will definitely drive that agenda forward.

[201] **Julie Morgan:** It is a huge task to increase breastfeeding rates because of the cultural issues and the perception of many young women that they are not able to breastfeed in public. That is our responsibility. Everything that you do in Flying Start is in the wider cultural context. How can you address that? It is almost too difficult to address.

[202] **Gwenda Thomas:** One of the things that we need to do is to give young mothers the confidence to make their own decisions. They need to realise that there is support for them to nurture their babies in the way that they think is best. Thinking cannot be imposed on anybody. It has to be done by persuasion. I have given the example of the young mother who talked to me. She said that Flying Start had changed everything for her. She talked about the childcare and the fact that she was now a part of a group. When she found out that she was expecting a baby, those things did not cross her mind as possibilities: she was on her own, she was up against the wall and she did not know to where she was going to turn. When you talk to people and realise that the programme can deliver that, then it is essential that we spread best practice and listen to the mothers. What struck me was that she felt that she was a real person in her own right. She now had the confidence to face what she thought at one time was going to be a horrendous experience. If it can change a life experience in that way, then it is a programme that needs to be supported.

[203] **Jenny Rathbone:** I want to pick up on a possible fault with the programme, which is the communication between the midwife and the health visitor and other members of the Flying Start team. The midwife has the first contact with women and starts them off on breastfeeding. Are you considering bringing midwives into better contact with health visitors? I have heard in more than one place that people do not have any contact or have very difficult contact. Some say that it was fine when it was 'x', but it is not fine now that it is 'y'. The variability seems to be a concern.

[204] **Mr Swain:** That is a classic example of good practice in Flying Start that is variable. In some Flying Start teams, they have a midwife who is part of the team and works with the Flying Start families from that very early stage. However, that is not a core part of the programme. Part of our learning is that we are looking at where that exists and how well that leads to better outcomes for the family. We are considering, in terms of the whole issue of parenting, whether that is something that we need to link with. We are working with the people who lead on the maternity strategy to look further at how Flying Start links with maternity services, particularly as we are doubling the extent of the programme. It is a classic example of a local approach, where sometimes you have very good practice and in other areas it does not happen.

[205] **Lynne Neagle:** That is a very interesting point. Where you have good practice in terms of midwives working with women when they are pregnant, is there contact when that woman goes in to deliver, because there is a crucial period when they are in hospital when, speaking from personal experience, you can get very variable messages from midwives on breastfeeding? Is that woman picked up when she is discharged, before the period when the health visitor comes on stream, by the Flying Start midwife?

[206] **Gwenda Thomas:** That has to be there. When we talk about the programme being for nought to three-year-olds, we really mean that. There has to be a pre-birth involvement with the mother. This is being developed and we are working with health boards in order to ensure that they are interacting with local authorities and the Welsh Government on developing this thinking. Therefore, the commitment to working with health boards is growing and that has to become the norm in the way forward for Flying Start.

[207] **Christine Chapman:** We will now move on to workforce issues.

[208] **Aled Roberts:** Rydym wedi cael y manylion ynglŷn â sut mae'r rhaglen yn mynd i ehangu. A oes gennych unrhyw bryder am y gofynion sy'n ymwneud â'r gweithlu a'r broses o'i ehangu ynghyd â gwariant cyfalaf? A oes gennych unrhyw bryder y bydd yr arian hwn yn dod allan cyn sefydlu niferoedd y gweithlu ac yn y blaen?

Aled Roberts: We have had the details about how the programme is going to expand. Do you have any concerns about the requirements in terms of the workforce and its expansion, as well as capital expenditure? Do you have concern that this money will come out before the size of the workforce will have been established?

[209] **Gwenda Thomas:** Rydym yn datblygu'r rhaglen. Nid ydym yn dod i'r holl arian i mewn y flwyddyn nesaf. Y flwyddyn nesaf byddwn yn rhoi £5 miliwn, gydag £20 miliwn yn y flwyddyn ganlynol a £30 miliwn yn 2014-15. Rwy'n credu bod yn rhaid i ni weithio gyda'r bobl fydd yn gorfod gweithredu'r rhaglen hon. Mae awgrym bydd angen 160 o ymwelwyr iechyd a 1,000 o weithwyr gofal plant. Rwy'n meddwl bod y systemau yn eu lle i ddatblygu'r gweithlu. Mae'n rhaid i hyn ddigwydd. Dyna pam rydym yn cymryd pethau yn araf bach yn y flwyddyn gyntaf. Mae hon yn rhaglen tair blynedd.

Gwenda Thomas: We are developing the programme. We are not putting all the money in next year. Next year, we will be putting in £5 million, with £20 million in the following year and £30 million in 2014-15. I believe that we have to work with the people who will have to deliver this programme. There is a suggestion that we need 160 health visitors and 1,000 childcare workers. I think the systems are in place to develop the workforce. This has to happen. That is why we are taking things slowly in the first year. This is a three-year programme.

[210] Mae gwariant cyfalaf yn hollbwysig. Ni allwch fynd â rhaglen yn ei blaen ar sail refeniw yn unig. Mae'n rhaid wrth arian

Capital expenditure is vital. You cannot take a programme forward solely on revenue. You must have capital funding. We have to be

cyfalaf. Mae'n rhaid i ni fod yn siŵr bod gennym le i ddatblygu'r man lle rydym yn bwriadu trosglwyddo'r gofal. Rydym yn gweithio ar draws y sector annibynol a'r trydydd sector gyda'r byrddau iechyd i sicrhau bod y llefydd hyn ar gael. Pan fod lle mewn ysgol, a ddylem ei ddatblygu fel welwyd yn Llanelli? Yno, caewyd ysgol ac aethom ati i ddefnyddio'r adeilad gwag. Mae'n rhaid i ni ystyried nad ydym yn mynd i allu sicrhau adeiladau newydd ar gyfer yr holl ddatblygiad.

[211] Fodd bynnag, mae gennym £6 miliwn o arian cyfalaf dros y ddwy flynedd nesaf, a byddwn yn ei ddefnyddio i greu'r adnoddau sydd eu hangen arnom. Mae hynny'n bwysig. Rwy'n teimlo bod llawer o waith yn cael ei wneud er mwyn i ni allu dod o hyd i le rydym yn mynd i ddatblygu gofal plant a lle rydym yn mynd i'w drosglwyddo. Wrth inni ddatblygu'r gweithlu, rydym yn gweithio'n galed gyda'r Asiantaeth Genedlaethol Arwain ac Arloesi mewn Gofal Iechyd ac addysg uwch. Mae hyfforddiant ar yr agenda hwnnw wedi dechrau'n barod ac rydym yn siŵr y gallwn ddod o hyd i ymwelwyr iechyd a'u hyfforddi mewn amser i ddatblygu'r rhaglen hon dros y tair blynedd nesaf.

[212] **Aled Roberts:** A yw'r wybodaeth a roddwyd i'r awdurdodau lleol fis diwethaf yn cynnwys unrhyw wybodaeth am wariant cyfalaf ym mhob sir neu a fydd rhyw fath o gyfundrefn bidio i'r canol ar gyfer gwariant cyfalaf?

[213] **Gwenda Thomas:** Gwnaf ofyn i Martin fy nghynorthwyo ar hyn, ond mae'n rhaid i'r awdurdodau lleol ddod â'u cynlluniau i ni erbyn diwedd y mis. Wedyn byddwn yn ymateb i ddweud a ydynt yn addas ai peidio, a bydd y gwariant cyfalaf yn rhan o hynny, yn ôl yr hyn rwyf i'n ei ddeall.

[214] **Mr Swain:** We have given local authorities an indication as to where we see concentrations of nought to three-year-olds in income-benefit households, so they have an idea of where their areas should be focused. We have asked them to give us a plan for next year, when we are not seeing huge expansion, so we will have the immediate plan for next year, and then we are asking for a three-year plan by early summer as to where precisely their new Flying Start areas will be, based on an assessment of what is available locally, particularly to deliver the childcare element, and what plans they can put in place. Many are thinking about linking it to other programmes, so some authorities are thinking about linking it with their schools development programme going forward and some are thinking about

certain that we have the scope to develop the place where we intend to deliver the care. We are working across the independent sector and the third sector and with the health boards to ensure that these places are available. Where there is space in a school, should we develop it, as we saw happening in Llanelli? There, a school closed and we used the empty building. We have to consider that we are not going to be able to ensure new buildings for the whole development.

However, we have £6 million of capital funds over the next two years, and we will use that to create the resources that we require. That is important. I feel that a great deal of work is being done in order to enable us to identify where we will develop childcare and where we will deliver it. As we develop the workforce, we are working hard with the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare and higher education. The training on that agenda has already commenced and we are certain that we will be able to find health visitors and train them in time to develop this programme over the next three years.

Aled Roberts: Does the information that was given to local authorities last month include any information about capital expenditure in every county or will there be some kind of regime of bidding to the centre for capital expenditure?

Gwenda Thomas: I will ask Martin to assist me here, but local authorities must submit their plans to us by the end of the month. We will then respond as to whether they are appropriate or not, and my understanding is that capital expenditure will be part of that.

community regeneration and what will happen in these communities. At the moment, we are not able to say, 'That's where we're going to spend our money', but we know what money we have and which areas we are going into. The precise details will come through in the plans in the early summer.

[215] **Aled Roberts:** I am interested in the Deputy Minister's comments regarding different approaches in different authorities. Will the approach be that there will be an indicative capital budget per local authority or will there be a bidding process? There is a danger if there is an indicative budget, given that authorities spend up to the budget, and it may be that you will take the view that the current provision, as far as capital resource is concerned, is adequate in that authority area.

[216] **Mr Swain:** We have made it clear that we have not given an indicative capital allocation, and we have asked local authorities to be innovative and creative in the solutions that they offer.

[217] **Jenny Rathbone:** You have given us the indicative figures per local authority in your annex. Is it also possible to have the numbers of nought to three-year-olds in families that are receiving income support in those local authority areas?

[218] **Gwenda Thomas:** Yes, we have those figures.

[219] **Jenny Rathbone:** That would be useful.

[220] **Angela Burns:** Thank you very much for your paper. I want to start with a question in a similar area to Jenny's. I welcome the development of the outreach service; that is great because there are a lot of families, particularly in harder to reach places, that really need that kind of help. Given that we can target those people by using the outreach service—this is a silly question—would it not also be possible to target the ones who are in the areas so that we would not have to define an area and say, 'This is a Flying Start area', so that we would not have to go about doing geographical lumps?

11.30 a.m.

[221] Has it ever been considered, or would it be too impractical to look at the cadre of people that we are trying to reach and see where they all are, because local authorities have the information, and just target them specifically? The reason why I say that is because it is about maximising the value of the pounds that we have to use on this. Although I do not mind if many ancillary people benefit because they happen to be in a Flying Start area, I was wondering whether any work has been done to see how much is being spent on people who do not need the services, because we could use the outreach methodology to get the scheme to exactly the people who need it.

[222] **Gwenda Thomas:** I am not going to change the funding to existing programmes, because it would be too much of an upheaval. We are talking about the roll-out of Flying Start. I had reservations about the funding that uses children's personal social services data because they are out of date and rely on various indicators, one being the index of multiple deprivation and the other being free school meals. All of the indicators, without exception, identified children aged nought to 18. There was not the focus that we needed on nought to three-year-olds. That is why the decision has been taken to change the funding. Within that, using the income support data, I believe that that will still come up with some geographical clusters by virtue of being related to income support.

[223] Having said that, it was very important to listen to people who were saying that it was ridiculous that someone on one side of the street could benefit and not the other. Something

had to be done about that. So, for the first year, the percentage of the revenue funding that will be put into outreach is 2.5%, which is not very much, but it is absolutely important that we start slowly and that we build the discretion of local authorities to look at this and to give them the power; they should know their local area. In ‘Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action’, I say that I want authorities to think of people in need and to get to know the need in their area, so the outreach proposal gives local authorities that discretion. If there is a family that can benefit from outside of the cluster areas, local authorities will need to develop their knowledge of that and use the money. I know that the money is not a lot in the first year, but, by the end of the year, I will need to know whether the outreach has been effective. That is the thinking behind it.

[224] **Angela Burns:** Could we make an assumption that, providing the evidence shows that it is successful, you will seek to get local authorities to increase the outreach?

[225] **Gwenda Thomas:** I would certainly expect them to respond as well as they possibly can within the limited resources they have—we all realise that there are limitations. However, I would expect them to understand the level of need and where that need arises in their areas.

[226] **Angela Burns:** I have heard anecdotal evidence from my constituency, so it may not be a Wales-wide issue at all, from organisations on the fringes of Flying Start areas—the soft boundaries, if you like—which says that they are either adversely or proactively affected by being on the edge of a Flying Start area. For example, where you have primary schools with a Flying Start nursery attached, parents do not send their children to a school that is just outside the area because it does not have a Flying Start nursery. There is a consequential long-term impact on the number of pupils going through the primary school, which jeopardises the health and strength of that school. So, you have one primary school that is oversubscribed because all the children have come through the funnel. Questions have been asked about whether it is possible to look at funding for nursery schools that are attached to primary schools on the edge of Flying Start areas, or to have Flying Start placements in order to spread it out, because it affects what happens when four-year-olds enter primary school.

[227] **Gwenda Thomas:** Flying Start funding is not in any way linked to school catchment areas. It is important to realise that. My wish is that we could have Flying Start in every community in Wales. Unfortunately, that cannot happen as quickly as we would want it to. The intention of this roll-out programme is to double the number of children in the programme. That is one of the five core aims that were included in our manifesto. So, we will double the number from 18 to 36.

[228] We have seen examples where some local authorities are exceeding the numbers that they can reach. So, we need to share this information and look at how some authorities are able to do that. Is the birth rate rising in some places? In Ceredigion, for example, birth rates have been rising and they will need to reach more children in the coming years. So, there is flexibility. However, until we can reach every child in need so that they can benefit, we will unfortunately always have these anomalies in the system.

[229] **Angela Burns:** I appreciate that and understand that it is not linked to schools, but one of the concerns I have is that, if local authorities choose to guide all of their Flying Start children to a certain school and not the school next door, you end up with an unfair social mix. You have a school that has a certain type of child and another school will have another type. We talk about social inclusion and integration; is it possible, perhaps, to guide local authorities more on trying to establish that mix so that we do not end up with silos of types of people?

[230] **Gwenda Thomas:** I have not had any evidence of that.

[231] **Angela Burns:** I could give you the names of a couple of schools, off the record. I will drop the information to you in e-mail for you to look at. There are a couple of examples that demonstrate what can inadvertently happen. I just wondered whether we should try to mix it all up a bit more.

[232] **Gwenda Thomas:** Yes, I would be pleased to look at that.

[233] **Julie Morgan:** I just wanted to be clear what is happening in a constituency like mine where there is no Flying Start provision at the moment. I am hoping that there will be such opportunities following the roll-out. Am I right to understand that it will depend on the local authority identifying a small cluster in the area, or that individual families who meet the criteria would be identified? There is not a nearby area to piggyback on, really. Do you see this as an opportunity for Cardiff North?

[234] **Gwenda Thomas:** If there are families in Cardiff North that could benefit, then it is a matter for the discretion of the local authority. We are currently negotiating with Cardiff the terms of the investment in Cardiff for the programme from the beginning of next year. So, there is discretion and we are talking to Cardiff.

[235] **Julie Morgan:** So it is a possibility.

[236] **Gwenda Thomas:** Yes, there is a possibility that outreach could allow them to identify families in Cardiff North that could benefit.

[237] **Simon Thomas:** Hoffwn fod yn glir o ran y system gyllido. Rydych wedi esbonio heddiw, ac yn eich papur, nad ydych yn mynd i newid y ffordd y mae'r ardaloedd presennol yn cael eu cyllido achos byddai hynny'n arwain at ormod o gythrwfl yn yr ardaloedd hynny, ond deallaf eich bod yn mynd i ariannu'r ardaloedd newydd mewn ffordd wahanol. Felly, bydd gennym ddwy system gyllido ochr yn ochr â'i gilydd. Am ba hyd y byddwch yn cadw'r ddwy system gyllido? Po hiraf y bydd hyn yn parhau, po fwyaf o anghysonderau fydd yn y system. Yn y pen draw, bydd angen uno'r ddwy. A oes gennych gynllun o safwynt pryd fydd hynny'n digwydd?

Simon Thomas: I would like to be clear on the funding system. You have explained today, and in your paper, that you are not going to change the way the current areas are funded because it would cause too much disruption in those areas, but I understand that you are going to fund the new areas in a different way. Therefore, we will have two funding systems working in parallel with each other. How long will you keep the two funding systems? The longer it continues, the more anomalies there will be in the system. In the end, it will be necessary to merge the two. Do you have a plan as to when this will happen?

[238] **Gwenda Thomas:** Ni allaf roi amserlen ichi am hynny, ond bydd rhai o'r plant yn gadael y system wrth iddynt fynd yn hŷn. Ateb personol yw hyn, gan nad wyf wedi derbyn cyngor ar y mater, ond credaf y byddai'n well inni symud tuag at gael un ffordd o gyllido. Hoffwn gael hynny fel amcan, ond credaf y byddai gormod o derfysg pe bawn yn ceisio newid y ffordd rydym yn cyllido'r rhaglen gyntaf. Fodd bynnag, ar ddiwedd y dydd, hoffwn eu gweld yn dod at ei gilydd.

Gwenda Thomas: I cannot give you a timetable for that, but some children will leave the system as they get older. This is a personal answer, because I have not received advice on this matter, but I believe that it would be better to move towards one funding method. I would like to see that being one of our aims, but I think that it would be too disruptive if we endeavoured to change the way we fund the first programme. However, ultimately, I would like to see them merging.

[239] **Christine Chapman:** Lynne and Jenny, could you both ask your questions? I want to

move on as we have less than 20 minutes now and we have quite a lot of ground to cover.

[240] **Lynne Neagle:** In an area where the council has done outreach work to identify new families, to what extent would the offer a family receives under Flying Start in that area be similar to that in an area where it is very well established? Is it a slightly different offer?

[241] **Christine Chapman:** Jenny, could you ask your question now as well please? Then the Deputy Minister can answer both questions together.

[242] **Jenny Rathbone:** Can you clarify that you will be expecting local authorities to identify concentrations of nought to three-year-olds whose families receive income support for new universal Flying Start provision? There is obviously 2.5% for outreach work outwith those areas as well. Is that correct?

[243] **Gwenda Thomas:** Can you say that last bit again please?

[244] **Jenny Rathbone:** It is clear that you have allowed local authorities 2.5% of the budget to do outreach work in areas that are not Flying Start areas. However, my understanding is that you are looking for local authorities to develop their plans for doubling the numbers of children receiving Flying Start by looking at their concentrations of deprivation so that you develop a similar programme to the ones that are already there. Therefore, what will happen in X, Y or Z deprived area will be similar to the programme that already exists in Adamsdown or Ely. Is that correct?

[245] **Gwenda Thomas:** The majority of new children we are going to identify would be in those concentrations of the population given the nature of the programme. However, I am very keen that they make the most of this outreach work and that it becomes a very real integral part of the programme as we develop it in the first year. When we come to the end of that year, we will look at how effective that has been. That leads me to Lynne's question. I would not expect the offer made to a family identified by the outreach programme to be any different to the programme offered in existing Flying Start areas. There could be differences in what that family needs. There are four elements to the Flying Start programme, and I do not see that any family identified in that way should receive an offer that was any different.

[246] **Suzy Davies:** We heard earlier from the Minister for education when we were discussing NEETs that there are many agencies chasing the same young people and that, sometimes, the continuity of support can suffer. In what specific ways does the expanded Flying Start programme link strategically and locally to other Welsh Government approaches to supporting families, such as the integrated family support services, Sure Start, Twf and, in particular, the Families First programme?

[247] **Gwenda Thomas:** As you know, the Families First and Flying Start programmes came into my portfolio after the election last year. That in itself has been positive in that we have all of them in one portfolio. It happened to be my portfolio, but we now have all of the programmes in the same portfolio. My intention is that we build a seamless family support service out of the three of them. I see Families First and Flying Start as preventive programmes, and we can link that to Communities First and the foundation phase. I see integrated family support teams as being right at the sharp end. It is extremely important that we get preventive programmes right. We have statistics now on children in need in Wales. That is the first lot of statistics we have had, and they show us that there are about 20,000 children in need in Wales. We have to focus our minds on that and realise that some of those children might be worse off than some children in care.

11.45 a.m.

[248] The early indications are that the number of children coming into care is beginning to decline. That is encouraging. However, I agree with you absolutely that these programmes have to complement each other, and the seamlessness of family support is the key to a successful way forward.

[249] **Susie Davis:** So, this is one of your objectives.

[250] **Gwenda Thomas:** Indeed it is.

[251] **Lynne Neagle:** Given that it has been identified that you need an additional 160 health visitors to deliver the expansion of the programme, how confident are you that you will be able to meet the target? What contingency plans do you have in place if the recruitment drive does not deliver the necessary number of health visitors?

[252] **Gwenda Thomas:** I am confident that we can achieve it, and that is the advice that I am being given. We need another 160 health visitors over the period of expansion. As I have said already, we are working with NLIAH, higher education, local health boards and local authorities, and we are identifying people who want to train as health visitors in this programme. I do not know off the top of my head how many there are in the first tranche who have already begun training to deliver this programme.

[253] **Ms Trott:** We have a small number already in training—I think it is seven, but we are planning to get another 80 in from April. The higher education institutions are recruiting at the moment.

[254] **Aled Roberts:** Mae gennyf dystiolaeth o'r gogledd-ddwyrain am y bwrdd iechyd lleol o'r tro diwethaf i'r cynllun gael ei ehangu. Yn ardal Wrecsam, mae'r cyngor sir yn cyflogi'r ymwelwyr iechyd fel rhan o'r tîm Dechrau'n Deg. Gan fod y bobl hynny yn cael eu cyflogi gan y cyngor sir, cymerodd y bwrdd iechyd y cyfle i rewi swyddi. Felly, mae llai o ymwelwyr iechyd cyffredinol yn cael eu cyflogi yn y sir wrth i Ddechrau'n Deg gael ei ehangu. A fydd y Gweinidog iechyd yn monitro hyn, achos mae pryder gennyf y bydd y byrddau iechyd, oherwydd yr holl bwysau sydd arnynt ar hyn o bryd, yn cymryd y cyfle i rewi swyddi a chael arbedion i'w coffrau eu hun?

Aled Roberts: I have evidence from north-east Wales with regard to the local health board from the last time the scheme was expanded. In the Wrexham area, the county council employs health visitors as part of the Flying Start team. As those people are employed by the county council, the health board took the opportunity to freeze jobs. Therefore, fewer general health visitors are being employed in the county as Flying Start is being expanded. Will the Minister for health monitor this, because I am concerned that, given all the pressures that health boards are currently under, they will take the opportunity to freeze jobs and get savings for their own coffers?

[255] **Gwenda Thomas:** Edrychwn ar y sefyllfa yn Wrecsam a dod yn ôl ag ateb ysgrifennedig i chi ar y peth.

Gwenda Thomas: We will look at the situation in Wrexham and come back to you with a written answer.

[256] **Aled Roberts:** Mae gennyf ddi-ddordeb hefyd mewn gwybod a yw hynny'n cael ei adlewyrchu mewn mannau eraill. Rwyf ond yn sôn am Wrecsam am fod gennyf brofiad personol o hynny. Os ydych yn edrych ar y gwahanol ddisgyblaethau yn y byrddau iechyd, mae cynifer o swyddi'n cael eu rhewi mae perygl go iawn y byddant yn cymryd y cyfle i wneud hyn.

Aled Roberts: I am also interested in knowing whether that is the case in other areas. I only mention Wrexham because I have personal experience of that. If you look at the various disciplines in the health boards, there are so many jobs being frozen that there is a real danger that they will take the opportunity to do this.

[257] **Gwenda Thomas:** Mae'r byrddau iechyd yn bartneriaid bodlon iawn yn fy mwriad i ehangu'r rhaglen hon. Gwnawn edrych ar y pwynt a wnaethoch, a deuf yn ôl i'r pwyllgor â'r ateb.

Gwenda Thomas: The health boards are very willing partners in my aim of expanding this programme. We will look at the point that you made, and I will come back to the committee with an answer.

[258] **Keith Davies:** Credaf fod y pwynt hwnnw'n hollol deg, achos rydym yn gwybod y bydd y byrddau iechyd yn gorfario ac yn gorfod cwtogi ar wario cyn diwedd y flwyddyn ariannol. Yr hyn fydd yn digwydd, fel y mae Aled yn ei ddweud, yw y bydd teuluoedd nad oes arnynt yr un angen ag sydd ar y teuluoedd eraill hyn yn cael eu cosbi, mewn ffordd.

Keith Davies: I think that that is a completely fair point, because we know that the health boards will overspend and will have to cut back on expenditure before the end of the financial year. What will happen, as Aled says, is that those families that are not in as great a need as these other families will be penalised, in a way.

[259] **Gwenda Thomas:** Nid yw hyn wedi dod i'm sylw. Ni wn a yw Martin am ddweud rhywbeth am y pwynt hwn.

Gwenda Thomas: That has not come to my attention. I do not know whether Martin would like to say something on this point.

[260] **Mr Swain:** We are working very closely with the chief nursing officer on this, because we would not want to see the number of health visitors in the generic service fall while we are increasing the number of Flying Start health visitors. That would be a really bad unintended consequence of the expansion of the programme. So, we are working very closely with the chief nursing officer and the NHS workforce development people. We have a sub-group that looks at that and at recruitment as a whole. We do not want to look at this as Flying Start health visiting, but as health visiting as a whole. We certainly would not want to see case loads in the generic service go up as ours come down. So, we are very alive to this and, hopefully, the situation that you describe would not happen as a result of the expansion.

[261] **Jenny Rathbone:** On how long it takes to train a health visitor, we have seven in training now and 80 coming into the training programme from April, but at what point do those people become qualified health visitors? In that context, could you tell us what programmes have been most successful in establishing a skill mix of competencies so that you have family support workers, breast-feeding advisers, play workers and so on, who work under the direction of the health visitor?

[262] **Ms Trott:** We have quite a complex model for the workforce planning to deliver the right number of health visitors at the right time in the right place. We are fairly confident at this stage that that can be delivered. It takes a year on top of the nursing programme. So, we are taking some people out of nurse training and some out of existing placements in hospitals and so on, so we are looking at the whole mix.

[263] On the skill mix question, we are also working closely with the chief nurse to join into the health visiting review, which is also looking at that. So, we are alive to that and we will reflect that in the guidance.

[264] **Jenny Rathbone:** So you do not currently have examples of good practice of the skill mix already in operation?

[265] **Mr Swain:** It depends what you mean by 'good practice'. We have evidence of a skill mix where Flying Start teams will include a whole multitude of people. For example, the model in Torfaen includes play therapists, child psychologists and speech and language therapists. The evidence for me is how well they are doing against the outcomes for children

in that area and we are now reaching that point with the programme. Moving from the pilot phase, we will be saying, 'Let us look at the outcomes'. We will want to look at how many children are going into the care system in their area and how many referrals there are to more acute services and to accident and emergency units. We will also want to consider the data on how well they are doing for the children in order to assess whether the skill mix is right or not.

[266] **Gwenda Thomas:** It is also important that we keep to the case-load target of 110 children to one health visitor. That is one of the key elements of the programme's success.

[267] **Christine Chapman:** We have just over five minutes left and a couple of areas to cover. We must finish by 12.00 p.m. Keith Davies has the next question.

[268] **Keith Davies:** Hoffwn siarad am y teuluoedd mwyaf anodd eu cyrraedd, gan fod yr arolwg yn dangos amrywiaeth o un ardal i'r llall. Pam fod hynny'n digwydd? Yn ogystal, dywedwch y bydd eich swyddogion yn monitro awdurdodau lleol. Felly, mae dwy ran i'r cwestiwn: pam fod amrywiaeth a sut y bydd eich swyddogion yn monitro'r sefyllfa i geisio ei wella?

Keith Davies: I wish to talk about the hardest-to-reach families, because the survey shows variation from one area to another. Why is that case? Furthermore, you say that your officials will monitor local authorities. So, there are two parts to the question: why is there variation and how will your officials monitor the situation to try to improve it?

[269] **Gwenda Thomas:** Mae'n anodd cyrraedd rhai o'r teuluoedd hyn, ac rydym i gyd yn ystyried pam y mae hynny. Fodd bynnag, mae'n bwysig cael system fonitro briodol ar waith fel bod modd i ni sicrhau bod llywodraeth leol yn gwneud cymaint ag sy'n bosibl i ddod o hyd i'r teuluoedd sydd angen y cymorth hwn. Fodd bynnag, mae hynny'n rhan o'r drafodaeth gychwynnol rhyngom ni a'r awdurdodau lleol cyn i ni gytuno i'w hariannu; mae'n rhan bwysig o'r drafodaeth honno. Mae'n bwysig cyrraedd y teuluoedd hyn ac mae'n ddyletswydd arnom i gyd i wneud hynny. Os byddwn yn dod i wybod am deulu, yna gallwn roi'r gwybodaeth honno i'r awdurdodau. Gallwn eu hadnabod mewn nifer o ffyrdd, er enghraifft, gallai'r system addysg ein cefnogi i ddod o hyd i fabi newydd, neu i deulu sy'n agored i niwed sy'n disgwyl plentyn. Mae nifer o ffyrdd y gallwn wneud ein gorau i gyrraedd y teuluoedd hyn.

Gwenda Thomas: It is difficult to reach some of these families and we are all looking at why that is the case. However, it is important to have an appropriate monitoring system in place so that we can ensure that local government is doing as much as it possibly can to identify the families who need this assistance. However, that is part of the initial discussion between us and the local authorities before we agree to fund them; it is an important part of that discussion. It is important to reach these families and we are all duty-bound to do so. If we get to know of a family, then we can give the authorities that information. We can identify them in a number of ways, for example, the education system could support us in identifying a new baby or a vulnerable family that is expecting a child. There are a number of ways that we can do our best to reach these families.

[270] **Aled Roberts:** Rwyf eisiau sôn am anghenion ieithyddol, achos un o'r diffygion o ran yr astudiaethau a gyhoeddwyd rhyw 10 diwrnod yn ôl yw'r diffyg sôn am astudiaeth o'r galw am wasanathau drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Pa mor fodlon yr ydych fod darparwyr Dechrau'n Deg yn ymateb i'r galw ieithyddol o fewn siroedd? Rydym hefyd yn poeni ynghylch rhieni o gefndiroedd di-

Aled Roberts: I want to talk about linguistic needs, because one of the deficiencies with regard to the studies published about 10 days ago is that there is no mention of a study of the demand for services through the medium of Welsh. How satisfied are you that Flying Start providers are responding to the linguistic demand within counties? We are also concerned about parents from non-

Gymraeg sy'n awyddus i'w plant fynd ymlaen i gael addysg Gymraeg. A oes digon o leoedd yn cynnal gwasanaethau drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg mewn ardaloedd di-Gymraeg?

Welsh speaking backgrounds who are keen for their children to go on to Welsh-medium education. Are there enough places providing services through the medium of Welsh in non-Welsh speaking areas?

[271] Hefyd, os edrychwch ar nifer o ystadegau ynglŷn â'r ddarpariaeth i deuluoedd o gefndir ethnig, o ran faint o weithiau mae ymwelwyr iechyd yn ymweld â hwy, mae'r canran yn llai, ac mae llai o deuluoedd o gefndir ethnig yn mynd i sesiynau galw i mewn, ac yn y blaen. A ydych yn ffyddiog fod y ddarpariaeth ar gyfer cymunedau ethnig yn ddigonol, neu a oes angen gweithredu pellach yn y maes hwn hefyd?

Also, if you look at a number of statistics regarding the provision for families from an ethnic background, in terms of the number of visits from health visitors, the percentage is smaller, and fewer families from ethnic backgrounds go to drop-in sessions and so on. Are you confident that the provision for ethnic communities is sufficient, or is further action also needed in this area?

[272] **Christine Chapman:** We are also concerned about children with disabilities.

[273] **Gwenda Thomas:** Yr egwyddorion sy'n tanlinellu sut yr ydym yn meddwl ynglŷn â hyn yw'r saith amcan craidd yr ydym wedi eu mabwysiadu sydd yng Nghonfesiwn y Cenhedloedd Unedig ar Hawliau'r Plentyn. Mae hynny'n bwysig. Mae'n tanlinellu ei bod yn rhaglen i holl blant Cymru, pa un a ydynt o gefndir ethnig neu'n anabl, a beth bynnag yw eu hiaith gyntaf, a bod hawl gan y plentyn i wasanaeth sy'n ymateb i'w anghenion. Mae'r ffigurau gennyf yn fy mhen. Credaf fod 20% o'r rhaglenni yn Saesneg yn unig. Mae 178 o raglenni dwyieithog ac mae 15% o raglenni yn cael eu darparu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Yr ydym yn ceisio ymateb i'r angen am ddarpariaeth drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg o fewn ardaloedd di-Gymraeg. Mae'r rhan fwyaf o'r 15% hynny o raglenni a darperir drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yng Ngwynedd a Cheredigion, fel y byddech yn ei ddisgwyl, efallai. Rydym eisiau datblygu dwyieithrwydd, ac efallai eich bod yn gwybod am y strategaeth ar y cyd a ddatblygwyd gan y tasglu ar ddarpariaeth drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg ym maes iechyd a gwasanaethau cymdeithasol. Byddai modd inni gysylltu'r gwaith hwn gyda'r gwaith y tasglu, gan ein bod wedi llunio strategaeth sydd ar fin mynd allan i ymgynghoriad ar ddatblygu darpariaeth drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg ar draws y ddau wasanaeth. Y bwriad yw ymgynghori ac wedyn symud ymlaen i ddatblygu cynlluniau gwaith, a symud y gwaith ymlaen ar frys.

Gwenda Thomas: The principles that underline how we think about this are the seven core objectives that we have signed up to in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. That is important. It underlines that it is a programme for all Welsh children, whether they are from an ethnic background or are disabled, and whatever their first language is, and that children have a right to a service that responds to their needs. I have the figures in my head. I think that 20% of the programmes are in English only. There are 178 bilingual programmes and 15% of programmes are provided through the medium of Welsh. We are trying to respond to the demand for Welsh-medium provision in non-Welsh speaking areas. The majority of that 15% of programmes that are provided through the medium of Welsh are in Gwynedd and Ceredigion, as you might expect. We want to develop bilingualism, and you may know of the joint strategy developed by the taskforce on Welsh-medium provision in the areas of health and social services. We could link this work with the work of the taskforce, as we have drawn up a strategy that is about to go out to consultation on developing Welsh-medium provision across the two services. The intention is to consult and then to move on to develop work plans, and to take that work forward urgently.

[274] I ddod yn ôl at Dechrau'n Deg, dyna yw'r ffigurau—credaf fy mod wedi eu cael yn iawn. Mae anghenion cymunedau ethnig yn peri gofid i mi; mae llawer mwy o waith i ni ei wneud i ymateb i'w anghenion, ac fe wnawn hynny. Mae hwn yn wasanaeth ar gyfer pob plentyn, ac ni fyddwn am weld unrhyw blentyn yn colli allan oherwydd eu bod o gefndir ethnig, yn siarad Cymraeg fel eu hiaith gyntaf, yn anabl, neu ba bynnag reswm arall. Pa bynnag eu hanghenion, mae'r plant yn gynwysiedig yn y rhaglen hon.

To come back to Flying Start, those are the figures—I think that I have got them right. The needs of ethnic communities are of concern to me; we need to do much more work to respond to their needs, and we will do that. This is a service for all children, and I would not want to see any child lose out because they are from an ethnic background, speak Welsh as their first language, are disabled, or for any other reason. Whatever their needs, the children are included in this programme.

[275] **Aled Roberts:** Mae'r astudiaeth gychwynnol wedi mesur y galw ethnig, ond nid yw wedi mesur y galw trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. A fydd astudiaethau'r dyfodol yn mesur y galw hwnnw?

Aled Roberts: The initial study has measured the ethnic demand, but it has not measured the demand through the medium of Welsh. Will future studies measure that demand?

[276] **Gwenda Thomas:** Rydym yn ceisio dysgu o hyd o le y daw'r galw am wasanaeth. Ar hyn o bryd, rydym yn cynnal adolygiad o'r gwasanaeth i deuluoedd ethnig a bydd rhaid dysgu ohono.

Gwenda Thomas: We are continually trying to learn where the demand for services comes from. At the moment, we are conducting a review of the service for ethnic families and we will have to learn from it.

[277] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you for your evidence, Deputy Minister. It has been a very comprehensive evidence session this morning. Therefore, I would like to thank you and your officials for attending. Thank you.

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

12.00 p.m.

Cynnig Gweithdrefnol Procedural Motion

[279] **Christine Chapman:** I move

in accordance with Standing Order No 17.42 (ix) that the committee resolves to meet in private for items 5 and 6 and for the meeting on 1 February 2012.

[280] Are all Members content? I see that you are.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 12:01p.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 12.01p.m.*