



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru The National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Menter a Busnes The Enterprise and Business Committee

**Dydd Mercher, 26 Tachwedd 2014
Wednesday, 26 November 2014**

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

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

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

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol Committee members in attendance

Mick Antoniw

Llafur
Labour

Byron Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Rhun ap Iorwerth	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Jeff Cuthbert	Llafur Labour
William Graham	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Conservatives (Committee Chair)
Eluned Parrott	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Gwenda Thomas	Llafur Labour
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Teresa Holdsworth	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr, Is-adran Ymgysylltiad a Chyflogaeth Pobl Ifanc, Llywodraeth Cymru Deputy Director, Youth Engagement and Employment Division, Welsh Government
Julie James	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Dirprwy Weinidog Sgiliau a Technoleg) Assembly Member, Labour (the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology)
Huw Morris	Cyfarwyddwr Grŵp, Sgiliau Addysg Uwch a Dysgu Gydol Oes, Llywodraeth Cymru Group Director, Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, Welsh Government

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

Kevin Davies	Y Gwasanaeth Allgymorth Outreach Service
Claire Morris	Ail Glerc Second Clerk
Anne Thomas	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Richard Watkins	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:30.
The meeting began at 09:30.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **William Graham:** Good morning and welcome to this meeting of the Enterprise and Business Committee. The meeting is bilingual. Headphones can be used for simultaneous translation from Welsh to English on channel 1 or for amplification on channel 0. The meeting is being broadcast, and a transcript of proceedings will be published. I remind Members that there is no need to touch the microphones, and in the event of a fire alarm,

people must follow directions from the ushers. This morning, we have apologies from Keith Davies and Dafydd Elis-Thomas.

Fideo Allgymorth ar Helpu Pobl Ifanc i Gael Gwaith Outreach Video on Assisting Young People into Work

[2] **William Graham:** As part of our inquiry into assisting young people into work, I ask Kevin Davies, who is an outreach liaison manager, to present a video of interviews with young people.

[3] **Mr Davies:** Thank you, Chair. The Assembly's outreach team has been out speaking to a number of different young people across different parts of Wales. We have interviewed 17 young people in total between the ages of 16 and 25. The video that we are about to watch has been split into a number of different categories, which include things like careers advice, work experience, transport, the Welsh language, confidence and pressures, and perceptions. In addition to this, the Assembly's communications team has also been speaking to a number of young people through workshops, presentations and visits to the Assembly's estate, and we have spoken to over 2,000 young people during this process. Members have been provided with a summary of the comments that they have raised at those sessions. There is also a pack that has been provided to give you a bit of background on the participants who have taken part in the video as well, which include things like their location and what their current situation is in terms of seeking employment. Does anyone have any questions before we play the video?

[4] **Joyce Watson:** How far west did you go—[*Inaudible.*] [*Laughter.*]

[5] **Mr Davies:** We spoke to some people from Aberystwyth.

[6] **Joyce Watson:** That is not west.

[7] **Mr Davies:** That is not west, no. That is mid-west, I guess, but not further than that, I am afraid.

[8] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Mid-west, I like that.

[9] **Joyce Watson:** It is not west.

[10] **Mr Davies:** Not west, no.

[11] **Joyce Watson:** I meant south-west, as in Pembrokeshire.

[12] **Byron Davies:** Do we know where [*Inaudible.*]—

[13] **Mr Davies:** We sourced the young people through a number of different organisations. We sourced people through organisations like Transitions into Employment, Disability Wales, the Prince's Trust, the Wrexham Warehouse Project and places like that. So, on the pack, it gives you some information on the participant and where they are from.

[14] **William Graham:** The names and locations are given there.

[15] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Interestingly, there is no-one from the south Wales Valleys.

[16] **Mr Davies:** No. We did speak to certain organisations and groups there to try to source people from those areas, but none of which we managed to interview in the time.

[17] **William Graham:** Right. If there are no more questions, Kevin, perhaps you would like to play the video.

Dangoswyd DVD. Mae'r trawsgrifiad mewn llythrennau italig isod yn drawsgrifiad o'r cyfraniadau llafar ar y DVD. Mae'r cyflwyniad ar gael drwy ddilyn y linc hon: [cyflwyniad DVD](#).

A DVD was shown. The transcription in italics below is a transcription of the oral contributions on the DVD. The presentation can be accessed by following this link: [DVD presentation](#).

Cyngor ar Yrfaoedd **Careers Advice**

Ms McFarlane: *I get a lot of advice from my parents and from friends. It's all good because it's experience; it's not just what they have been taught. It's things that they have learnt. In school, we have a careers officer and I have been to see her before, but I think it's very hard for a careers officer to learn what all the options are for the set job that you want to do. There are a lot of jobs out there and a lot of different universities. Sometimes, it kind of feels like they are not quite trained to handle that mass, that amount of knowledge.*

Ms Hesketh: *Nearly everyone I know is doing A-levels—different variations. I was just, you know, don't do A-levels. It's not what I wanted to do.*

Ms Fuge: *I actually had really good careers advice when I was in school. We had a careers officer and just before we were leaving school, we were all given an appointment for a certain time to go and see her to talk about where we were going to go after school, any future plans after college, and she would give us like the booklets of the different colleges, different advice on the courses you wanted to do.*

Ms Ncube: *I have received careers advice, but I've not found it very useful because there's not been enough offered.*

Mr Phillips: *When I went to university, I had obviously more directed advice. Fair enough, I think they were a lot more honest with me in university. One of my lecturers, who I won't name, turned round and said to me that, in comparison with every other student, I will find it more difficult to get a job because of my disability, which I think a lot of people would have been afraid to say because, obviously, it is not a thing you should be saying; there shouldn't be discrimination, but there is definitely something there. They sort of prepared me for, like, you know, the disappointment of trying to look for work as well.*

Ms Price: *Mae gen i swyddog gyrfaoedd. Roedd hi'n rhoi cymorth, ond doedd o ddim mewn digon o ddyfnder ac ro'n i'n teimlo bach ar goll yn gwneud cais am UCAS a gwneud cais am brifysgolion. Erbyn rŵan, rwy' 'di arfer 'ag o, ond ar y pryd, do'n i dal ddim yn siŵr beth o'n i eisiau ei wneud. Efallai bach mwy o gymorth a dyfnder.*

Ms Price: *I did have a careers officer, who gave advice, but it wasn't in-depth enough and I felt a little lost making my UCAS application and applying for universities. Now, I am fine, but at the time, I was still not sure what I wanted to do. So perhaps a little more help and depth would have helped.*

Ms Lownsbrough: *There was that support: 'Oh you are going to university', to pick your courses and how to fill out your UCAS form. You receive all this help to go forward with that, and there wasn't really—. Obviously, there was the option for myself, 'Oh, I'm going to leave college actually. I'm not going to go to university, actually', but there was not the option of, 'Okay, this is the help you can receive if you're not going to university'. There was so much*

help around going to university, but nothing around any other options.

Hyfforddiant Ymarferol a Phrofiad Gwaith **Practical Training and Work Experience**

Mr Lowthian: *Of course, we did not do work experience in our school. We missed it and everything, so there's nothing we can put down on our CVs really for work experience, because we haven't had it, because we never had it in our school for some reason.*

Mr Sims: *It depends on the course really, because when I was in school, they had work experience, but only, like, for the girls it would be hairdressing, or for the boys it would be motor mechanics. So, that was all they really had. So, when we went into college—if you're going straight from school to a job, you're not going to know what to expect.*

Ms McFarlane: *With work experience, we have only been given a week, and a week isn't long enough to be able to understand that that is the career that you want to go into. It is barely long enough to be able to get to know the place where you are.*

Ms Fuge: *When I started year 11, I got dropped from science because I did not get the grade in the mock in the previous year, but I was put on another course instead called, 'Work and employment'. It was only half a GCSE, but it gave us the skills of how to write a CV and how to manage ourselves financially, and just how to prepare to be in an interview for college or a work interview.*

Mr Piper: *I think there's enough practical training out there for the young people to do; it is whether they get involved in it or whether they find out about it, whether they have heard about it. Down here, I know we do a lot of practical stuff, so there's a lot of practical stuff for people to get involved in.*

Ms Rees: *I'm studying health and social care, and they provide a lot of training for me to go into something like that, but if I were studying something else, it would not be good.*

Ms Ridely: *I don't feel the majority of young people are given adequate skills to enter the workforce, as it is very dependent on your subject choice. Many subjects like English or a subject where communication is key, they are almost to an advantage to if you took more science-based or other subjects.*

Mr Morrison: *They need to be pressured into it, maybe. I think, on the jobseekers and through the Government and that, I think they should have to do certain training to be able to receive their jobseekers' income, because, myself, I got offered it, but because I didn't want to do it, I never ever did it, but I reckon that if I did do it, it would've increased my chances of getting a job or into training or something by a big mark.*

Cymwysterau a Phrofiad **Qualifications and Experience**

Ms McFarlane: *There is a loop: you either can't get the job because you've not got the qualifications and then, once you've got the qualifications, you can't get the job because you haven't had the experience.*

Ms Ncube: *It's that whole situation about, 'We won't employ you unless you're experienced', but it's like a 'how are we going to get experience if no-one is going to employ us' kind of thing.*

Mr Phillips: *I think some employers as well use the whole needing to get experience as a way*

of cheap labour. Let us be honest about it. They'll see people and think, 'Okay, we'll get them in and have them for that experience period and then get rid of them', and then you are sort of stuck still looking for experience and looking for a foot in the door.

Mr Jeffs: Sometimes employers are unrealistic about the skills and the experience they expect from young people when they consider them for work. They often have far-too-high requirements when they are writing up their job descriptions and such, and it really puts off a lot of possible talented young people.

Ms Price: *Yn fy marn i, dwi'n meddwl bod lot ohono fo ydy—ti'n gallu cael gradd dda neu wneud yn dda yn dy arholiadau ond maen nhw'n dweud, 'Ti angen profiad'. Mae'n anodd cael profiad tra bo ti'n astudio neu tra bo ti yn yr ysgol, efallai, neu efallai ti 'di bod yn gweithio mewn caffi ers oeddet ti'n fach, ond nid yw'n ddigon iddyn nhw, neu rwy'ti eisiau job fwy uchelgeisiol ac mae angen mwy o brofiad.*

Ms Price: In my opinion, I think that a lot of this—you can get a good degree or do well in exams but they say, 'you need experience'. It is difficult to get experience while studying or perhaps while in school, or perhaps you have been working in a café since you were small, but it is not enough for them, or you want a more ambitious job and need the experience.

Mr Zion: *A lot of young people think that you've got to have a uni degree, you've got to be with good experience in order to get a job, so sometimes people aren't even motivated to try, because they expect to fail.*

Ms Lownsbrough: *You could be a really fantastic worker, but you might not have any experience, so you haven't got a chance in hell. When I was unemployed, I could apply for—. Well, I did apply for loads and loads of jobs, month after month after month, but I did not even get a reply. I didn't even get turned down. So, the fact that I didn't even get the opportunity to be turned away says there's a massive problem with the way we're applying for our jobs.*

Cludiant Transport

Ms Zion: *A lot of people do not have the money to pay for public transport all the time, and if you can't get a lift somewhere or you don't drive yourself or something, that can really be a problem. Sometimes, maybe people live quite far out in the countryside, so they've got to travel away or the job they really want just isn't nearby to them.*

Ms Hesketh: *I think something that does really, really does need to be pushed is a bus pass for NEETs, because why do—. The older generation gets free travel, and young people should be as entitled, as well as them.'*

Ms Ncube: *Buses are, like, never on time. If I was to go to a job interview or to work, I would never get a bus that gets me to work 20 minutes before, because more than likely, that bus is going to be 20 minutes late.*

Mr Ridely: *I know I live in an isolated village where even the bus service has been stopped, and so unless my parents take me, I have no way of getting to work.*

Yr Iaith Gymraeg The Welsh Language

Mr Preddy: *I personally have friends who speak Welsh and then, actually, just friends of the family who have translated for things like BBC, like S4C, and things like that, and they've*

said, like, it's helped them so much more, because, like, it's just easier for them to get into the workplace because they're bilingual. Yes, it really does help a lot.

Ms Ncube: *I have been affected by jobs that require Welsh-language speaking skills, because I can understand Welsh, but speaking it is a little bit difficult for me. I just need a little bit more confidence within it.*

Ms McFarlane: *It is hard when you go in and you do understand a basic amount, but when they interview you and they say, 'Do you speak Welsh?', and you say, 'Well, I understand some of it, but not really', sometimes you can be pushed aside quite easily with that.*

Mr Ridely: *Welsh language skills hasn't affected me in a negative way. I have a basic understanding of Welsh. I had a B in second language Welsh, and I've used this to my advantage in previous work.*

Mr Phillips: *My perspective on the Welsh language has sort of altered over the years. When I was in school, you know, I'm obviously a passionate Welshman and the Welsh language has been important to me, but I never thought I would go on and use it in a career at all, because most people, you know, their first language is English. But the Welsh language has opened a lot of doors for me that would have been closed to other people. I've done a lot of Welsh-language media work and stuff like that since leaving university. It's really important to me.*

[18] **Mr Morrison:** *Well, I've never been affected by needing Welsh-language skills, because I've only recently moved into Wales, but I think the businesses that are based in Wales should have a link to maybe Welsh training, speaking classes, and it should be free of charge maybe, and then they have to go a certain amount of days a week, just to pick it up if they want to. I think that's what should be set up.*

[19] **Ms Boff:** *For me, personally, to find work in this area, not being able to speak Welsh has been a major, major hurdle. I am looking into courses and I am looking at ways of learning it, and I'm going to try and learn it, but from my past experience of trying to learn another language, I've been really struggling before. So, I don't know if I am going to be able to learn it and, in that case, I don't know if that's going to be a problem that I can resolve.'*

Hyder a Phwysau Confidence and Pressures

Mr Morrison: *I think there are certain people that are happy just doing what they're doing. I think they need pressure for them to actually succeed.*

Mr Jeffs: *There is a great deal of pressure to find work when you're young if you're in-between jobs, or if you've just come out of education, most definitely. Not just pressure from possible parents or guardians, I feel there's a pressure from society and there's a pressure from the Government as well, with a lot of get-back-to-work schemes, which I feel work on some scale, but I think they need to improve the way that they help and target young people.*

Ms Zion: *I actually know quite a few young people who are, like, transgender, and they are terrified to go for job interviews because they think they'll be discriminated against, because they think if they go as one gender, and then later on 'come out', they will then be fired. They're worried that there'll be prejudice in the workplace, and it's just, like, there are people who are genuinely really scared to even try, because of how they will be perceived.*

09:45

Cyfleoedd Swyddi

Job Opportunities

Ms Hesketh: *I think the biggest barrier to young people finding work is that a lot of the jobs, now, most of it is seasonal and temporary for Christmas. So, they are not really there for as long as they really could be. Then, you do not really get to work in the environment that you want to.*

Mr Preddy: *There are people who are lazy, but I know so many people who've got their degree, gone on, now, and they've ended up going to work in HMV or something, because they cannot find—. There's no available jobs for them for the degree that they want, so they're going to have to try to adapt to the job market, then, as well.*

Mr Piper: *The problem that young people in this area face is that it is not a massive area. The job opportunities are not great, so you really have to look and search hard to find a job in this area, I think.*

Rhaglenni Hyfforddi Training Programmes

Mr Lowthian: *On traineeship, basically what we did was, because we only had to go in there for one day per week, for the rest of the days they would put us on a placement, which is like work experience, basically, but it's part of the course, doing it. It was all right at first because, like, I enjoy doing something new, but then it just kind of felt like he was making me do more cleaning than actual experience.*

Ms Ncube: *I have been part of Jobs Growth Wales, but unfortunately, for me, that did not go so well. I was expecting to be there for about three weeks at the most, as a sort of first training, and then go straight on to employment, but what ended up happening was that I was there for about a month and a half, still not getting paid. I was promised a job by both the job centre and by the company I was working with, but it didn't quite work out well for me, because I didn't get it in the end, obviously.*

Ms Lownsbrough: *When I was a NEET, I was a NEET for 10 months. I was really down. I remember there were points when I'd be crying in the job centre, because people were questioning me, you know, 'You've been looking for all this work, why are you still unemployed?' 'I don't know, I don't know'. As well, when you leave school, it's not what you dreamed your life to be. You think things will fall into place, but they just don't. The job centre then let me know about the Prince's Trust. I did a course with the Prince's Trust. It was run by Admiral insurance company. It was a customer services course and that was two weeks long. It didn't give me any aspirations to go into customer service as such, but it definitely—even just, say, getting out of bed, getting somewhere, going home and having a structure to your day again, and learning about myself.*

Canfyddiadau Perceptions

Mr Zion: *I think a lot of people tend to think that most young people who are unemployed are lazy, must be on benefits, and they're obviously not trying anything. But then, I mean, people on benefits, not all young people are on benefits, obviously, but the people who are, they're not necessarily lazy. Like, I myself am on benefits at the moment. I'm not looking for work but that is because I am volunteering, and I am trying to build up my skills and my experience there.*

Ms Ncube: *Myself and the people at the Communities First project, we may not have jobs, but we are still actually doing stuff with our lives. We are not just sitting around being lazy all*

day. We are actually coming together to do projects and do stuff in the community, while still looking for jobs.

Ms Fuge: *In all honesty, I think some people are just lazy. Sometimes, they cannot be bothered to write up their CV or go down to the shop and have a look to see if there are any jobs going. I've done that. I know. I've been there.*

Mr Phillips: *The media is responsible for a lot of the negativity in terms of disability and youth unemployment, really, because there is a perception that young people are lazy and that they want everything like that. It is not at all. It is not something that is instantaneous either. People are prepared to work, but I don't think employers are prepared to afford the opportunities to learn. Like, a lot of the older generation seem to think, 'Back in my day', and all that, but back in their day, they had the opportunities to get out there and work and put a shift in. There was growth in their jobs as well, where they would be able to climb the ladder.*

[20] **William Graham:** Thank you very much. Are there any comments?

[21] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I have one specific point. I am a little concerned that, from the most disadvantaged areas of Wales, the south Wales Valleys, there was no direct involvement. However, the young lady, Kheti, said that she was on Jobs Growth Wales for one and a half months, but did not get paid. Can we find out a bit more about that, if that is possible? That sounds like an abuse to me, but we might need more detail.

[22] **William Graham:** We will see what we can find, and come back to you on that one. Byron is next.

[23] **Byron Davies:** I have two points. [*Inaudible.*] That certainly came out and the other thing is—I have found this myself from talking to young people and it is what came over there for me, anyway—preparation for interviews and having good bit of coaching prior to interviews; there should be that sort of input.

[24] **William Graham:** Yes, one of the things that was said when we were having our meeting in Swansea was the idea of some sort of Oyster card—that sort of thing—so that young people would have free bus transport, particularly in rural areas. That seemed a sensible suggestion. Rhun is next.

[25] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** It was a very well-put-together film; a really good, well-edited collection of clips. One point that I would make to Jeff is that Holyhead is just as poor as the south Wales Valleys—

[26] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I am not disputing that, but the whole of the Valleys was missing from it.

[27] **Joyce Watson:** May I come in there? It was a really good film and it was well put together and it allowed that conversation to flow, even though Pembrokeshire was not in there. I say that because, as we speak, it is doing a recruitment drive to take all of the high-paid jobs somewhere else, and I know that there are some really good schemes down there. However, that aside, it was good and it is difficult to cover all of Wales.

[28] I absolutely agree with the transport issue. It is something that I come across time and time again. Opportunity is the other thing. I think what I would like to see us do is look at, where there is an obvious opportunity, that people know about it and their families know about it, because there is industry in a given place and it is almost an expectation that their sons and daughters might follow them and there is a clearly defined path within the family. Let us be honest, a lot of this starts in the family and we do the add-on. Where that is not the

case—and that will be the rural areas and the Valleys—there will be a greater reliance then on professionals to provide that backfill. I think that we need to—. We have never really quite got underneath that and I do not know how we do it, I am just putting it out there.

[29] I also noticed a difference in the way that the confidence levels of people came across, depending on where they came from. I particularly noticed that those from Queen Elizabeth High School in Carmarthen were super confident. If we could take that confidence and where it has come from—and I know where it has come from; it is the system within the school—and transfer it into the other schools to grow that confidence in those young people, I think we might see some change in their outlook, which they might not get anywhere else. Those are my observations.

[30] **Eluned Parrott:** I think Joyce is absolutely right. There are some schools that do the job of mentoring, supporting and nurturing their young people really, really well and I can think of three or four in my region that I think are just brilliant at doing that kind of thing. However, we also know that, clearly, from some of the comments that the young people have made, that is not the case in every school. Some people feel that their careers guidance has not given them the support that they needed. In particular, it was interesting the criticism of the one-week work experience placements that they get in schools. Some of them did not have one at all, some of them felt that it was not appropriate for them and that they were being sent to places that were not appropriate. Maybe we need to change the way that we think about work experience, and not just have a week when you are 15 years old. We have to ask ourselves how useful that is. Maybe we need to be thinking about an opportunity to encourage slightly longer placements and maybe we could look at paid placements. Maybe places such as this ought to be taking a lead in providing paid internships. Perhaps that is a recommendation that we can make to the remuneration board: that each Assembly Member should be given the opportunity to take a six-week paid intern, or something along those lines, instead of using the research budget, which would be cost-neutral. It would provide a young person with a work experience opportunity that is substantial and useful to them, and give them an opportunity to do something, build their skills and take something useful into their professional world.

[31] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I agree largely with Eluned's points. During the second Assembly—I think that my memory is correct—we were able to provide paid internship work for school students, because I can remember paying something like £100 a week or something like that to a school student, and that was quite above board, but then it was stopped. So, I think that the principle has been established. I think that, where we can be pioneers, we ought to be. The general view that I have on this is that the issue of work experience is something that we need to raise with the Deputy Minister. I think that it needs to be done in a far more planned and structured way. Of course, that involves getting employers on board, which is work that perhaps the work-based learning providers will be good to do, to act as the middlemen, if you like. However, there have to be ways of developing that.

[32] The final point, Chair, is that a number of the young people seem to have reasonable experiences, and it is important to capture those and roll them out as examples of good practice so that we do not have this mixed picture.

[33] **William Graham:** I agree. Just a point: I agree with what you say about the second Assembly. The problem was that payments were not uniform.

[34] **Joyce Watson:** Well, we could do something about that.

[35] **William Graham:** That is a matter of history, unfortunately. Certainly, I think that there are common themes. The careers guidance could clearly be improved, I think, for all. The lack of experience seems to be a major barrier to people actually finding a job, whatever

qualifications or apprentice course that they have been on. That came through strongly in this film, and certainly from the people that we met last week, and in the evidence that we have had already. I think that we should certainly take forward further how we could, just as you say, Jeff, engage employers to see how they can offer some form of experience, but it must be more than just a week, must it not?

[36] **Joyce Watson:** And more than just cleaning.

[37] **William Graham:** And more than just cleaning or stacking shelves. Yes, I agree.

[38] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Chair, a theme that has come up in various ways during the inquiry has been the lack of preparedness of young people for work, and the need to engage them in the real world, the world of work, sort of played into that as well. So, I would really like our report to be quite strong on that.

[39] **Joyce Watson:** I agree. Also, on help, I noticed that Llandrillo was offering makeovers and clothing—I am sure it was Llandrillo; one of the students says that—and I have raised that before. Yes, it was Llandrillo. If you have been out of work for a long time and you turn up in what you have, what happens when you go into the room is that the employer thinks, ‘They haven’t tried’. However, if they do not have anything to try with you have given them a disadvantage before they even walk into the room, because within 10 seconds someone has made up their mind about the way that these young people look. So, even if they cannot—it feeds into what you were saying, Rhun—literally and physically help with giving them better clothing, at least they can tell them that how they present themselves matters. I think that it is key, because, if you go badly prepared, whether that is the way that you look or what you say, you have had it, quite frankly.

[40] **Byron Davies:** That is my whole point about coaching to prepare—

[41] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, you are right. It is all part of the same.

[42] **Byron Davies:** It involves more than just being able to speak; it is about your presentation.

[43] **Joyce Watson:** That is absolutely right.

[44] **William Graham:** It is about interviews generally, is it not, and how to present yourself to best advantage?

[45] **Byron Davies:** One should not generalise, and I am not criticising—please believe me—but there was a lad there from Swansea who had his hoodie and baseball cap on. It does not bother me at all, because I wear a hoodie myself when I am at home, but, if you present yourself like that—and he has done it on screen there—that is how he is going to come over to the members of this committee and perhaps other people that are shown that film and, you know—

[46] **William Graham:** It does not help, really. No, quite so.

[47] **Joyce Watson:** But you are right.

[48] **William Graham:** Are there any other comments?

[49] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** He might be the brightest young person out of that whole film.

[50] **Byron Davies:** He might be.

[51] **William Graham:** Absolutely.

[52] **Joyce Watson:** But that is not the impression—

[53] **William Graham:** Again, it come comes back to what mentoring they were given in terms of it, and what courses they should be applying for, and what aptitudes are to be developed.

[54] **Joyce Watson:** But it was good.

[55] **William Graham:** Thank you very much, Kevin, and your team. Excellent. You will have seen from our questions and comments that it was much appreciated. Thank you very much. Perhaps we could have a recess now until 10.15 a.m. when the Deputy Minister joins us.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10:00 a 10:13.
The meeting adjourned between 10:00 and 10:13.*

Ymchwiliad i Helpu Pobl Ifanc i Gael Gwaith—Sesiwn 8 Inquiry into Assisting Young People into Work—Session 8

[56] **William Graham:** I welcome the Deputy Minister and her officials. For the record, may I ask you to give your names and titles?

[57] **The Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology (Julie James):** I am Julie James, the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology.

[58] **Ms Holdsworth:** I am Teresa Holdsworth, the deputy director of youth engagement and employment.

[59] **Mr Morris:** I am Huw Morris, the director of skills, higher education and lifelong learning.

[60] **William Graham:** Thank you very much. As you know, this is our penultimate session for the committee's inquiry into assisting young people into work. We will go straight to the questions. The first question is from Mick Antoniw.

[61] **Mick Antoniw:** I want to ask you about the youth engagement and progression framework, Deputy Minister. Perhaps you could summarise what you think are the main achievements, or the main progress that has been achieved to date.

[62] **Julie James:** Certainly. We are still in early days, of course, with the youth engagement and progression framework. We have two main guarantees in that framework. The first is a key worker for each person who is identified as being in danger of being not in education, employment or training at some point in the future, based on a range of indicators that would lead us to believe that they fit into the demographic that is most at risk. The second is a guaranteed progression after compulsory schooling finishes onto some kind of placement—once again, in employment, education or training—so that we do not have people who fall out of the system at that point. So, those are the two main aims of the framework. There are a whole series of things—I do not know whether you want me to, but I could go on for about 45 minutes on the rest of it. However, those are the main aims of it.

10:15

[63] **Mick Antoniw:** Within the framework, one of the key roles in achieving its objectives is local government and the role there. There are two aspects to that. One is whether there is any potential risk from, I suppose, what is happening at the moment with regard to local government reorganisation and so on. Would you see that as perhaps a distraction that might have an impact on it? The second aspect, I think, is the resource intensity of the lead co-ordinators, because it seems to me that there is a whole group of young people for which the provision of co-ordinators, leaders and mentors in that sense is very important in terms of direction and giving support. So, you have the two issues: first, the reorganisation impacting, and, secondly, the intensity of resources at a time when local authorities are very heavily challenged with their finances.

[64] **Julie James:** I think we have got some very good practice emerging across the sector. There are differences in local authorities at the moment, because they started in a different place, so you cannot expect them in one year to have all got to the same place. Nevertheless, they are all doing very well and we are expecting the targets that the programme sets to be met. However, there are some critical things. It is absolutely essential that the co-ordinator function is carried out by the right level of officer inside the authority, so that there is someone who can command the attention of decision makers inside the authority and can prioritise resource and respond to the analysis of need as it comes up. This is not intended to create a bureaucracy. This is intended to create a sharp decision-making structure, where young people can be identified quickly, their resource need can be mapped, and that need can be met quickly and efficiently.

[65] So, to some extent, reorganisation is bound to affect that, but there is no reason why it should affect it any more than any other challenge that local government faces. This is a programme that we expect local authorities to have throughout Wales, so it is not something that one authority will be doing and the other one does not. There should not be any kind of culture clash with it. So, I do not expect it to impact particularly, any more than the general churn impacts all programmes.

[66] In terms of the resource intensiveness of it, I think that, yes, absolutely each young person will have a key worker and so on. It will not be that person's sole job, obviously. This is a preventative programme, so this is invest-to-save by a different name, really. The idea is that if we invest early in these young people, and you keep them engaged and on track, then we will not have to spend what we know are ridiculous amounts of resources, once young people go off track and into the youth justice system and all the rest of it. So, it is very much invest to save. I am not alarmed by it being resource intensive. I think, actually, it is the right place to put your resources.

[67] **Mick Antoniw:** A key element, of course—and you mention this in your own evidence—is the relationship between local authorities and agencies, for example. I think you say yourself that it is important that the accountability of different agencies to deliver better outcomes for young people is strengthened. It is important that it is. The Audit Commission, in evidence that we took from it, indicated in its report that there was a high degree of inconsistency between local authorities, and I think it suggested some level of dysfunction. Is that something that concerns you? How is that being overcome?

[68] **Julie James:** In terms of the youth co-ordination function, as I say, they did not all start in the same place, but we are expecting them to come on track. The Wales Audit Office report was actually written before the beginning of this programme, not during it. Although it has only just come out, it was actually written before the programme started, so it obviously has a slightly different picture.

[69] The whole point of this youth progression and engagement framework is to address that point. That is the point of why we are doing it. We would not be doing it if there was not

a need for it. So, we are doing it to address that need. That is why we accept the Wales Audit Office's findings in principle a lot of the time, rather than accepting them outright. It is because we have identified that need upfront. That is what the framework is for. So, the idea is to pull everybody into providing a similar sort of service. I am sure you will come on to this in your questions later, but we are also doing a provision-mapping exercise as well, so that we know what is available and whether there is duplication. We are not sure whether there is duplication, but we know where the gaps are, much more importantly. So, this co-ordinator can identify the resource necessary and direct people in the right way.

[70] **Mick Antoniw:** Of course, you do have, as part of the programme, biannual meetings, so there will be those reviews. Have those started? Is there anything that you could indicate to us?

[71] **Julie James:** I will ask the officials to answer that one.

[72] **Ms Holdsworth:** Yes, the meetings have started. The framework was implemented in October last year. I went out and met with the strategic leads in every authority during January and February of this current calendar year, with a view to doing follow-up meetings next spring. In between times, my team has gone out and met with the co-ordinators responsible for pulling together the activity at individual authority level. So, there is regular dialogue, and I have to say that the dialogue is not restricted to those biannual meetings. If the authorities have any issues or concerns, they are in regular contact with colleagues within Welsh Government. We also have a series of regional meetings that are held on a quarterly basis, and those regional meetings bring together authorities at a regional level with agencies such as the careers service, the National Training Federation Wales and Colleges Wales. It also includes Jobcentre Plus and the voluntary sector. Those regional meetings are about identifying good practice, identifying issues that the co-ordinators within individual authorities are facing, and there is also shared learning at that level so that these things can be helped in terms of the implementation.

[73] **Mick Antoniw:** It is obviously unfair to ask for premature evaluations, but are there any key indicators or lessons that you are identifying early on?

[74] **Ms Holdsworth:** We have had a formative evaluation report, which we are due to publish before Christmas. That formative evaluation is indicating that there is good progress generally being made. It is also indicating for us—which is why we wanted the evaluation—that there is better practice in some areas than others across the piece. We have 22 authorities; as the Deputy Minister has indicated, not all of them started in the same place. So, we would expect there to be better progress in some areas than others. However, that is what the evaluation is there to help us to do at this formative stage, to help us through the implementation phase to do the best job we can to get consistency across all local authorities.

[75] **William Graham:** Thank you. What progress is being made on early identification of people who are at risk of becoming NEETs?

[76] **Julie James:** Again, it varies depending on the local authority you are talking about. Many local authorities, before the implementation of this plan, had pre-existing good practice in place for early identification. Other LAs did not. So, as I said in answer to an earlier question, Chair, the LAs did not start in the same place so we have differing progress. So, there are slight differences between most local authorities, but they are all under way now.

[77] What we have done is identify some good practice. There were good practice authorities before the implementation of the framework, and that good practice has been adopted and we are asking LAs to roll that out. It has to be said that there are variations in the good practice. What works for one does not work for everybody, so it is not an identical piece

of work. Obviously, there is a range of challenges there. It is about whether you do it as a panel, whether you do it via the schools or whether you do it as a consortium, as the officials have just been pointing out. Everybody recognises the need for it and everybody understands that the results are better once you have done it. I think that there is good buy-in right across the sector, and we are confident that there is not going to be a real problem in any kind of implementation.

[78] **William Graham:** Thank you. Nobody likes a label, particularly when you do not choose it yourself, and certainly in the evidence we received, particularly from young people themselves, they greatly resent being called 'NEETs'. I appreciate that it is a fairly descriptive term, but I wonder whether you have any thoughts on that yourself. I am sure that you are picking up on it already.

[79] **Julie James:** Well, you notice that I am not using it myself.

[80] **William Graham:** Yes, yes.

[81] **Julie James:** Young people do not like it. It is a label, and labels are not always helpful. It is a convenient way of describing something if you are trying to implement a plan or policy, but it is not a good label for a young person. So, I have been trying very hard not to use it as a label. However, using it as a way of describing what we are trying to address in the programme is a very different matter. So, one of the big issues with this is treating individuals as individuals. One of the difficulties we have is that we are trying to implement a programme across Wales for a human problem, and each individual has a very different set of difficulties and obstacles to overcome—hurdles and so on. So, it is about having a structure in place that works but which allows individual identification of programmes for each individual person. If you are trying to do that, a label is not convenient because it tends to make you think of everybody as the same.

[82] **William Graham:** Great. Would you like to expand little bit on your youth guarantee? That was something that came up quite well.

[83] **Julie James:** What we are saying is that, once we have people identified in the system, we will be in a place to make sure that their individual needs and requirements are met, that they do not fall back out of the system, that we guarantee a progression for them into some form of training, employment, et cetera, that each person's needs will have been assessed, and that we get them into the right pathway. I am sure that you will come on to this in your questions later, but when I was on this committee, one of the things that we were very keen on looking at was ensuring that vocational pathways were equally available and given the same status as academic pathways. That will be one of the main tenets of that, to make sure that schools in particular are seen to be giving good vocational pathway guidance. I am sure that you will come on to this as well, but also in terms of the careers service and schools-based career services, that they are giving young people the right access to vocational pathways as well as to the more traditional academic pathways.

[84] **William Graham:** Mick has a supplementary question.

[85] **Mick Antoniw:** Just to take that a little further, once people have left school, they then come under the UK Government programmes and so on. We have discussed in the past the overlap between Welsh Government responsibilities and UK Government responsibilities. One of the problems, of course, is that those without any clear skills, who have been unemployed and perhaps have never worked quite often fall out of the system—they just sort of stay there, and they claim benefits. To actually identify and engage with them, part of the thing about lead co-ordinators is to try to identify, to tackle and to engage with them, but what is the strategy in terms of getting hold of that grouping who just keep off the register in some

ways?

[86] **Julie James:** There are two issues there. What to do with the current grouping, which is a slightly different question, and what this programme is designed for, which is to stop that grouping arising in the first place. So, if we just take the second one first, the idea of this, of course, is to prevent people from falling out of the structure and to have their needs identified and met at an early stage. Although it is not within the remit of this committee, I think that it will be of interest to you, for example, on the issue with looked-after children, that there has been a discussion between me and the Minister for education about the needs of looked-after children, who would be, very often, identified through the youth progression engagement framework, but who would need a very specific type of case worker or lead worker. We are having a discussion about whether those workers would need to be specifically trained in order to meet the needs of those young people. That is why we are saying that the lead worker might be from a range of different organisations, and that they might have different skills, because each individual requires a different set of training and guidance. Indeed, the lead worker will be in a position to pull in assistance from other people. They are not intended to be the person who delivers everything themselves.

[87] In terms of the current cohort, we are having a provision-mapping exercise to make sure that we can get as much data as we possibly can. I took a legislative consent motion through Plenary yesterday about data sharing, which is very much designed to get the outcome data that we need in order to track the young people and to try to get them back into a programme that best suits their needs. That is a different—

[88] **Mick Antoniw:** Of course, you have the working group, do you not, between the two?

[89] **Julie James:** We have the working group between ourselves and the Department for Work and Pensions about the juxtaposition of the DWP programmes and our programmes. We have discussed in various fora the work programme issues, but there is work ready and there are a number of other programmes, and we have a working group that is designed to try to make sure that the interface between those programmes is as smooth as possible, that there is not duplication and that they match together and so on. That working group has not been going very long, but it has actually made some really good progress. In fact, one of the first things I did when I came into this portfolio was agree that that working group would continue to meet, because it had gone past its original frame. So, that is very much an ongoing piece of work.

[90] **Eluned Parrott:** I wanted to ask about guidance and support for young people to ensure that they follow a path that is appropriate for them, and one of the things that we have talked about previously is how important it is to encourage young people to consider all the options, whether that is a vocational route or an academic route. However, on the importance of making sure that they have that information, how are you going to make sure that young people in schools particularly have access to good-quality information about apprenticeships, for example?

10:30

[91] **Julie James:** One of the things that we are doing at the moment is that we have a project to look, as you know, with the careers service at a complete restructuring of the careers service. I must say that, because of the reduction in resources to the careers service, which I would not have wanted to make, we have had no good choices here. However, that kind of reduction sometimes means that you have to look again at everything you do, and the careers service is in that position. I have been speaking to the chief scientific adviser about doing a little piece of work for us on what else might be available via a number of resources

online, for example, to schools. We have some interesting things that I will be talking about in Plenary this afternoon in this committee's debate on its STEM report—I am doing a few spoilers here. There are some really good ideas about how to engage young people at a very early stage, specifically in that STEM activity, but actually in all activity really, and about getting that information to them at the earliest possible opportunity. Indeed, for the people in this category that we have just been talking about, it is about ensuring that their lead workers are plugged into that information to make sure that it is available. So, there are three or four pieces of work going on at the moment to try to improve that provision; it is born of necessity, but I think that clouds sometimes have a silver lining, so I think it might improve the service.

[92] **Eluned Parrott:** I am glad that thought has been given to that, because, clearly, if you want to raise awareness of something, you cannot do it reactively; people do not go searching for something that they do not know exists. One thing that further education colleges have flagged to us as a concern is that they do not have access to young people in the way that I did when I worked for a university, in that I could go into schools and talk to them about the options they had available to them. Further education colleges do not have that kind of opportunity, sometimes because they are in direct competition for those students. What can we do? Is there something we can do independently, to have an independent body going into schools to talk about apprenticeships if the FE colleges are not being given the opportunity to do so?

[93] **Julie James:** Well, I think what we are going to do is to make sure the FE colleges are given the opportunity, actually. What we want is universality across the piece so that young people have access to advice from higher education institutions, further education institutions, other work-based learning providers, employers themselves, et cetera. Again, I think the committee is probably going to come on to it, but we are doing a big piece on work experience. I am being reminded that we have the introduction of a common application process as well, so that the whole thing is universalised, if I can put it like that. We are doing that piece of work as we speak. It is something we recognise needs to be done. It needs to be improved. I am very much aware of the information that we received when I was a member of this committee, and I have taken it upon myself to make sure that some of those things are actioned.

[94] **Eluned Parrott:** One of the things that we are really concerned about, especially this morning, having listened to a video of young people from around Wales talking about their experience, is that what had been available to those young people was so inconsistent from school to school. The personal and mentoring support that was available from school to school was also very different. If you want to make sure that FE colleges have access to schools, how are you going to make sure that every school is offering the same kind of thing?

[95] **Julie James:** I am going to ask Teresa to talk to you a little bit about the introduction of the common application process and how that is going to work.

[96] **Ms Holdsworth:** Excuse me; I have a cold, so if I sound like I am croaking, I am slightly. As the Deputy Minister has indicated, we have the introduction of the common area prospectus and the common application process. First of all, to start with the prospectus, the idea is that all young people in year 10 and year 11 will have access to a prospectus of what is available to them post-16. The context of that for all the schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and apprenticeship opportunities is this: in the same way that young people who are applying for a HE place go through a UCAS system, it is a similar system, but targeted at 16 to 18-year-olds, so that all providers in an area can actually upload information about what the offer is that they are able to provide, and individuals can then scan that offer and look at what they want to do.

[97] Picking up on the point that you made, that people do not always know what they

need to look for, we are linking that to a much better approach to employer engagement with schools, right through from age 11 in year 7 all the way through, up to age 18. We are looking at an enhanced employer engagement approach where we want to encourage employers to link with schools and colleges so that young people have real access to individuals who are engaged in the world of work. Careers Wales is in the process of completing a new application-type approach through the website. It is almost like a TripAdvisor type of thing, where if an individual goes in and, say, they want to be a plumber, they can look at what kinds of wages they could expect and what qualification levels they would need to get and what the route to those qualifications might be. So, it could be through an apprenticeship or it could be by doing A-levels. Obviously, if you are a plumber, you do not necessarily need to go to university, but, if there are different routes into employment that young people are looking for, this will actually help them to gauge the type of employment opportunities that exist, and whether they are local or whether they would need to travel for them. So, that, linked with better employer engagement, will raise people's awareness and raise people's aspirations in terms of what they want to do, and then the application process will give them that real opportunity to look at how they are going to get on the route that will enable them to progress beyond compulsory education. The context of the application process, again, will support the early identification system, because young people who do not complete that application will be identified as people who need support, and somebody will make contact with them on a one-to-one basis to help them to understand what the routes are and what the options are, and to provide the support that they need to be able to make that application.

[98] **Julie James:** May I just add to that? One of the really good things about this is that it will have local employer labour market information on it. We want people to be aspirational, but we want them to be aspirational in a realistic way. So, for example, you do not want to train—I am trying to think of something—97 theatre managers in a place where there are only two theatres and that young person does not actually want to travel for their work. It is about making people understand what they need to travel for as well, what is locally available, what their life plan is and whether it matches with that. So, I think that that local labour market information, and the national and international labour market information, is really important at an early stage so that you can make those right decisions.

[99] **Eluned Parrott:** I really welcome the approach, but it is hugely complicated, obviously, in terms of the amount of data that need to be collected and put together to ensure that pathways are understandable and that they are comprehensive, really. What kind of implementation date are you hoping to be able to pin this down to?

[100] **Ms Holdsworth:** We have been working on this for around 18 months, because, as you have just identified, it is not as simple as it sounds. There is a tremendous amount of data collection and management that goes behind a system like the one that I have described. However, we are looking at launching early in the spring of next year, so that it will be available for pupils in year 11 in the spring term. So, as I say, that, hopefully—. It will probably need tweaking and amending, but we are looking at the early launch in the spring of next year.

[101] **Julie James:** I have seen a beta copy, and I have to say that I think you will be impressed. It is a much cleaner offer than you would expect from the amount of complicated data that we have just been discussing.

[102] **Eluned Parrott:** Okay. Thank you.

[103] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning all. If I could just pick up on a point that has been made to me from the construction industry, namely that it is seen as an industry where you can put people who do not necessarily need a high level of skills when, in fact, that is not necessarily the case, and it is undermining the industry itself, what are you trying to do to

properly inform people, whoever they are, to be engaged in getting the skills—the right people with the right skills—into that industry?

[104] **Julie James:** Through the process that we have just been talking about, and also, though not strictly in line with this inquiry, but more generally, we are talking about the implementation of specific construction academy/college-type arrangements, which a number of employers that I have spoken to over the last few months have specifically asked us for. There is absolutely no doubt that most construction workers are highly skilled individuals—you know, there are very specialised skills in that market. So, it is very important, going back to the question that Eluned Parrott asked, to make sure that those people identify early on, that they understand what the routes into those workplaces are, and that it is not seen as something you do if you do not want to do something else. It is very definitely a career aspiration rather than a default setting for somebody who cannot make their mind up. So, this skills gateway will be really important in doing that. We have had a lot of discussions with big employers, supply chains and so on about how to get that process going. So, we are very aware of that and are working really hard to make sure it happens.

[105] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** May I ask you to engage in some quick-fire questions with me, at the risk of being superficial? I know that there are lots of issues we have talked about during this inquiry—things that are barriers. I want to give you an opportunity, just in case there are some things the Government is particularly looking at. We have looked at deficiencies in work placement opportunities. What is the Government doing, and what could the Government be doing, in order to try to engage young people more with the workplace at a younger age?

[106] **Julie James:** We are doing an enormous amount of work with employers, supply chains and so on—I have met with an enormous number of them over the last two or three months—to make sure that they understand that their future workforce is currently in our schools and that they need to engage in order to ensure that the future workforce has aspirations towards their particular industry. We hear a lot from employers about their unhappiness that essential skills are lacking in people who, on paper, look well qualified and so on. We have been saying, ‘Yes, absolutely, and the Government is working really hard on that’, and our curriculum reviews and our Welsh baccalaureate reviews and all the rest of it are aimed at some part of that, but, at the same time, the employers themselves have a responsibility to the people in their communities and so on, to make sure that they understand what is necessary if you want to work for Julie James Inc. or whatever. It is a two-way street. We have a huge employer engagement programme under way, and we are completely relooking at work experience, as we want to make work experience a much more meaningful thing. The week you spend making coffee around the corner is not what we want—we want people to have real work experience.

[107] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Is that something that you would like to formalise on a Wales-wide scale? There is a danger that, in areas where there is lots of employment, lots of local employers and large companies, it will be easier to have that kind of engagement.

[108] **Julie James:** That is why we are talking to the big employers and the supply chains and so on. We have some employers coming up in your own area, with Wylfa, for example, who could absorb the entire population of Wales in some aspects of the construction and build for that. So, clearly, just local people are not going to be—. There are not sufficient numbers of them. With those big employers and their supply chains, we are working on doing exactly that—that they spread themselves out right across the country. It is horses for courses, a little. In answer to Eluned Parrott, I said that local labour market information is also really important. A lot of Wales’s companies are little microbusinesses—lifestyle businesses, family businesses. We love them. That is what makes us who we are, but they also have to have a succession plan. They also have to understand that the person who is going to buy their

company when they want to retire is currently in the primary school in their local village. So, we are working with the whole range.

[109] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** What about encouraging voluntary work among young people?

[110] **Julie James:** Again, we are going to have to have a look at work experience in general. The traditional work experience, where you go and make coffee for a week in a local whatever and decide that that is not for you, is not what we want. We want people to have real work experience where they develop the life skills that you need. They learn how to turn up on time and dressed in the right clothes, to speak to people rather than texting them, and to have a lot of the life skills that you need, which, although you have paper qualifications, you do not necessarily acquire. We need to have the experience in place to have them do that. Voluntary work is one way of doing that, making sure that third sector organisations publicise any voluntary work that is suitable, right down the chain. You can do voluntary work in primary school, of some sorts; obviously, while supervised and with all of the protection arrangements in place—nevertheless, you can do it. We are very aware that we need to completely revamp that offer and engage in a much bigger way.

[111] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** I am glad that you mentioned this coaching of young people to prepare them for the big wide world—to turn up on time and that kind of thing. What do you see is the role of the school in making sure that young people have those skills?

[112] **Julie James:** One of the things, again digressing a little from this inquiry, we are looking at, as you know, is a complete qualifications and curriculum review. One of the things the curriculum review is going to be looking at is ensuring that, rather than teaching people to be bored for a very large percentage of the time, school actually engages them and teaches them real life skills. That is going to be very much part of that review. Schools are where you prepare for life, are they not? It is not just at home. We need to get academic qualifications into people, but we need to get proper skills into them as well.

10:45

[113] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Interestingly, this was a point raised by one of Wales's leading training providers—that providing a context for young people in Wales about Wales's history, for example, and its industrial and entrepreneurial success over the years is something that has not and is still not being addressed properly. Maybe that will come through in the new Welsh curriculum. What are your thoughts about the importance of giving young Welsh people that context in order to promote their own entrepreneurial curiosity?

[114] **Julie James:** I totally agree with that. We want our people to be aspirational and we want them to have world-class jobs as well, but we want them to have world-class jobs based in Wales. I am not in the market of exporting our young people across the world permanently. I am in the market of exporting them temporarily to get life experience and so on, and to bring that back home to Wales to make our economy the powerhouse that it really can and ought to be. So, we have to have a little mixture of those things, do we not? I am a good example myself. I spent my early career in London and then rushed home to Wales as soon as I could possibly do so. That is the kind of pattern of employment that I personally like to see with a lot of young people. Construction workers, for example, can work all over the world and then bring their wealth home to Wales; there is nothing wrong with that, it is a very good way of working.

[115] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** That leads us on to the promotion of role models. Are you looking at ways of engaging role models, perhaps not with schools, but some way of bringing in those success stories that we have in Wales?

[116] **Julie James:** Yes. We have a really good role model programme already, actually, with an enormous number of people who volunteer their time. They always speak to me about how startled they are about the training that they get, because we have a lot of people who put themselves forward as role models and then they are quite startled that we insist that they are trained in how to get their stories across. So, we have that programme. What we are very much looking to do as well is to make sure that those role models are across the piece. Again, when I was a member of this committee, you all heard me say, 'It is great to have the chief scientific adviser of Wales as a role model, but I would also like to see somebody who is a really skilled technician, with a great job in their local community, being a role model as well', because we need people at all levels to inspire people to understand where they are going. We need plumbers and skilled construction workers to be role models, as well as chief scientific advisers and high-flying entrepreneurs.

[117] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** I have two more questions, if I may, one of which is a very important one. We heard of problems caused by transport issues and the lack of ability of young people to get to and from training locations, and we heard some very good ideas about how problems could be overcome. There is the scooter project in Pembrokeshire—I do not know whether you are aware of it—where young people hire scooters, and there are lots of ideas about giving young people Oyster-card-type things in order to help them to get around. Where are we at and what is your level of engagement with the Minister for transport on that?

[118] **Julie James:** It is not in my portfolio, but we are very much engaged in that. We are very aware of it as being a big issue; it is a big issue in my own constituency, I will say, and it is a big issue across many parts of rural Wales. So, we are very aware of it as an issue, we are fully engaged with the Minister for transport in looking at that and we will be coming forward with some proposals shortly.

[119] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** How shortly? Do we have a timetable?

[120] **Julie James:** It is not in my portfolio, I am afraid, so—

[121] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Okay. Finally, what discussions have you had with the Department for Work and Pensions on loss of benefits and so on for people as they move in and out of short-term jobs, short-term training placements and so on, because that is perceived as a barrier as well?

[122] **Julie James:** It is one of the things that we are looking at in the working group, but it is at official level, so I will have to ask officials to give you specifics. What we are trying to do is map the provision so that it is seamless for people. What you do not want is people sanctioned on their jobseeker's allowance and so on because of some problem with a training programme or something. One of the pieces of work that I talked about earlier was about trying to line up all of the programmes so that they are seamless, and that is part of that piece of work.

[123] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Okay. Is there any more that your officials could add to that?

[124] **Julie James:** I do not know whether there is any more that we can add to that.

[125] **Ms Holdsworth:** Obviously, in terms of the benefits issue, benefits are not within the remit of Welsh Government. We cannot influence, in any way, the decisions on benefit, but that does not stop us entering into negotiations with officials from the DWP where issues are raised with us.

[126] **Rhun ap Iorwerth:** Have you been lobbying on any particular aspects of this recently?

[127] **Julie James:** Yes. We do not want a situation in which, because somebody enters into a training programme, for example, their benefits are sanctioned, so we have training programmes that have been specifically designed to make sure that they meet the rules of the jobseeker's allowance scheme. For example, you are allowed an intensive two-week training course without coming off benefits. There is an extended course—sorry, I do not have at my fingertips the number of hours that you are allowed to do, but, whatever the number of hours is, we have designed it specifically so that it meets those requirements so that you can still train and do some voluntary work and work experience and not have it affect your benefits. We are aware of that, although the benefits rules, of course, are not within our grasp.

[128] **Joyce Watson:** We have talked a lot about the 16 to 18-year-olds and I want to talk about the 19 to 24-year-olds. The Wales Audit Office said that too much investment in the 16 to 18-year-olds was to the detriment of the 19 to 24-year-olds. Do you agree with that? If you do, how are you going to address it?

[129] **Julie James:** I do not agree with it, really. Some of the recommendations we have accepted in principle, and one of the reasons we have done that is because, actually, our programmes, given the financial situation that we find ourselves in, are concentrating on under 25s. So, obviously, the 19 to 24-year-old category is very much within that. So, we are still concentrating very much on those people. There are provision difficulties. We have already discussed mapping the provision. It is much more complicated to map provision after 16 across all of the various providers, and our mapping provision projects and so on are looking at that. However, I disagree that the resources are not there for them. As I said—and I have said this many times over the last several weeks—there have been no good choices in making these financial decisions, but the decision was to concentrate on under 25s and higher-level apprenticeships. So, that is not the case. Were we to discuss the over-25 cohort, I feel that the situation is not like that. It is not the case that we have affected the provision for 19 to 24-year-olds.

[130] **William Graham:** Thank you very much. Gwenda is next.

[131] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you. I would like to look, please, at the additional support that is needed by vulnerable groups of young people, including those with disabilities. We have had evidence from Llamau, and, to take Rhun's point on travel and difficulties, it must be even more difficult if you have special educational needs or other special needs. Llamau and Barnardo's have talked about the importance of micro-steps in supporting young people with disabilities. I was very impressed with the Llamau independent travel training scheme that we have had written about in our papers here. I am wondering what you have to say about that. Also, Chwarae Teg, for example, is very enthusiastic about the lead worker role within the Welsh Government framework, and it talks about the mentor one-to-one scheme. Can you comment on those, please?

[132] **Julie James:** Absolutely. There are several aspects to this. First of all, the lead worker is designed to assist people with the most needs. That is why we talk all of the time about getting the right lead worker in place, making sure that that person has the right training and skills to broker for the young person all of the things that they need to meet their needs. I specifically mentioned earlier looked-after children, for example. You may need lead workers with specific training in order to be able to conquer some of the barriers that people in the looked-after system encounter. Exactly the same is the case for people with additional learning needs and other specific barriers. So, we are very keen on our lead worker scheme. That is the point of it, really: to lever in some of these issues. The transport issue is one of the things that we are discussing with the Minister for transport. As I said, it is not in my portfolio, but it clearly affects people's ability to access the services in this portfolio. So, we are in discussion about the best way to deal with some of those. I am aware of some

innovative schemes around the place.

[133] We also have a ‘distance travelled’ that we are looking at. This is a whole thing about—. One of my big bugbears in life has been that, while we want to have really robust attainment and aspirational targets for the majority of our young people, what we do not want to do is have a situation where people who do not attain those targets are somehow labelled as failures, when actually, for their personal journey they have made enormous strides. So, what we are looking at is a tiered approach. We have a ‘distance travelled’ aspect of that as well so that young people who have, for themselves, accomplished enormous things in their journey through life are recognised as having done that, and they are assisted to be the best person that they very possibly can be, which I always say is the whole point of this system. It is to encourage people. It sounds like a cliché, but it is not. It is absolutely about making each individual the best person that they can possibly be and identifying them early enough to make sure that we put those things in place throughout their lives so that they get to be the best person that they can be.

[134] **Gwenda Thomas:** That is a very important point, I think—the transitioning process. Deaf young people, of course, have rights in international law under the UNCRC. The point that the National Deaf Children’s Society made, for example, was that there is a failure and a weakness with regard to the transition into employment. So, I am glad to hear you talk about transitions. It is very important, and it leads me on to the additional support required by looked-after children. Reading the evidence with regard to barriers faced by looked-after children, there is quite a list here of things that impede their progress. Examples are a lack of ambition and placement instability. I am sure that there is awareness of their right to stay in foster placement for longer, a thing that we have legislated for here with ‘When I am Ready’, but one of the barriers listed here is the failure of corporate parenting. Does the co-ordinator within local authorities look at the corporate parenting role?

[135] **Julie James:** Yes, I think that that is one of the things we are looking at very much. That is why I was talking about having lead workers with specific training and having those co-ordinators and lead workers being the right sort of person to be able to have the decision-making powers and the access to the corporate parenting—to the right committees, to the right cabinet members, to the right chief officers within a local authority—to vehemently make the case that their arrangements need to be changed or need to be revamped in some way or, indeed, actually are very good practice and need to be shared, whatever it is. So, we are very aware of that. I have been speaking, as I said earlier, to the Minister for Education and Skills about having specific training for some of our lead workers, youth workers and so on, and we will be progressing that because there is a real issue about having the skills necessary to broker all of the right support for people. I am really proud of the fostering arrangements that we put in place here in Wales, and it is absolutely the right thing to have done, but our young people are therefore dispersed so part of the mapping of provision is about locating them and making sure that we have a map of the provision in the area that they can access easily and have the right support to do so.

[136] **Gwenda Thomas:** Yes, and I assume that that includes the individual care planning, which is so important to young people in that—

[137] **Julie James:** Absolutely.

[138] **Gwenda Thomas:** Thank you. I am glad to hear that. Thank you, Chair.

[139] **William Graham:** Byron is next.

[140] **Byron Davies:** Good morning. We have heard mixed and varying views on Careers Wales. I hear what you say about complete restructuring of the service and reduction of

funding and what have you. I do not know how well informed you are. I am certainly not, actually, in terms of the provisions for young people with Careers Wales in the tiered model. I just wonder whether you think there is sufficient provision for young people at the tier 1 and tier 2 levels.

[141] **Julie James:** One of the things we are looking at actually is a complete revamp of the way that some of the careers services are delivered. One of the issues there is to concentrate specific resource-heavy services, face-to-face interviews and so on on tier 1 and tier 2-type individuals and to ensure access, basically. This goes back to some of the things that Teresa was talking about earlier, that, if you are not completing the right progression forms, you are picked up as an individual, looked at specifically and your needs are specifically addressed. Those are the sorts of things we need to do to ensure that people stay on track.

[142] **Byron Davies:** They are very basic things really.

[143] **Julie James:** They are basic things, but they need to be done. Actually, one of the things that really strikes you if you talk to some young people and some disadvantaged communities is that some of the things we take for granted people just do not know how to do. I spoke very recently to young woman in the north of my constituency who had been offered a work placement but did not know how to catch the bus, because she had never had enough money to do so. It had never occurred to me, I freely admit, in my entire life before that that might be a barrier, but, as soon as it is pointed out to you, you realise that, of course, it is a barrier. How do I know when the bus is coming? How do I know what route to take? How do I know how to get a ticket? How do I know how to do those things? The answer is that somebody taught me at some point in my life. I was not born knowing that, and this young woman had not had the chance to be taught those things. So, those are the sorts of basic life skills that we need to be picking up on as well as all of the academic qualifications and so on that people need. So, we have to have a system that identifies those kinds of barriers and picks them up quickly. You can only do that on an individual basis for some people.

11:00

[144] **Byron Davies:** This crosses a lot of sections of society, does it not?

[145] **Julie James:** It does. Absolutely.

[146] **Byron Davies:** I think you have already talked about the alignment between Welsh Government and the Department for Work and Pensions and how that could be improved. You are looking to improve it, so I shall not go down that route.

[147] On the importance of progression between programmes and the benefits of Career Wales's tiered approach, I think you have touched on that as well. So, that concludes my questions.

[148] **William Graham:** Deputy Minister, could I ask you a bit about the European funding? Have you found much duplication there?

[149] **Julie James:** We rely heavily on the Welsh European Funding Office, of course, and it has an intensive scrutiny programme. One of the issues that have arisen with some of the DWP programmes, for example, is that WEFO is of the view that we cannot ensure that there is no duplication, and that is why we are not allowed access to some of those programmes. So, I do not think duplication is the real problem. As you know, European funding has to show additionality. It cannot be used for base programmes and so on. So, WEFO is very much on top of that.

[150] We work very closely with WEFO to make sure that our programmes stay on track. We are currently in the process of making a number of bids. We work very closely with it during the progress of those bids to ensure that the programmes designed do exactly what they say they will do. I think the duplication problems are not at that level; they are at the local provision level. You heard me talking earlier about provision mapping. With local authorities, we are doing a project to provision map, so that we know what is where and so that we do not have a situation where we have a lot of courses competing for the same cohort, offering the same thing. It is also so that we do not have market failure and gaps—we identify the gaps as well. So, it is a big exercise, but it is necessary to do it. So, the problem is not at the European funding end; it is further down in the system. We have a big project looking at trying to sort that out, so that we have a complete map of provision in each area, to make sure that people can access it.

[151] **Mick Antoniw:** The dilemma that you have identified, and identified previously, is that you have funding coming in from two different directions, from dealing with common areas, through the UK responsibilities as well as the Welsh Government responsibilities. You mentioned earlier about the working party to pull that together. Do you think that the position is sustainable, carrying on in the way it is going, where you effectively have two different governmental bodies responsible?

[152] **Julie James:** My very personal political view is that we could probably do a better job if we had an integrated approach to those programmes. One of the issues with devolution is always how the two things match together. However, a lot of work needs to be done about how that would be funded, what exactly is in the programme, and how the global financial arrangements work. I will give you an example of that. One of the things that we all know is that when a young person comes off any of these programmes into sustainable employment, there is a saving to the welfare budget. That saving is obviously at a UK level. So, what we do not want is a situation where we are spending an enormous amount of Welsh Government money, but the saving, as a result of that, goes back to a different body. So, there are a lot of very complicated financial provisions to be ironed out, before we are in a position to say that we could take it over. However, I think that we can see the benefit of doing so, if we can get ourselves into that position.

[153] **William Graham:** Deputy Minister, how about public sector employers? Could they do more, do you think?

[154] **Julie James:** We have got quite a lot of involvement from public sector employers, and from third sector employers as well. As we all know, the public sector is in a difficult financial position at the moment, so some of the public sector employers that were very active previously are not quite so active at the moment. However, yes, I think there is a huge role to play, certainly for third sector organisations as well, and we are working very hard to make sure that we have a large number of very successful social enterprises in Wales. We are making sure that we engage all areas of our economy in our employer engagement programmes and so on. So, yes, I think there is a lot to be said for public-sector-employer involvement. We are seeing a little decline in that at the moment, although I am sure it will pick back up again, once the churn that we are currently in has settled.

[155] **William Graham:** We heard quite a bit last week from third sector organisations. Do you feel, again, that there is some duplication there, or do they all have a properly defined role?

[156] **Julie James:** I think this is part of this provision mapping, is it not? One of the things we all experience in our constituencies is trying to find out exactly which agency is covering what, and where they are and so on. There are some serious pieces of work going on at the

moment_about data, information and matching. I was at great pains yesterday, and I will say it again, to make it clear that inside the data protection regulations—so, not identifying individuals and not using data for the wrong purposes—we have a big data project going on to make sure that our data are fit for purpose and that we are using them to the best effect. One of the effects is to make sure that our provision matches our requirements, that we are not duplicating and that we are filling in the gaps, so it is all part of the same overall piece of work. I will have to ask Teresa how many different projects there are. There are quite a few projects going on.

[157] **Ms Holdsworth:** Certainly, in terms of data collection, at a local level, all authorities have either got or are working towards an approved Wales accord on the sharing of personal information scheme, so that the data sharing between agencies can help. Once we get beyond the age of 18, there are much greater difficulties in terms of data protection, and one of the issues with data sharing with DWP is sharing information at an individual level. It is very complex. That does not mean that we are not working to look at how we can improve it, but it is not a simple thing to do. However, as the Deputy Minister has indicated, data sharing is key to tracking and looking at progress for individuals, and certainly up to the age of 18, we think that we are making significant strides to progress that issue.

[158] **William Graham:** Thank you very much, Deputy Minister, and no doubt we will hear more, particularly on mapping in future when we scrutinise you at a later date.

[159] **Julie James:** Possibly even later today, Chair.

[160] **William Graham:** Oh, right. We look forward to the debate this afternoon. It is to be hoped that there will be innovations that you are going to be able to announce. Thank you very much for answering our questions today. I think that we are very pleased with the way that we were able to tease out some of the very important things that you are doing. Thank you very much.

[161] **Julie James:** It is a pleasure to come and help.

11:07

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

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

[162] **William Graham:** I move that

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

[163] I see that the committee is in agreement. The public meeting is closed.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11:07.
The public part of the meeting ended at 11:07.*