



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

## **Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol The Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee**

**Dydd Iau, 29 Medi 2011  
Thursday, 29 September 2011**

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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**

Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Janet Finch-Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Gwyn R.Price	Llafur Labour
Kenneth Skates	Llafur Labour
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

**Eraill yn bresennol****Others in attendance**

Naomi Alleyne	Cyfarwyddwr Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director of Equalities and Social Justice, Welsh Local Government Association
Bernie Bowen-Thomson	Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr, Cymru Ddiogelach Deputy Chief Executive, Safer Wales
Jim Crowe	Cyfarwyddwr, Anabledd Dysgu Cymru Director, Learning Disability Wales
Rhian Davies	Prif Weithredwr, Anabledd Cymru Chief Executive, Disability Wales
Miranda French	Rheolwr Polisi a Materion Cyhoeddus, Anabledd Cymru Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Disability Wales
David Morgan	Swyddog Polisiau Cydraddoldeb, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Equality Policy Officer, Welsh Local Government Association
Karen Warner	Rheolwr Gwasanaethau Gwybodaeth, Anabledd Dysgu Cymru Information Services Manager, Learning Disability Wales
Mark Williams	Cydgysylltydd er Atal Troseddau Casineb, Cymru Ddiogelach Anti-hate Crime Co-ordinator, Safer Wales

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

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Hannah Johnson	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members Research Service
Marc Wyn Jones	Clerc Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.30 a.m.  
The meeting began at 9.30 a.m.*

### **Cyflwyniad ac Ymddiheuriadau Introduction and Apologies**

[1] **Ann Jones:** Good morning everybody. Welcome to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. I remind Members to please switch off your mobile phones and anything else that may affect the broadcast. The meeting is conducted bilingually, so headsets are available. Channel 1 is for translation and channel 0 for amplification of the floor language. We are not expecting a fire alarm test, so should it go off we will wait and take our instruction from the ushers. However, for information, the assembly point is outside, on the side of the building. As I always say at this point, you can follow me because I will be one of the first to leave the building.

[2] We have had an apology this morning from Rhodri Glyn Thomas. He is conducting a public appointment on behalf of this committee. If you remember, we appointed Rhodri as our representative. There is no substitution. Do Members need to declare any interests, before we go any further? I see that no-one does.

9.32 a.m.

### **Aflonyddu ar Sail Anabledd—Casglu Tystiolaeth Disability-related Harassment—Evidence Gathering**

[3] **Ann Jones:** The main item on our agenda is to continue with our evidence gathering on our disability-related harassment report. We are pleased to have with us Rhian Davies and Miranda French from Disability Wales, and Jim Crowe and Karen Warner from Learning Disability Wales. You are all very welcome. I am sure that some of you have been to Assembly committees before.

[4] Would you like to give a brief introduction to complement your papers, or are you happy to go straight to questions?

[5] **Ms Davies:** Thank you very much for this opportunity to give evidence to this committee. I know that these sessions were triggered by the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Hidden from Plain Sight' report, following its 18-month inquiry into disability-related harassment. From Disability Wales's point of view, we feel that the publishing of this report is an important landmark and opportunity for us in Wales to tackle and address this agenda. We have been working on this issue for the last few years, particularly at a national, strategic level, working with all four police services in Wales. We have been organising seminars and conferences that bring together representatives from the four police services and national disability organisations, out of which an action plan has been produced. The disability hate crime action group also derives from this. It primarily comprises disability organisations, but also includes such organisations as Safer Wales, which has a strong interest in this. We feel that this report will build on the work that is already well under way in Wales and the commitment that has already been shown by a range of agencies to tackle this very serious issue.

[6] **Ann Jones:** Jim, would you like to add to that?

[7] **Mr Crowe:** I will allow Disability Wales to proceed. No, it is probably better if I speak first.

[8] Thank you for this opportunity to join you today. We are very supportive of the evidence that you have received, to date, from our colleagues, Disability Wales, today, and on previous occasions from Mencap Cymru and from other organisations. We welcome the inquiry report, and particularly welcome the summary report for Wales and the recommendations that it contains. Clearly, there is great potential for us in Wales, we would suggest, to tackle harassment, bullying and hate crime in a more coherent and collaborative way than is perhaps possible in other parts of the United Kingdom. We have, in the context of our experience, offered a couple of recommendations in our paper related to our links and work with people with learning disabilities. We have homed in on those issues and recommendations rather than the broader issues around, for instance, the equality duty, on which we fully support the evidence and submissions from Disability Wales and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

[9] **Ann Jones:** We will move to questions, and, because I am in the chair, I will start. This question is to both of you. Out of the evidence that we have already received, four main themes are appearing. One is around the issue of leadership and partnership. To what extent do you think that the Welsh Government can play a leadership role in tackling disability hate crime and harassment?

[10] **Ms Davies:** It has an absolutely crucial role through its strategies, for example, on community cohesion. I know that work is already under way there. The Welsh Government can bring together different parties. The work that we have done with the police is something that we brought about ourselves, but there are many other agencies in Wales, both devolved and non-devolved, that have direct input into this work. So, the Welsh Government has a crucial role in bringing people together, and also, through the specific equality duties, in setting down the strategic objective of how it wishes to see this come forward and producing some kind of framework that sets out its expectations of other agencies with regard to this issue.

[11] **Ann Jones:** Do you want to add to that, Jim?

[12] **Mr Crowe:** I would just endorse what Rhian has said. The Welsh Government does not have direct responsibility for police services, but good links have been established through Inspector Dean Piper and the small Association of Chief Police Officers unit within the Welsh Government offices. There is much to build on there. The four police forces are working more collaboratively and there are certain areas in which consistency of approach would certainly be beneficial for disabled people. Knowing that concerns would be addressed in the same way in each police force would be helpful. Organisations such as Disability Wales, the commission and ourselves could then issue helpful easy-to-read information to disabled people to give them advice about how things will work wherever they are in Wales.

[13] **Peter Black:** One issue highlighted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission last week was a lack of communication, particularly between different agencies such as the police, the health service and local councils. Even in respect of vulnerable adults, it said that that communication was not in place, despite the fact that there are protocols for what should happen. Is that your experience as well?

[14] **Ms Davies:** Although some organisations, such as the police and the Crown Prosecution Service, have been looking to tackle disability hate crime and harassment, it has not been on the radar of quite a number of other agencies. What has emerged from the report is that people do not recognise it, as is suggested by its very title, 'Hidden in Plain Sight'. When clients or service users report incidents that have happened to them, they are not seen for what they are. Even though some individuals may have several agencies working with them, such as housing and social services, and they may have reported issues to the police, there is a lack of a joined-up approach and data sharing. Given that there is not a shared

understanding of what disability-related harassment is, it is not recognised and there are no procedures in place for officers to follow when an incident is reported.

[15] **Peter Black:** With regard to adults who have been highlighted as vulnerable, surely that sort of information is available to all the agencies. Agencies should be aware of that and that should raise an alarm if a crime is reported against those people.

[16] **Ms Davies:** One thing that has emerged is that people are just not believed when they report issues. The view is: who would be abusive to or attack a disabled person? Given people's particular conditions, if they have a mental health issue, for example, or if they do not express themselves clearly, they are often seen as 'having imagined it' or it is 'not as bad as that'. The individuals are encouraged to change their routines or behaviour rather than trying to find the perpetrators and deal with them. So, people get rehoused, people get told not to go on a certain bus route or whatever; it is not taken seriously enough. I think that is what has come out so clearly in this report.

[17] **Peter Black:** How can we strengthen the protocols, in particular in relation to vulnerable adults who have been recognised by social service departments, to make sure that when an incident is reported that, at the very least, that information is shared with other agencies?

[18] **Ms Davies:** Some of it is about training staff, so that they are able to recognise disability-related harassment and hate crime. In a broader context, it is about the rights of disabled people. In some ways, characterising people as being vulnerable almost suggests that they are at risk or that experience this harassment is an inevitable part of being a disabled person. We feel strongly that what we should be recognising is people's human rights. People have a right to live in their own homes, to be able to go about their everyday business and not be subjected to attack, abuse, torture and even murder. I think we need to shift our view of disability and disabled people, and not see people as vulnerable but as having rights. As a result, you put things in place to tackle that.

[19] **Mr Crowe:** If I may just supplement that, part of the answer rests with the precedent set by the multi-agency risk assessment conferences on the reporting of domestic abuse issues. I think that that provides a good example. It is recommended by the commission. I think it offers a way forward, combined with the impending Welsh legislation and the replacement of 'In Safe Hands', and with the caveats that Rhian has offered about striking a balance. I would just emphasise the extent to which this goes on and the extent to which people with learning disabilities or other disabilities are sometimes reluctant to pursue redress. The dilemma for them is whether they potentially aggravate the problem with their neighbour or the person down the street, or whether they tolerate it and try to live with it. I was in conversation with a disabled gentleman in Cardiff last week—nothing to do with harassment—and, in passing, he said that somebody had burnt down the garden bench outside his room while he was watching television. He did not make a lot of it, but that is the extent of the problems that people can face.

[20] **Peter Black:** I have seen a number of serious case reviews in which a child has died or been badly abused because information has not been shared by different agencies. In theory, the police should be aware of someone who is on the at-risk register and take the appropriate action, but there are instances where that has fallen down. The idea of these serious case reviews is to put that right. If you are saying the same thing applies to vulnerable adults, then that is even more concerning, and that is what I am trying to get to the bottom of.

[21] **Ann Jones:** Has anybody got anything to add?

[22] **Mr Crowe:** As you mentioned, the terrible example is the one that is led on in the

Welsh report, namely the unfortunate situation that happened with the Pilkington family in Leicestershire. The Leicestershire police had many reports of incidents of harassment and abuse, but none of it was put together collectively and acted upon. So, certainly, there are concerns.

9.45 a.m.

[23] **Gwyn R. Price:** To follow on from what Peter was saying, I am concerned that there are all these agencies but the issue is going under the radar. I want to find evidence of best practice, or perhaps a one-stop shop where one agency takes information in and shares it with the other agencies. We took evidence the other day that, in some cases, there was a delay of three years in the police connecting up to other agencies. We obviously want to change that. So, can you refer to any best practice? Would a one-stop shop, where one agency feeds the information to others, be the way forward?

[24] **Ms Davies:** Our understanding is that, in some areas, the police are piloting the multi-agency risk assessment conference approach. The thing with disability hate crime and harassment is that, because it just has not been on the radar, we are still in the early days of people being able to recognise and tackle it. Some of those things are at the pilot stage. In South Wales Police, for example, they are talking about looking at very local neighbourhood approaches to tackling this issue. So, various things are being tried out. In the Gwent police area, they have developed a number of reporting centres. A great deal of work has been done by Torfaen People First to set up a lot of reporting centres. One of the issues is that, in different areas, there are different examples of good or innovative practice. Where we need to go from here with this report is a more national, strategic approach. To go back to the Chair's original question about leadership, this is where the Welsh Government should step in to try to draw this together and look at how there could be a more uniform approach so that, wherever you live in Wales, you would know where to report, how to report and what was going to happen. It would mean that you would get support and that agencies would work together to tackle this and that there would be some form of redress. We are still some way from getting to that point.

[25] **Ms French:** To give you examples of how the voluntary sector is organising itself at the moment, it is particularly important to highlight the benefits of particular expertise on disability issues in supporting disabled people to report incidences of harassment and to progress cases in Wales. One example is where Disability Wales, Safer Wales, Learning Disability Wales and others came together to create the Disability Hate Crime Action Group Cymru, which is a network of organisations. We meet quarterly and we take it in turns to host the meetings. It is a way we can exchange information on how we are helping the reporting agenda and provide information to our membership to support disabled people in Wales to raise issues at the time.

[26] **Ann Jones:** Gwyn, are you happy with that?

[27] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes, thank you, Chair.

[28] **Joyce Watson:** I have been sitting here listening to what you have been saying and this is what I have come up with: I think that you need BACKUP, which can stand for 'Believe'; 'Act appropriately'; 'Consistency' which was mentioned; 'Know', that is, to know what you are dealing with; 'Understand it'; and 'be Proactive'. If all of those things were put together in a package that spelt 'BACKUP', it would give everybody a way forward. People could play around with the words that I have used if they wanted to. However, in that way, everyone would know what they were dealing with, immediately. We talk about hate crime, but the levels of hate crime vary hugely. The fact that you have a learning disability or any other disability immediately disadvantages you because, sadly, the society we live in does not

accept that this is not right. If that acceptance was there, none of this would be happening. We have talked about MARACs, and domestic abuse would be part of this hate crime—which makes it difficult in any case—but is it your experience that, whatever form of harassment or hate crime you suffer as a disabled person, whatever your incapacity or disability, it is hard for you to get your voice heard in the first place?

[29] **Ms Davies:** Yes, and some people literally do not have a voice, or are unable to communicate or express exactly what has happened to them. That is why it is more important that the support is in place all the way along the line, from reporting to going through a prosecution or whatever. This whole issue raises the wider question of the position of disabled people in society because, although we have had a Disability Discrimination Act since 1995, and despite the fact that, since the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990, people are much more likely to be living in their own homes in the community, we are still talking about people experiencing exclusion and being seen as somehow different or set apart. So, there is a wider societal issue about attitudes and how we view people who appear to be different, but it is also about how we ensure that people are not just plonked in a house somewhere on an estate. It is about ensuring that people are truly valued members of their local community—in work, in education or in doing voluntary work—to create a more cohesive society in which difference is recognised more and valued, rather than using it as a way to divide and to set different groups up against each other.

[30] **Ms Warner:** With some of our previous work with people with learning disabilities, we undertook a project, with the help of the Welsh Government, that looked into whether people with learning disabilities actually understand what abuse is. We produced a DVD that really helped people, because people were suffering abuse, the safeguarding system was not helping, and nothing was being taken seriously. I would like to see some consistent approaches to helping people with learning disabilities and other disabilities to understand when they are being subjected to abuse. There is a lot of confusion and a lot of confusing words out there—it probably happens within families. A couple of our recommendations are to do with having a consistent approach to reporting and producing information in formats that people can understand. There is already some really good work. One of our recommendations would be for people with learning disabilities to undertake the training with the police—that has worked very well in Gwent, and I would like to see that rolled out across Wales.

[31] There is also a True Vision reporting pack. I do not know whether you are aware of it, but some police authorities in Wales use it. It contains an easy-to-read reporting form. The approach across Wales is not consistent, however, and some police authorities are still using reporting forms in very difficult language. They are not available in Welsh; so, they need to be in Welsh across the board. People do not know where or how to report, and a lot of people cannot read, so there is a need for a consistent format in different languages.

[32] **Mark Isherwood:** You referred to Disability Hate Crime Action Group Cymru, and I am interested to hear what actions you think should be taken to achieve the aspirations that you are espousing. I have two points in particular to raise with you. You mentioned MARACs, and, a few years ago, when the predecessor committee did an inquiry into domestic abuse, I attended, on behalf of the committee, a multi-agency working group on domestic abuse in Flintshire. The lead authority on that happened to be children's services, but there were representatives from the third sector, the public sector, the police, the NHS, charities, and so on, around the table. They focused on individual cases and the joint action that they would agree together to take that forward. It had become systematic and personal. These people all knew each other, so they did not just wait to meet around the table; they also contacted each other daily as things arose. I would like your view on how to embed that systematically within the agencies.

[33] Secondly, you talked more broadly about the wider societal issue, and that is very much the case. Culturally, the human species is a funny old beast. There is often a fear of the unknown, unless it is something that has affected your life in some way—family, friends, neighbourhood—and you realise that it is normal and nothing whatsoever to be concerned about. Indeed, it is quite the opposite; it is something to engage with as part of normal life. Just last week, I was involved in a case about independent living for adults with learning disabilities, and the initial response from the neighbourhood was fear, because the community did not understand what these people represented, who they were, and how they could integrate with the community. What action would you like to see taken to better generate public understanding, and not just among the agencies that would be dealing with the individuals concerned?

[34] **Ann Jones:** We will give you a minute to think about that one. [*Laughter.*]

[35] **Ms Davies:** In the evidence that we submitted, we referred to the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities—or disabled people, as we say in Disability Wales—and it sets out the various articles. Article 16 is about freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse. One article that we have been interested in over the last few years is article 19, which is about the right to live independently in the community. There are other articles, such as article 28, which is about having the appropriate support, such as financial support, and services to be able to support yourself. Everything is in the UN convention with regard to recognising the human rights framework. In Wales, people generally respond well to concepts of human rights. We have a real opportunity in Wales, especially through the specific duties, to progress both the concepts within the UN convention and the equality duties to set down a benchmark for how we expect people to behave in Wales and to act towards each other.

[36] We mentioned training; there have been some interesting school projects with organisations such as Theatr Fforwm Cymru. We need to look at the workplace and see what opportunities disabled people have to work or to take part in volunteering activities. The Welsh Government, as well as other agencies, has a role in setting that agenda and making it happen. We are talking about people enjoying their rights and not being seen as vulnerable and in need of protection, because that could close down people's rights and limit their independence even further.

[37] **Mr Crowe:** On your first point, Mark, I would limit my comments, with regard to inter-agency working, to referring to the Crown Prosecution Service. Colleagues in the police service and in local authorities still have some difficulties in engaging with the Crown Prosecution Service at a strategic level. The Crown Prosecution Service must ensure that the cases that it pursues are robust and have a chance of success, but there are issues to cover with the Crown Prosecution Service. I am not sure whether it has submitted evidence to this inquiry; I have not noticed that it has. It is an important element in ensuring that action can be taken. I understand that it is not a devolved body but it has an important role to play in some of the responses that need to be made. So, if the committee could look at that area, that would be helpful.

10.00 a.m.

[38] On the point about inclusion and participation in society, the convention exists and says clearly that disabled people's rights should be exactly the same as any other individual's rights in society. We should always remember that only one in 10 people with a learning disability in Wales lived in institutional settings, even at the height of the old-style mental handicap institutions in Bryn y Neuadd, Hensol and Ely. So, people with learning disabilities have always lived in the community and continue to live in the community with their carers, very often the family, but, perhaps, as Rhian has rightly pointed out, they have not been visible, having gone to segregated settings such as schools and day centres. The welcome



moves over recent years to encourage community participation and access to generic and mainstream services have been helpful. I will match your broad point with my own: in this time of financial cuts, the risk is that local authorities may start to look for segregated solutions to some of the service options that they are offering to disabled people. Not only will that not save money, it will be counter-productive on issues such as community presence and participation. Finally, a number of us have made reference to initiatives in mainstream schools and educating tomorrow's citizens, putting them alongside the disabled peers. Human contact works wonders, does it not?

[39] **Ann Jones:** Rhian, you started to talk about limiting independence, which was what the EHRC's report was talking about, by taking safeguarding measures. Yet, Jim, your paper noted that you supported that EHRC approach. Do you have any views on what Disability Wales is trying to say on limiting people's independence?

[40] **Mr Crowe:** There are definite risks there. We think that disabled people are people first and foremost. It is about striking that balance. We have made representations, in years gone by, to the Welsh Government on the creeping spread of risk assessments and the risk assessment culture. I can recall one incident of a person moving into a group home where the neighbours invited them in to watch a football match and the staff responsible for providing support for that individual said that that was not appropriate because a risk assessment had not been done on how that could happen. That might be a trite example, but it is worth telling that story to show the attitudes that can exist. 'In Safe Hands' and other initiatives are extremely important, but we want people with learning disabilities to live a real life. With real life comes a certain level of exposure and risk, and we all know that notions of protecting people and putting them behind walls have not provided any greater safety. We have only to look back to the summer and the Winterbourne case in Gloucestershire, where people were supposed to live on an industrial estate.

[41] **Ann Jones:** I am sorry, Mark; I jumped in there. Had you finished?

[42] **Mark Isherwood:** I apologise if you mentioned it before I came in, but I have not heard mention of this. What role, if any, might the media have to play either in addressing its current approach or in promoting better understanding for the future? I mean the reporting media and the entertainment media.

[43] **Ms Davies:** We feel strongly about this. In the last year or so, there has been a lot of negative reporting of disabled people in the media, particularly people who claim benefits and people who are referred to as scroungers, layabouts and workshy. A recent survey by Scope of disabled people, particularly people with cerebral palsy, said that, in the last year, they feel more afraid because of the way that disabled people are now being characterised. Especially at a time when there are cutbacks in services, those people who might continue to receive a service could be seen as even more of a target, because they are getting things that others feel they are not getting. So, the news media has a clear role in providing a balanced view—not stereotyping people, and not characterising them one way or another.

[44] In the wider entertainment media, there has been good progress in the last few years. You are more likely to see disabled people in soaps, on quiz programmes and so on. It is important that disabled people are not just there as the storyline, but as characters in the Queen Vic or whatever. They should not be there because of their impairment, but just as a character who happens to live in Albert Square or whatever. I do not want to take this example too far; I am showing too much familiarity with soap operas here.

[45] The media is important. Obviously, in Wales we do not have a wide range of print media; there are local newspapers, and the *Western Mail*, and then it is the BBC and ITV Wales. Incidentally, there will be a programme on ITV Wales next Tuesday evening on this

issue, so that is one to look out for. The media has an important role to play, in representing disabled people as part of society, but also in ensuring that the balance is right in the way that people are characterised in any reporting.

[46] **Mr Crowe:** I do not have any easy answers on the media. There is a lot of expertise around this table on working in and dealing with the media. We have difficulties in Wales given that so much of the media is England-oriented. I have relatives in Wrexham and on the north Wales coast who get BBC North West rather than BBC Wales as the default. We all know the types of stories that can attract newspaper comment. I do not have an easy answer, I am afraid.

[47] **Ms French:** I want to share an example of a soap, *Casualty*, that had a storyline a few months ago in relation to mate-hate crime. A young gentleman with learning difficulties was targeted, and the story really got across the impact on him and his family. It helped to raise viewers' understanding of that impact, but it also showed people with learning difficulties when they could be speaking up and telling their friends and family. I met with Pembrokeshire People First about a project that we are working on regarding women and domestic abuse, and I asked them when they had come across hate crime, or when they had heard about it, and someone said they had come across it through watching *Casualty*. So, at some point, something clicked for that person, and they thought, 'This is unacceptable. I need to be talking to people about this'. I thought that that was a clear example of how the media can play a huge role.

[48] **Ann Jones:** Done correctly, that kind of thing can send a powerful message, but there can be problems when there is stereotyping, and it goes the other way, and does more harm than good. That was quite a powerful point. I have three more speakers. This session will run on a bit, and we will take some time out of the break.

[49] **Mike Hedges:** Briefly, my experience is that most of this is done by neighbours—not necessarily the people living next door, but people in the neighbourhood. It always comes down to the action of the individual police officer who turns up. Whatever wonderful policies have been created by police authorities—and everybody can agree them, and you can all be happy with them—when that police officer turns up, it is what they do that counts, and whether they take it seriously or ignore it.

[50] The other thing that strikes me is that people wait a long time to report this kind of thing. They do not report the first incident, or the tenth; it might be the fiftieth or hundredth incident by the time they come to report it. From my experience, it is not that there is a problem with the Crown Prosecution Service; these incidents never get anywhere near the CPS. Is my experience fairly common? What can be done in order to ensure that not only does the police authority have wonderful policies, or the chief constable signs up to anything that you put before him, but that the policeman or policewoman who turns up at the door—I am sorry, I am trying to relate a specific case, so I apologise if I slip into gender-specific terms.

[51] **Ann Jones:** I will let you off this time.

[52] **Mike Hedges:** Someone may turn up and say that there is no problem, but it might have taken a lot of courage and time for the victim to report the incident and that person's report could end up being ignored. The other question that I would like to ask is: what about involving us? We, as elected politicians, have an opportunity to raise matters with the local inspectors, and so on, which is closer to ensuring that there is action rather than raising the matter with the local chief constable. Should we be seen as a point of contact as well?

[53] **Ms Davies:** Last November, Disability Wales and South Wales Police organised a

joint conference in Swansea, which was attended by police officers of all ranks as well as individual disabled people, members of disabled people's organisations and other national disability organisations. There were some very powerful presentations and, for the police officers, the disabled individuals and representatives, it was a hugely eye-opening experience. No fewer than three incidents were reported because the people at those events realised that they had experienced hate crime and they reported the incidents at the conference. Quite a few police officers attended the conference, and the incidents were picked up and dealt with. The feedback that I have had from colleagues in the police is that it was quite a turning point for police officers to be in the same room as disabled people and their representatives, looking at the issue, and they then saw it completely differently. Obviously, you cannot put on a conference for 150 people every week, but what you can do—and South Wales Police is quite interested in doing this—is put on very localised events, engage with local disability organisations, whether in Neath and Port Talbot, Bridgend, Pontypridd, or wherever. It may be possible to do a mini version of that conference, where you bring people together and build relationships, gain understanding and awareness and maybe have a bit of training. It then means that everyone feels a lot safer knowing that they can report incidents, but the police also feel more comfortable and more tuned in and are more aware of what they need to do and the part that they have to play. So, a local approach can be taken as well as a national, strategic approach.

[54] **Ann Jones:** The EHRC report came about as a result of the Fiona Pilkington case, but also the very tragic case of a young gentleman, who was a constituent of mine. However, we have heard very little about what is happening in north Wales. You referred to a conference with South Wales Police. Is this work being done pan Wales or are we just being south-Wales specific?

[55] **Ms Davies:** North Wales Police was part of the events that Disability Wales has been involved with. Work has been done recently in Wrexham to develop reporting centres, for example. North Wales Police has also been looking at training and other similar issues. The equality and diversity manager in North Wales Police is very committed to this agenda. I do not know whether other colleagues have other information on this.

[56] **Ann Jones:** He has submitted a paper to the North Wales Police Authority today, which has stated that the reported levels of hate crime have increased. It worries me that, when we talk in committee, we seem to be talking about south Wales. Many of the conferences are held in south Wales and it is extremely difficult for anyone from north, mid or west Wales to get into Cardiff or Swansea. Perhaps the committee ought to state that if it is a pan-Wales problem, there should be pan-Wales solutions and events.

[57] **Ms Davies:** We ran two national seminars in partnership with the police and the equality and diversity committee of the Association of Chief Police Officers took the lead on it. Those seminars were held in Llandrindod Wells—

10.15 a.m.

[58] **Ann Jones:** In an equally inconvenient location—[*Laughter.*]

[59] **Ms Davies:** Exactly. The event held last November was something that South Wales Police specifically wanted to do and it involved us in it as a partner. However, we would be more than willing to work with North Wales Police, Dyfed Powys Police and Gwent Police to do something similar.

[60] **Ann Jones:** That was a gripe, because although the committee is very well balanced, we are a bit north Walian.

[61] **Ms Warner:** We know that awareness training and working with the police works, with people with disabilities actually holding the training. We have some really successful work going on that covers north Wales as well, but it just scratches the surface. That is the problem; it is not mainstream training as the groups do not have the money to offer that. We need to make sure that it is mainstreamed and rolled out across Wales, because we find that the success of the work is down to the fact that individual police officers are beginning to understand the needs and rights of people with disabilities. So, although it is a success, it needs to be rolled out across Wales.

[62] We are also doing work in Torfaen with Gwent Police, which we would like to suggest as a recommendation. We would like that pack to be rolled out across Wales so that each People First group can work with each local police authority.

[63] **Mr Crowe:** We ought to pick up on Mr Hedges's comment about your importance as Assembly Members and also the importance of councillors. We would certainly encourage the people that we work with to contact their local councillors and Assembly Members.

[64] **Kenneth Skates:** I will be very brief. I am well aware of the consequences of the Community Care Act 1990 and the charities set up as a result of that. What should the Welsh Government do to rectify some of the exclusion that was a consequence of that Act? Going back to the issue of standardising the literature and material produced, who should take the lead on disseminating the best models across Wales? I am also thinking of what we have learned from England—the Blackpool example was really interesting. Who should take the lead on disseminating that best practice?

[65] **Mr Crowe:** If we start with the specifics, I will ask Karen to respond on who should take the lead on those materials.

[66] **Ms Warner:** The voluntary sector has expertise in working in partnership, and we work very well in partnership with other disability organisations and local authorities. A group such as the disability hate crime action group could take on some of this work. The problem is that we need money, but if we wanted to have a consistent approach, the voluntary sector could take a good lead on that.

[67] **Mr Crowe:** In terms of funding the work, we would probably need to look to the Welsh Government, even though it is a non-devolved matter. Unless you have particular influence with the Home Office, it is difficult to get through at that level.

[68] Rhian has a broader point on the Act.

[69] **Ms Davies:** Could you clarify what issue you were referring to when you talked about the Community Care Act 1990?

[70] **Kenneth Skates:** It was basically about the way that people were removed from central care and put into communities, without the necessary back-up. The idea was superb, but it was perceived by many, rightly or wrongly—I believe rightly—as more of a cost-cutting measure rather than a way of taking it forward. So, exclusion resulted from people being taken out of institutional care and placed in a community without any support network in place. Therefore, is the Welsh Government doing what should be done to rectify that exclusion, and could it do more?

[71] **Ms Davies:** We are aware that the Welsh Government has published 'Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action'. I am also aware that the social services Bill was announced yesterday, which talks a lot about person-centred services, service user control and agencies working together. Disability Wales is very committed to the independent

living agenda, and that that will pave the way for people not to feel that they are just being moved or shipped around, but that they are in control of their lives. It means that the services are there and that the funding is arranged in a way that enables people to achieve their goals and aspirations; rather than simply being a client or a service user, people can live their lives and achieve their aspirations.

[72] **Mr Crowe:** The critical area of community care for Assembly Members to keep monitoring is the impact of restrictions to eligibility criteria. Increasingly, as local authorities seek to make their funding spread further, they are tightening eligibility criteria. This means that increasing numbers of people with learning disabilities or those on the edge of having learning disabilities—I am sure that you come into contact with many of these people through your surgeries—are not being looked after or supported by the local authority. They are floating free, in a sense, and they can get into difficulties, whether that is by being vulnerable or, in some cases, by becoming offenders.

[73] **Bethan Jenkins:** The previous committee heard a lot of evidence on young people in the secure estate. Discussions on the criminal justice system noted that we do things differently here, and one of our recommendations was a need to look at devolution of the youth and juvenile secure estate. I appreciate that you say that South Wales Police and others are undertaking work on this, but do you believe that if we had devolution in this area, we would be able to take ownership over these things? We want to take a human rights approach, for example, while that is not so much the case on an UK level; what are your thoughts on that?

[74] I appreciate your comments on vulnerability and the human rights agenda, but I want to focus on the matter further. To a certain extent, people are always going to be put into boxes: as minorities or as women, for example. I want to understand what you mean when you say that it would cross a line by inflicting a threat to a person's independence. If we see this as an issue, we need to target it, as opposed to saying that we want everyone to be treated the same. Of course we want everyone to be treated the same, but the reality is that people are not. How can we move forward on that?

[75] **Ms Davies:** Taking your last point first, people can find themselves in vulnerable situations without necessarily being inherently vulnerable. Where people have had issues with their neighbours, for example, the solution of the agencies involved has been to rehouse them, while the behaviour of the neighbours is not addressed. The person who raises the issue is taken out of the situation, and it is almost as if it is their fault. Another example is that people could be under constant risk assessment, with others controlling their lives. The worst thing that could happen as a result of doing that is that people may still be living in their own homes in the community, but those homes have become like a fortress and only certain people can visit them, or the only way that people can go about their business is if they have a personal assistant or a care worker with them. We have to tackle the attitudes that give rise to disability-related harassment and not just wrap the individual in cotton wool. One of the things that was not picked up in the work by the EHRC, or perhaps it was not within its remit, was that we do not know what the motivation of the perpetrators is. We need to do a lot more work and research on that.

[76] On your first point regarding the criminal justice system, particularly the devolution of youth justice, I must admit that it is not an area that I know a lot about. My experience of working with police is that they have taken this issue seriously and have invested in it, although much more obviously needs to be done. Answering the question of whether or not devolution would help is, perhaps, beyond my level of experience. The Association of Chief Police Officers works at an all-Wales level and the equality and diversity forum is an all-Wales forum, and it is encouraging that they have taken a joint approach. Within the parameters that they have at the moment, they are working towards operating on a Wales

level. Whether that could be enhanced by greater devolution is a bit beyond my competence.

[77] **Ann Jones:** I do not think that that issue is for this inquiry. We are trying to look at the EHRC's report.

[78] **Bethan Jenkins:** Sorry, but if we are talking about the criminal justice system, it is within our remit to discuss that. That was the main thrust of that particular inquiry—the influence of the police and the way that they had to deal with the issue. I wanted to see whether things would be different if we had more power here. That is quite a sensible question to ask.

[79] **Mr Crowe:** Being mindful of your time, I will focus on the issue of youth justice. It is fairly clear that access to forensic medicine and custodial healthcare is going to be devolved and moved across to NHS Wales. That is going to be very helpful. There are clear arguments for youth justice to be devolved as well. Particularly for people with learning disabilities, it would be easier to make some of the connections and provide some of the supports that might assist people who were at risk of offending or who have offended. There are many people in Parc prison who very probably have a learning disability and are quite young.

[80] **Ann Jones:** We will take up your point, Jim. The CPS has given us no evidence at all, so we will write with some questions. Members can decide during the private session what they want to include in those questions. We are looking at youth justice as part of our inquiry into community safety next week. We are desperately out of time now, so I thank you all for coming in this morning. You will receive a copy of the transcript, so that you can make sure that we have not included anything that you have not said. Please check it for accuracy. Thank you again for your evidence this morning. We will take a short break now, so Members have two minutes to get a coffee and come back in.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.27 a.m. a 10.34 a.m.  
The meeting adjourned between 10.27 a.m. and 10.34 a.m.*

[81] **Ann Jones:** I apologise to the next set of witnesses for the fact that we are running slightly late, but that does not mean that we will not give you a fair amount of time to respond to some of the questions that we want to ask. Our second session is with Safer Wales, and it is my pleasure to welcome Mark Williams, the anti-hate crime co-ordinator, and Bernie Bowen-Thomson, the deputy chief executive. You are both very welcome. Thank you very much for the paper that you have submitted. If it is okay with you, I will move straight on to the questions.

[82] In your paper, you say that Safer Wales works in partnership with many organisations—and many of us around the table will know that—and you receive support from the Welsh Government. In our evidence so far, leadership and partnership working are two of the main themes that seem to be emerging. To what extent do you think that the Welsh Government can play a leadership role in tackling disability hate crime and harassment?

[83] **Mr Williams:** I would like to add a point to the written submission that we made. I have spent the last three days in Flint, running hate crime awareness sessions, which were funded by the local authority. We are seeing that there is already partnership working there. However, the Welsh Government needs to take the lead and to require local authorities to do more of this type of work, to run awareness sessions and to run media campaigns and so on, to get this out into the public domain so that more people are aware of it.

[84] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** If we want to safeguard people from hate crime and hate attacks, particularly the more violent crimes associated with some forms of hate crime, there are already duties to be fulfilled by local authorities; it is a matter of linking up that work. It is

linked to human rights and criminal justice, but there are also safeguarding issues in relation to families and communities across the nation.

[85] **Peter Black:** I would like to talk about your first recommendation, which is to increase the number of inclusive reporting centres. I note from your paper that the current reporting centres are largely run by the third sector. How effective are those reporting centres? What sort of links do they have with statutory services, in terms of taking forward a complaint?

[86] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** Mark can describe to you the detail of all of the different ones, as there is a variety of reporting centres. We set up reporting centres to try to create something more sustainable. There is a value to it being based within the third sector, because there is a mechanism to report to the police directly, but we are conscious that many people may not identify what has happened to them as a hate crime, or they may not want to call the police; there are a number of issues with regard to that.

[87] There is also an issue with regard to confidence. We know that, with third-party reporting systems, people who may not approach a statutory organisation or the police have an opportunity to report something safely. There are mechanisms in relation to feeding intelligence directly to the police, and Mark has links with every one of the police forces in Wales. With those links, there are ways of doing that anonymously and with people knowing. The system can capture it, even if the person does not want to disclose to the police who they are and what has happened. Often, the incidents can involve people who are known to them and it can take a few steps to report it fully. We have seen this with domestic violence and abuse, and with a variety of hate crimes, so this is an opportunity for us to get to the real picture and to start targeting some of our work across Wales—not just us, but all of our partners.

[88] **Peter Black:** Is the purpose of those reporting centres to gather information, or to try to address individual issues?

[89] **Mr Williams:** We are looking at a variety of centres. Of the reporting centres that are mentioned in our submission, those provided by organisations such as Mencap Cymru offer a key support service to those who have particular needs. The other organisations that we have named so far are lesbian, gay and bisexual organisations, which are offering support services to individuals, but, through Safer Wales, they are linking to the police, so that we can share information. As Bernie said, even when we do not have consent to pass on full details to the police, so that an investigation can be carried out, we are at least informing public debate on what we need to ask the police in certain areas.

[90] **Peter Black:** So, when you say that you want to increase the number of reporting centres, are you promoting a particular model or are you happy for them to be propagated in a variety of different forms?

[91] **Mr Williams:** We look at four different forms of reporting centres. They can be as small as someone just distributing leaflets and posters to promote the scheme. Citizens Advice Cymru has recently come on board and said that it wants to promote the scheme so that it is out there in the public domain. There is also the provision of a full service, such as by Mencap Cymru, in which organisations work with people. So, it is about the scope of what organisations can manage. So, going back to my three days in Flint this week, we have had a number of other organisations, such as Barnardo's and a couple of housing associations, come on board and say that they want to promote this scheme. So, it is really starting to take effect.

[92] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** One of the reasons why this approach was taken is because we did not want to do add another layer of having another project or another team of people

going around doing it and just being about anti-hate. One of the precursors to this approach was the fact that we both sit on the hate crime scrutiny panel for the CPS, and we noticed that some of the cases are deemed to be low-level nuisance, even though they are actually about hate crime. This means that hate crime is sometimes not picked up as such by agencies, so what we want to do is to embed it in organisations that already have their areas of specialism. So, if you are a registered social landlord, you can work with the systems that are already in place. It is about heightening their awareness and giving them the tools to be able to report, even if it is an anonymous third-party report, because it helps build a picture of intelligence. So, the rationale behind that approach—embedding this across organisations as opposed to just having one lead organisation—was more about making a sustainable mechanism for reporting hate crime.

[93] **Peter Black:** So, you are actually promoting organic growth, as opposed to systematic promotion of particular centres in different areas.

[94] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** The promotion of particular centres in particular areas is crucial for organisations like Mencap Cymru, where you have people who can give particular specialist support. We recognise that, but there is also a need for more generic generalised centres. Going back to the earlier question about what the Welsh Government could do, one of the things is to heighten the awareness of housing providers, such as registered social landlords, so that we can pick up some of these issues at an earlier stage and provide support at that stage, rather than wait until it gets to the criminal justice system.

[95] **Gwyn R. Price:** How convinced are you that police officers have a full understanding of learning difficulties when hate crime is reported? As Mike alluded to earlier, it all depends on which police officer turns up, and their understanding of the difficulties that the person in front of them is going through. I want to see more training across the board, but particularly on the police officer side of this. What is your experience of that?

[96] **Mr Williams:** A lot of work goes on with our new police officers. From the work that I have done with various police forces, I have seen that police officers, in their foundation training, are trained to understand the needs of minority groups. However, I am unsure whether the majority of officers in our police forces, who have been there for some time, are getting that training and are fully understanding. So, as you say, Gwyn, it is a bit hit or miss as to who you get when you report an incident and how skilled they are. I agree with you that we should be working with the police to do training that encompasses all areas.

[97] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** In addition, as was just mentioned, it is crucial to train people to pick up early identifiers. It might be the use of a name and not brushing off the fact that someone is being called a name, because it may mean something much more and it may be that you are just seeing the tip of what is really going on in their lives. So, there is a need.

10.45 a.m.

[98] **Mr Williams:** We do not want to see a repeat of the Pilkington case in Wales.

[99] **Gwyn R. Price:** I was concerned that perhaps they see it and do not realise that, as you said, small things can lead to bigger things. If they report the smaller things at an earlier stage, that could stop the bigger things from happening.

[100] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** It is not necessarily just the criminal justice system. There is a greater scope to this; when you are looking at issues of safeguarding and community safety in the wider context, there is a mainstreaming role to play in the identification of early signals of hate crime.



[101] **Joyce Watson:** I am a regional Member, so I represent a massive area, which takes in two police forces. So, my question is appropriate for my area and it is about the geographical variations in the level of reporting. Have you spotted geographical variations in the level of reporting? If so, have you thought of any possible solutions?

[102] **Mr Williams:** Of the reports that we have seen for Wales in the last few years of running the scheme, we are seeing a spread across all police force areas, but I cannot confidently say to you, Joyce, that we are covering some of the rural communities. We would like to see a good spread and those areas are being picked up as well. We tend to see cases that are linked to our major conurbations rather than rural communities. That is not to say that we are not getting them, because we get some, but the majority of our cases come through the larger towns and cities.

[103] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** When you look at reporting to the police forces across Wales, you see that there is also a disparity. Gwent, for example, has quite significant reporting compared with other police authority areas. The other side is about the support that people can receive and the mechanisms of support. One recommendation made was about multi-agency risk assessment conferences, and part of that is about trying to embed, when cases are very serious, the practice of managing and dealing with them. Part of the thinking behind our work to try to engage the reporting centres in a broader sense is to try to increase and heighten awareness and management within existing organisations and providers in a variety of areas. More could be done on that. On providing support and other mechanisms, we know from the women's turnaround service that you can provide a certain level of support from a distance. Our partner agencies across north, south and west Wales have done that and they were able to do that linking up. So, there are mechanisms that we know are useful, to a degree, but there are also more face-to-face mechanisms based on embedding that work within existing services.

[104] **Joyce Watson:** I have a small supplementary question. We all know that police forces have targets and so on. Have you come across any resistance to increasing the level of reporting, which increases activity levels for that particular crime, which might not look good on the books?

[105] **Mr Williams:** Quite the contrary: all the police forces are keen to see numbers going up. When figures come out, you will generally get a comment from a police forces in Wales, if not all, that they are pleased to see the numbers going up. So, that is reassuring.

[106] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** There is more awareness of this than there has been for many years. We have been working across a variety of agencies, promoting the fact that this is an under-reported area and so increased reporting is beneficial. The other side of that is that there is a greater likelihood of bringing someone to justice for these kinds of crimes. So, it helps them on other side of their targets, namely bringing people to justice.

[107] **Joyce Watson:** That is good.

[108] **Mark Isherwood:** You have referred to parallels between domestic abuse and hate crime and to your three days in Flintshire. I was pleased to hear you mention Barnardo's. The two most proactive organisations up there are Barnardo's and neighbourhood watch. Obviously, a key role is played by housing officers, whether they are working for the local authority or a registered social landlord. That can often be where the solution lies, but it can also be where the problem lies, as I have encountered. In taking this forward, first, have you only been training statutory bodies, or have you also been invited to train bodies in the third sector that would be engaged on the front line, such as housing associations? Secondly, is there a role for MARACs, as used in relation to domestic abuse, in high-risk cases? You mentioned Flintshire; are you engaged at all with the domestic abuse group meetings, which

meet more regularly than the MARACs, and are about earlier engagement, discussing cases, and agreeing ways forward? They have the third sector and the statutory sector in the room together. Could that be a model as well?

[109] **Mr Williams:** The training that I have just run in north Wales has been organised by North Wales Police, and I must say that they have been very effective in terms of the delegates that we had on the training courses. We had people representing refugees and asylum seekers, Barnardo's, and various housing providers—we might come on to that—as well as neighbourhood watch, which is also asking to become part of the scheme. We were pleased to see that. Therefore, with regard to having the public sector and the third sector in the room together, that was happening, and we were seeing a good exchange of information, with people taking on board the need to take things forward. There were quite a few housing wardens attending the training as well over the last few days, and it seems to have been a really productive and effective use of time for us to go up there. A number of people have now come on board and said that they want to set up as reporting centres, or distribute the leaflets, so we are seeing awareness raising coming from that.

[110] I will ask Bernie to answer on the MARACs and the domestic abuse aspect, but one of the things that was mentioned was that Flintshire already has an anti-social behaviour forum group, which is looking at high-risk, anti-social behaviour issues, so it is almost as if they are starting to do that MARAC-type process. I know that there are discussions about doing the same sort of thing in Cardiff at the moment. It is starting to happen.

[111] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** There is a real opportunity at the moment for Wales to take its own path on this. When we look at the mechanisms that we have in place across all of our counties, the MARAC system means that we are lucky in the sense that there is already a degree of multi-agency collaboration across both the third sector and the statutory sector on high-risk cases. With the focus that there has been on anti-social behaviour, as Mark said, there are opportunities to look at how nuisance is picked up and reported, and what that means, and to look into that more closely. Awareness is really crucial in that regard. At the moment there is a gap in awareness, so it is bitty. In terms of providing equitable support to victims, I would say that we are not there yet. The other side of it is that we know, from our experience with the MARAC process, about the impact that it can have in saving lives and reducing repeat victimisation. We also know from our experience of similar arrangements, such as the specific work that we are doing with sex workers, that case management has helped to bring together agencies and to increase accountability within agencies for making sure that someone is safe. With hate crime, it is crucial that the same thing happens. They have started doing it in Cardiff, and there have been cases in Cardiff that Mark has been involved with where they have taken a similar approach. The mechanisms to roll something like that out are already in place, because we have agencies that are already aware of those kinds of processes, and how to manage them pretty quickly and effectively. The gap is at that lower level, where people need to pick it up. What north Wales is doing with the anti-social behaviour forum is a real opportunity to test this out, to see whether it is a way of picking incidents up at an earlier stage and then being able to intervene to prevent them.

[112] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** For me, it is about building up an acknowledgement and awareness across our Welsh society and agencies as a whole. Mark has touched on this point. I note that you outline in your paper what works, and you put a lot of emphasis on distribution, and so on. For me, avoiding the duplication of resources is key. That is, the publication of materials, and so on. People are becoming a little concerned that many colour brochures are being published on various matters, and there needs to be more joined-up thinking on this. To what extent do you work with local authorities in Wales? Most of the authorities that I am familiar with put out a regular bulletin to their residents, and I think that they would value the inclusion of your publication in order to build that acknowledgement within their publications.

[113] With regard to the community safety partnerships, in Conwy and Denbighshire, we work together more as a team. There is cross-border working. It is about tapping into the resources that are being spent and working with the existing resources in order to avoid duplication and the production of too much material. I note that you say in your paper that you would place your publications in places of worship, libraries, and so on, but people see a rack of leaflets when they go into such places. How many leaflets do people want to take home with them? There has to be some joined-up work and everyone needs to work together.

[114] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** You are right; I have three young children, and when I take them to the library, I see big racks of information on a variety of topics. However, it is about using a mixture of techniques. The electronic reporting facility is accessible to anyone, so an individual can do it. This is a part of increasing awareness across a variety of organisations, so it becomes normal practice. People enter the information and can access information immediately, rather than the information being paper-based. The beauty of that style of reporting is that it can also be done in a variety of formats, such as an easy-to-read format.

[115] However, there is still a need for some paper forms; these are found to be particularly useful in police stations when the police are dealing with something that they want to flag up. Having said that, it is not just about producing a lot of leaflets in many different formats and getting those out. Part of what Mark has been doing in creating these centres is a way of getting around that. Having different levels works for people who cannot give someone more individual attention, and it is useful to have publications.

[116] **Mr Williams:** There is not much that we can do about the schemes that are already in place, unless we can start working more closely together. I will give you another example, which is also from north Wales, but there is nothing to say that it cannot happen elsewhere. North Wales Police seems to have been quite effective recently in trying to stop other schemes being created, as there are 15 different reporting schemes across a particular area of north Wales. North Wales Police worked with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender group in Anglesey, which was about to create its own scheme and asked the group, 'Why do you want to do that; why don't you do this instead?' That particular link has been quite effective. We have had reports through the organisation, and we are able to work with it and give feedback as to how many cases we have had each month. So, we can work in partnership with those local organisations.

[117] In our submission, I also mentioned that we have received certain cases that we are not geared up to deal with. We are based in Cardiff and are therefore not geared up to provide support services for someone living in west Wales. So, we work with local organisations to provide that support. We have directed people to the Valleys Regional Equality Council and to Race Equality First, whose office is in Cardiff. We are trying to link people to the organisations that can provide the services that we cannot.

[118] **Ann Jones:** I am quite interested in the training in north Wales and I am pleased to hear about it as I believe that we need to work across Wales and not be south-Wales specific. Sometimes, we get bogged down in what is happening in south Wales. However, I was more interested in the fact that you have been doing some training. We heard from witnesses last week that disability awareness training should be provided for front-line staff in any organisation. That came over quite strongly. Have you found whether or not that disability awareness training is preventive and whether or not it works? You mentioned some good practice in north Wales, but how do we share this good practice?

11.00 a.m.

[119] **Mr Williams:** The sessions that I am currently running are about all forms of hate

crime, so it is not just restricted to disability-related harassment. However, we use case studies and put people in the scenario of being victims of hate crime to see how that felt for them. That work is being done with public sector and third sector organisations at present. I also work in schools where I talk about disability-related cases. However, we at Safer Wales are not really the experts to enable people to better understand the issues that affect people with disabilities; from working with other organisations, I know that other people are better able to do that. It is difficult to say whether what we have done has reduced the number of cases, and it is a difficulty of our project in that on the one hand we are trying to increase reporting, but on the other hand we are trying to do something to stop it from happening. So, we do not know how to measure our success. We currently measure our success by getting more reports in, but there will come a point when we will want to start to see things settling and the number of reports coming down.

[120] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** One thing that we are seeing from the work that Mark has been doing with schools is a shift in the attitude of young people who are reporting an increased awareness. Although we cannot relate that directly to answer the question as to whether that will reduce hate crime, we would anticipate that there will be some levels of correlation further down the line. The reports that we are getting from young people are positive; Mark sees shifts in attitudes happening in front of him in terms of how they start off talking and how they are talking by the end of the session.

[121] **Joyce Watson:** It is great that you spread the message in schools, but I think that there are two messages regarding the outcome and how to deal with it. A lot of hate crime can be packaged differently, so it could be packaged as bullying by the perpetrator—I am not necessarily talking about the younger age group in school, but the more senior age group where they would know that what they are committing is a hate crime. However, it might be preferable for the school for it to be packaged as bullying. Have you had any opportunity to unpick that?

[122] **Mr Williams:** In the discussions that I have with young people in sessions, I talk about verbal abuse and name-calling, what that is about and what bullying is. So, I am doing that—I am having those discussions. This is why that I think that the work that we are doing in schools is key, because I see that today's bully is tomorrow's hate crime perpetrator. The bullying that is going on in school is hate crime when it is targeted against a minority identity.

[123] **Ms Bowen-Thomson:** There was a situation where Mark went into a school and worked with the teaching staff to heighten their awareness, because some of the teaching staff can become victims of hate crime perpetrated by young people. You can imagine the complexity of the issues that that can raise and Mark has done some work in schools where that has been the case. However, there is an issue that it could easily be described as bullying, but it is more positive if a school recognises when a hate crime is going on, just like when they recognise that bullying is going on. It is important that that is seen as a positive move for schools, as opposed to sweeping it under the carpet and not dealing with it.

[124] **Ann Jones:** I see that there are no other questions. I thank you both for coming in to give evidence, which has been very useful. We will send you a copy of the transcript for you to check for factual accuracy so that we have not put anything down that you did not say. Thank you both very much.

[125] We move on to the next evidence session with the Welsh Local Government Association. Joining us at the table are Naomi Alleyne, director of equalities and social justice at the WLGA, and David Morgan, the equalities policy officer; you are both welcome. Naomi, you have been to committee meetings several times before, so you will know the format. We are undertaking a short inquiry based on the EHRC's report on disability-related harassment and crime. We have received your paper; do you have brief opening comments to

make or do you want to go straight to our questions?

[126] **Ms Alleyne:** We are content to go straight to questions.

[127] **Ann Jones:** We have heard that leadership is a key factor in addressing disability-related harassment. To what extent can local authorities play that leadership role in tackling disability-related harassment? How can the Welsh Government support local authorities to do so?

[128] **Ms Alleyne:** Our paper highlights the fact that local authorities have a community leadership role and a lead responsibility in establishing a number of fora and partnerships where disability-related hate crime could and should be addressed. The examples that we highlighted in our evidence are the community safety partnership, the community cohesion strategies and the disability equality schemes that will be in place until next April, when authorities will be required to develop their strategic equality plans. Not only do local authorities have a leadership role around the strategies and partnerships that are in place, but there is also a key role to play in the services that they provide or commission. These, in turn, have a key role to play in challenging disability-related harassment, supporting the victims and dealing with the perpetrators. There is an opportunity for local authorities to undertake that leadership role. One aspect that I have not mentioned is the role of the local service board, where you bring together a range of partners and are able to identify priorities for action and to monitor progress.

[129] Turning to the second part of your question, on what the Welsh Government can do, it is about the encouragement, information and statistics that need to be available. I am sure that we will come on to the issue of the underreporting of these types of incidents. It is about how we collect that information on an all-Wales basis and ensure that there is also a comprehensive understanding of those incidents at a local level. Local authorities would be more than happy to work with the Welsh Government, as we see that a partnership approach is required by devolved and non-devolved bodies if we are to tackle the issue effectively.

[130] **Ann Jones:** Your paper gives examples of local authority practices, but I note that there is nothing from north Wales. Are you telling me that north Wales is not doing anything to address this situation?

[131] **Ms Alleyne:** No; that is not the case, and David has picked up on this matter. The paper provides examples that were given to us by the authorities. David has done a lot of work with authorities in north Wales and probably has more of an awareness of the work that is ongoing in that area.

[132] **Mr Morgan:** One of the key developments in north Wales at the moment is the recognition of these issues in strategic equality plans while looking to the future. One of the related issues is an awareness of some of the good work that has been done on reporting, and the different options, media and ways of reporting that have been developed in Wrexham in particular. Part of the approach taken in north Wales is a group that consists of all of the local authorities, the health boards, North Wales Police and other bodies to develop strategic equality objectives around hate crime, with a specific reference to disability harassment. Part of the group's aim is to get to a position where the communication of information between the local authority and police force can be done in a more consistent way. It is also about learning from experience; for example, third-party reporting or alternative ways of reporting in the Wrexham area are deemed to be particularly good examples of good practice.

[133] **Ann Jones:** Thank you for your answer. I will not pursue that issue any further; I could wax lyrical about it, but I will not.

[134] **Mike Hedges:** I wish to address the issue of sharing data, or specifically, my wish to see the creation of shared databases that could be shared by many organisations and belong equally to them. I am aware that, within local authorities themselves, there are difficulties in terms of sharing data between different departments. If you could create shared databases, as opposed to having a data-sharing protocol, everybody would have equal ownership of those data. Do you see any advantages in that?

[135] I also wish to talk about councillors, who are an unused resource for local authorities. Why can vulnerable adults not be given a list of local councillors, so that if they have a problem, they have someone whom they can contact? This is a simple thing. The relevant information exists within local authorities, so why can it not be given out to people when they are being housed or when they are being dealt with by social services?

[136] **Ms Alleyne:** There are issues related to the sharing of information and we will all be aware of some of the difficulties that can be caused by that. We are awaiting further guidance from the Welsh Government about overcoming some of the issues around not sharing information. It is critical, in terms of ensuring that organisations can work together and have the information that they require to provide support in a holistic and joined-up way.

[137] Regarding shared databases, I am not an IT expert. I can certainly see the sense in being able to have access to similar information at that time. One example to highlight in relation to some of the ways of creating or gaining better information across a local authority is the Ffynnon project, which is operating at the moment. It is more of a performance management tool than a data-sharing tool, but it certainly means that local authority staff input data and it is therefore possible to make nice graphs and correlate the data across different services to get a full report on them. More recently, some of the police forces and the fire and rescue services are also using the same system for performance management data. Therefore, although I am not an IT expert, I believe that there may be some scope for sharing and accessing information as you would through Ffynnon, because it is the same system that is used by a number of organisations.

[138] I take the point wholly about the unused resource of elected members. Obviously, the contact details of elected members are available publicly. So, availing a vulnerable person of the personal contact details of their local councillors and others who would have a role in those issues seems like a reasonable suggestion. I would just like to mention that we have been working with councillors from Neath Port Talbot and Swansea over the last six to nine months. We have an action learning set for them that looks at their interaction on a whole range of equality issues. Part of that training involved bringing in people from diverse groups to have face-to-face discussions on their experiences and the barriers and challenges that they face, so that councillors are more aware of what those issues are. That was a really effective way of sharing information, with people thinking, 'Oh, I never knew that,' or learning something about how small changes can have a big impact.

[139] **Mike Hedges:** There is another current Swansea councillor here, apart from me. I was unaware of that, but I do not know whether Peter Black was aware of it.

[140] **Peter Black:** I assume that you were working—*[Inaudible.]*

[141] **Ann Jones:** I think that that is an outside issue and we will not go into it. I want to ask one question. Local authority departments within the same local authority area often do not share data. How can we ask others to share data when you have a situation where a social services department will not talk to an education department about a particular family and their needs? Is there not a role for the WLGA, in the first instance, to ensure that local authority departments share their data, before we try to ensure that data is shared elsewhere?

[142] **Ms Alleyne:** I would imagine that it is frustrating to not be able to share data. There are probably many examples where the sharing of data could have helped a great deal in terms of dealing with certain problems. We have looked for opportunities to address those sorts of issues in future. The projects around Families First spring to mind. Those will be bringing together and co-locating a range of agencies, including internal departments—

11.15 a.m.

[143] **Ann Jones:** That will only work if local authority departments have the mindset that they must share the information. That is the problem, is it not?

[144] **Mr Morgan:** You are quite right that the will needs to be there, but there are also methods of creating that will and sense of ownership. One thing that we can contribute is that, with the new equality legislation and the new strategic equality plans, the fact that there is a need to focus on hate crime and harassment is something that has been picked up by the majority of authorities. These plans are strategic with a whole authority. Ways of taking those forward will be discussed within the whole authority, bringing the different departments together, asking how they can contribute to the fulfilment of the objectives. In relation to an objective on tackling hate crime, in most local authorities, we would certainly be talking about all the local authority departments having the discussion on that objective. Also, in north Wales, you have the wider partnership with a shared objective. In south-west Wales, they are discussing the possibilities of shared objectives—whether that will be Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and South Wales Police and whether it will be expanded to include Dyfed-Powys Police and Carmarthen. It is all at an early stage. It provides a forum in which people are going to begin to discuss these things. In a way, the finger is going to be pointed at people and they will be asked, ‘How can you contribute to this agenda?’ So, that should help the flow of information.

[145] **Peter Black:** I want to move on from data sharing to more fundamental communication. We have had information from the EHRC and others about the way that hate crime is being reported and the fact that information has not been shared or passed on. Vulnerable people in particular have not been identified and action has not been taken in relation to that. In particular, they have talked about reports made to housing providers—which would include local authorities as well as social landlords—the police, health bodies through the hospitals, and social workers. I am concerned because I always understood that there was a protocol with regard to the sharing of information in relation to the identification of vulnerable adults with particular agencies so that, when an incident arises in any one of those agencies, and someone is flagged up as a vulnerable adult, the other agencies are notified so that co-ordinated action can be taken. The evidence that we have had to date seems to indicate that that is not working. Is that right?

[146] **Ms Alleyne:** I am sorry, but I will need to provide a note on that specific question with regard to the protocol, because that would probably fall to another colleague. I think that there are issues with communication and issues with people identifying these cases. I think that you were hearing from Safer Wales that, in some cases, these incidents may be recorded as anti-social behaviour rather than the aggravating factors or the vulnerability of the individual involved being flagged up. It is quite funny in a way, because I think that we need to learn a lot of lessons from the way we have tackled racial harassment and homophobic harassment and crime over the past few years. Some of these structures are in place, but they do not necessarily cover all aspects of hate crime. The EHRC report reflects that, as this is a daily occurrence for disabled people, the issue has not had the profile that it requires. It also reflects the fact that, when individual cases are reported, the same process of sharing information does not automatically kick in.

[147] There is a great deal of guidance on anti-social behaviour and the need to ensure that

all agencies are informed. Going back a number of years, we have seen that there are some examples—although not across Wales—of case conferences being held regularly at which agencies bring together the reports that they have received, to try to match reports that have gone to other agencies in order to get the full picture. Probably, you are not getting enough of that sharing of information. It is not seen as an opportunity to identify where else people may have experienced harassment in order to ensure a holistic approach. So, I think that there are issues to do with communication and ensuring that, when someone receives an individual report, they automatically consider who else they need to make aware of that. There is some work ongoing. I think that one of the examples in the report was of the work in Swansea to develop that further, particularly because, although they have a form for reporting disability harassment, there are no reported incidences within a given year. So, they need to take a step back and ask how they can encourage people to report and how, once they have got the information, they can ensure that everyone else who is required to know is aware of that information. I will provide a note to the committee on the protocol, if that is okay.

[148] **Peter Black:** In a sense, it does not really matter whether it is identified as anti-social behaviour. If someone is flagged up as a vulnerable adult and an incident is reported in relation to that person, that information should be passed on then so that other people can make the judgment on what type of crime it was. I am concerned about this. Once, I sat in at the 101 centre in Cardiff. A call came in about an incident in a house and the operator said that the person had been flagged up on the local authority record as being on the at-risk register, so the police were dispatched much more quickly. I understood that that sort of protocol applied with regard to vulnerable adults. We need to see that in place. I understand that you are going find out more information on that, but I am interested to know whether that is how you think things should work in terms of social services co-ordinating that sort of thing.

[149] **Ms Alleyne:** One of the examples in the paper was from Blaenau Gwent, which uses that flagging system to ensure that that information is passed on. I will certainly provide a note on that in more detail.

[150] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning, and thanks for your paper. I want to ask some questions about awareness raising. You have mentioned some examples in your paper. In particular, you referred to the training of local authority front-line staff. Is it realistic to expect local authorities to deliver that training on that scale, given their budgets? What training is currently taking place in local authorities on this issue?

[151] **Mr Morgan:** On local authorities having responsibility for that, I think that it is reasonable that they train their staff on these things. At times, it causes concerns about budgets for training departments and which elements of the local authority are responsible for the costs. So, there are perhaps questions there. However, with regard to the delivery of training and some of the examples of how it takes place, there is not one consistent approach. There are some very good examples. In Caerphilly, for example, the training that is done on disability awareness is provided by the local access group. So, it is delivered by people with a very direct knowledge and expertise on the subject. That is a good example in that it opens up wider possibilities. The training that it delivers is open to people from other local authorities, people from community groups and their own staff.

[152] There may also be a distinction to be made between the situation in social services departments, where training is quite specific and deals with these issues in detail, and training in other parts of the councils, where there may be less departmental emphasis on the training and perhaps a more corporate approach. So, there may be different levels of training and expertise on disability issues and harassment in different departments.

[153] **Ms Alleyne:** Training and awareness raising can be done in different ways, so it is



not always about the resource provided. We have tried to build up and support the development of the capacity within local authorities with regard to training officers so that they are equipped with the knowledge, the experience and the skills to deliver that training in-house. It is always useful to directly involve disability groups, because, if there is a payment, there will be money going back to support their work. As David said, it is about having those people who have the expertise and who can share their personal experiences.

[154] Picking up on one thing that Mark from Safer Wales said, it is about having a case-study approach. You can talk people through an example of an incident that could happen and what actions should be taken, and then compare against what actions were taken, the failings and whether improvements need to be made. However, in terms of looking at information, how do you then disseminate that information? Of course, you can share that information and what you have learned with colleagues in team meetings, but we also need to look at more innovative and different ways of disseminating that information, rather than just in that formal, sitting down in a room, training-session setting.

[155] **Joyce Watson:** A question has been raised several times by two different organisations today of using councillors or elected members as a resource. Most of these cases will be very local, so is there a case for councillors and elected members to have training, so that this is at least on their radar and for them to be able to ask questions accordingly? We know that newly elected councillors receive a raft of training in their inductions, such as training on issues around child abuse, but should this training also be available to all councillors, not just the newly elected?

[156] **Ms Alleyne:** Yes. Local authorities with newly elected members develop their own induction processes, but the WLGA provides a whole range of induction resources. There are courses on equality issues and community safety issues, either which would be relevant to pick up these types of issues. It is about understanding the experiences of residents within their area; not necessarily having all the answers, but knowing where to seek support and assistance on behalf of constituents. The Equality and Human Rights Commissions report states the need to work with disabled people to encourage the reporting of cases, but unless people feel confident and able to report, and know how and who to report to—because not everyone knows who their local councillor is—we cannot respond. So, we need to make this process as easy as possible so that people, when they have had that experience, know who to report it to. I know that a lot of existing councillors also undertake that training, because they find it useful to refresh themselves with the current issues. As I said, the EHRC report states some of the key issues that need to be addressed going forward.

[157] **Joyce Watson:** We have talked about data, and data on tenants should be available, because you will have records on social housing. How many successful outcomes have you had for victims of disability hate crime? What we all want to know is whether we are dealing with the perpetrators or just moving the problem.

11.30 a.m.

[158] **Ms Alleyne:** If you are referring to the opportunity for tenants to be evicted on the basis of their anti-social behaviour or their criminal activity, then, yes, it is clear within tenancy agreements that that behaviour will not be tolerated and that the end result could be that people lose their tenancy. We would hope that earlier intervention, in challenging people and telling them about the effect of their behaviour, would help to nip that in the bud, but, as you know, there is a hard core of people who will never respond to that kind of intervention. I am not aware of any successful evictions in the past year in Wales on the basis of either hate crime or harassment. Formal eviction proceedings can be time-consuming and costly. You are right that it is often easier to say to someone who is experiencing harassment, ‘Do you want to move? If you no longer feel safe or happy in this area, we can transfer you elsewhere’.

However, you are right, that transfers the victim, but does not deal with the core of the problem. If you then put someone else who is vulnerable in that household the cycle can happen two or three times. More needs to be done to ensure that the actions arising from the tenancy agreements are taken forward. We would welcome discussions with the RSL sector and housing bodies about whether something could be done to make that process easier, because it is time-consuming and expensive.

[159] An example was given in the EHRC report of someone putting a tape recorder on when they left their house because they wanted to record what was going on. The issue there is that, while that may make that person feel a bit safer and that they are taking some action to protect themselves, it is questionable as to whether that evidence could be used in court. Getting the level of evidence that is required can be time-consuming. We have seen that, when cameras have been put into people's properties to record what is going on outside, there have been issues about whether that is suitable for use as evidence. A debate needs to take place with the criminal justice agencies so that we can gather the evidence required for the court case to enable evictions to take place. However, it is about what you can do prior to that, because that is a time-consuming and long process.

[160] **Mr Morgan:** [*Inaudible.*] At one of our consultation events, we had hate crime officers from South Wales Police who work with registered social landlords in Rhondda Cynon Taf as speakers on this very issue. They were keen to discuss the issues. They talked about the way in which registered social landlords had communicated where there was a problem of communication with tenants. Things had not got to the point of eviction and the legal process, but that had had a positive effect, they felt. The police also raised circumstances—there might have been a number of cases, I am not sure; they would have the details—in which they had found it necessary to move the victim rather than the perpetrator. This was a case in which there was not sufficient evidence to identify the specific perpetrator and there was a possibility that a number of people had caused problems for that individual. With some regret, it was felt that that was the only thing to do in that particular case. They are keen to discuss the work that they have done in Rhondda Cynon Taf, so that might be another source of information for you.

[161] **Gwyn R. Price:** What evidence is there that we are going out to schools and getting our message across at an early age? We have taken evidence this morning that today's bully can be tomorrow's hate crime perpetrator. Is there evidence that we are getting out into schools and tackling this at a young age?

[162] **Mr Morgan:** My knowledge and involvement in relation to schools and bullying is limited. So, I will tell you what I am aware of, but I am not necessarily the best person, at the moment, to give you all the details. We can come back to you with a paper with more detail on that. I am aware of things such as Safer Wales's engagement with schools, but also of a recognition or, almost, a demand from schools to engage as part of the process of complying with the new equality legislation, to discuss their own equality plans. Within that in particular, one of their highest priorities is bullying, across the range of protected characteristics. That will include disability-related bullying, so I would say that, from the work that I have been involved in, in terms of speaking primarily to local authorities about how they may go on then to support schools—so I am not at the centre of this—there has certainly been a number of times a demand within schools, and a willingness within schools, to tackle bullying in relation to protected characteristics, including disability. There is guidance coming from the Welsh Government in relation to bullying, and people are hoping and expecting to take those things forward as part of addressing the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. There is a willingness to take those things forward. In terms of information about what is going on at the moment, and where the best practice is, we will probably have to get back to you with something on paper.

[163] **Ann Jones:** A note to committee would be fine.

[164] **Gwyn R. Price:** You have talked about local government and leadership, and I think that local government and schools are very close and, as you said earlier on, Chair, about sharing best practice, I think early intervention in schools is the way forward, and I look forward to your paper.

[165] **Mark Isherwood:** We have heard about weaknesses in cross-departmental working, for example. How do we ensure that, in managing change, it is not simply structural, but cultural? We do not want to replace one set of silos with another. For example, you mentioned the leadership role that the Welsh Government can play. How, if at all, should it then be monitoring? Should it be governance by throwing a dart and hoping that it hits a target, or should it be by boomerang, knowing that it will come back, hopefully with some information that will tell you what is working well and what needs to be differently? Secondly, we have heard a lot of reference to training, but that is simply an event that should be part of an embedded outcome-focused process. How do we change cultures so that that training becomes part of a performance-management process within which these issues are embedded? The issues need to be owned by individual members of staff, whether they are a senior officer or lower grade—it does not matter. Finally, just to comment on the data sharing, there is a precedent, which I know that Ann is familiar with, in the fire and rescue service, particularly in north Wales. A number of years ago it wanted to create a shared dataset to identify people at highest risk of fire, and was told initially that data protection was a barrier. However, a way was found to do it on a multi-agency basis, so perhaps there is a precedent.

[166] **Ms Alleyne:** I am aware of the work that the fire and rescue services, in particular, wanted to undertake, working in partnership to prevent fire deaths in the home. That was the driver. If they have managed to crack it, then yes, there are opportunities for us to learn what it was that unblocked, if you like, those concerns over data sharing. We need to monitor the outcomes and the impact of what we do, particularly around some of the harassment cases, from the low-level harassment that can be reported right through to some of the more serious cases that happen. At the moment, I am not aware that the Welsh Government requires any information from local authorities on how they have tackled hate crime. There is no requirement to provide information. There may be for schools, in relation to the cases of bullying that are reported, but, in terms of how many cases there have been within housing or other departments, I am not aware that there is a requirement for that to be sent to the Welsh Government. Nonetheless, what would be happening is that some authorities—I cannot guarantee that is all of them—would be collecting data. Going back to the original point, whether the data are analysed on a multi-agency basis is where the system is letting us down, because we cannot monitor the outcomes across. You might be able to monitor the intervention that you provided, but, in terms of providing a holistic, joined-up approach—because, very often, the incidents will be happening in the home, possibly in school, and on the streets—there is a range of agencies with a role in supporting victims.

[167] With regard to the importance of evaluating schemes, I will give you an example of where some of that best practice could be identified and shared. I mentioned earlier that most local authorities have a community cohesion strategy, which sets out how they will promote community cohesion in their areas. Good relations with disabled people is one of the priority areas within that. The Welsh Government is in the process of evaluating community cohesion strategy across Wales: what it has been able to achieve and what is different as a consequence. It monitors the effectiveness of the projects that it is funding under their community cohesion schemes. It is an 18-month to two-year project for the Welsh Government, and it will be interesting to see whether we can pull out from that evaluation the work that is being done specifically on disability-related harassment across Wales and the way in which the impact of those projects is being evaluated.

[168] **Mark Isherwood:** And the training?

[169] **Ms Alleyne:** I am sorry, what was the question on training?

[170] **Mark Isherwood:** How do we ensure that training is not just an event, but is part of an outcome-focused process?

[171] **Ms Alleyne:** It is very difficult. Every time our training manager delivers a training course, she hands out what she calls 'happy sheets', which ask how people found the training and what changes they will make as a result of the training. What we try to do—although I cannot say that we are successful in every case—is to undertake a six-month evaluation. So, six months after someone has attended a training course, they are sent a form to ask what impact the training had and what changes they have made as a result of attending that training course. The idea is that we will gain more information about the impact that that has had on individuals. We have more anecdotal evidence from some of the training courses because some people have chosen to e-mail my colleague to say, for example, 'Since the training, I have not stopped thinking about it, and I have done such-and-such work with my team'. So, we sometimes get feedback about the changes that have happened.

[172] We want willingness on someone's part to attend a training course. If someone does not want to be there, you might as well forget it; they are only going through the motions. Those who choose to be there are choosing to learn. It is about the changes that they can make. As I said, it is very often about how you share what you have learned with colleagues. So, you are not just changing your behaviour, but influencing others. However, more work needs to be done to evaluate the impact of that training over time. A step-by-step approach is needed. We need to ensure that the training is in place, that it is of good quality, and that it is delivering the messages that are required. As I said, we often use disability organisations to deliver training because we do not have the expertise to do so and, for people to be able to respond to the issues, they need specific information. So, more work is still needed on that.

[173] **Mark Isherwood:** I would like to make a short comment on that point. Performance management is not about an annual appraisal, a training scheme being completed or a qualification achieved, it is an ongoing communication and dialogue, seeking agreement, agreeing on action, and monitoring that performance. Therefore, when someone attends a course, should that information not be going to their line manager, whoever that might be, for that person to embed that in the performance management of that individual or that team of people?

[174] **Mr Morgan:** There is a real opportunity here. We mentioned earlier how useful case studies can be. They are useful where ongoing cases are discussed by multiple agencies and, as things develop with particular cases, it is possible to evaluate your approach and the system that is in place for dealing with such matters and it is possible to learn from that experience. It is also useful to gather case studies after the event and share them between authorities in different localities. That allows you to challenge the current systems that are in place by looking at the case studies and, halfway through the year, if a particular incident has occurred in a neighbouring authority, it is possible to consider how the other authority would have dealt with that under its system and whether it would have achieved anything more. So, there is a real role for collecting these case studies and putting them into a format that would allow them to be easily shared without causing any complications in terms of data protection law or any of the other potential downsides.

[175] In terms of sharing case studies, it would mean practitioners could see and become more familiar with what has happened elsewhere, and allow them to challenge their current processes and procedures against that knowledge and experience of real events. There is a real

opportunity for that to happen, and it is something that I would wish to recommend.

[176] **Ann Jones:** No-one else has indicated that they wish to speak, so I thank you both for coming in to give evidence and for your paper as well. You know that we will send you a copy of the transcript for you to check for factual accuracy. Thank you very much for your evidence today.

11.45 a.m.

### **Cynnig Gweithdrefnol Procedural Motion**

[177] **Ann Jones:** I move that

*the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 17.42.*

[178] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.  
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11.46 a.m.  
The public part of the meeting ended at 11.46 a.m.*