



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

Y Pwyllgor Craffu ar Waith y Prif Weinidog **The Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister**

Dydd Mercher, 27 Chwefror 2013
Wednesday, 27 February 2013

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Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r Cyfarfod
Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Meeting

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

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

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol **Committee members in attendance**

David Melding	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Conservatives (Committee Chair)
Paul Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Mark Drakeford	Llafur Labour

Elin Jones	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Eluned Parrott	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Kate Cassidy	Cyfarwyddwr, Cymunedau a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, Llywodraeth Cymru Director for Communities and Social Justice, Welsh Government
Carwyn Jones	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (Prif Weinidog Cymru) Assembly Member, Labour (The First Minister of Wales)
Derek Jones	Yr Ysgrifennydd Parhaol, Llywodraeth Cymru Permanent Secretary, Welsh Government
Eleanor Marks	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr yr Is-adran Gymunedau, Llywodraeth Cymru Deputy Director, Communities Division, Welsh Government
Marion Stapleton	Pennaeth Uned Gyflawni'r Prif Weinidog Head of the First Minister's Delivery Unit

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

Siân Phipps	Clerc Clerc
Richard Johnson	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Graham Winter	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil The Research Service

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 11.00 a.m.
The meeting began at 11.00 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **David Melding:** Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister. I will start with the housekeeping announcements before I introduce the First Minister and his officials. We do not expect a routine fire drill, so if we hear the alarm, please follow the instructions of the ushers, who will help us to leave the building safely. These proceedings will be conducted in Welsh and English. When Welsh is spoken, a translation will be available on channel 1. Channel 0 will amplify our proceedings. Please switch off all electronic equipment completely, as it can interfere with the broadcasting equipment, even when left on 'silent'.

11.02 a.m.

Uned Gyflawni'r Prif Weinidog
The First Minister's Delivery Unit

[2] **David Melding:** It is a great pleasure to welcome Carwyn Jones, the First Minister, to the second meeting of the scrutiny committee. We found the first meeting to be very helpful and useful. We welcome your presence this morning to talk about two important subjects: the operation of the delivery unit and progress on the reduction of child poverty. I

welcome your officials: Marion Stapleton and the Permanent Secretary, Derek Jones. I do not think that I need to explain anything to the First Minister or your officials about how we are going to operate. We have a range of questions and I will ask each Member to pose a number of questions and then there may be various supplementary questions to follow. We will start with the issue of the delivery unit, and I ask Eluned Parrott to put the first set of questions to the First Minister.

[3] **Eluned Parrott:** First Minister, thank you for your paper; I found it very interesting. When you established the delivery unit, I had imagined it being a performance-monitoring mechanism for the work of Government departments. However, I note that, in paragraph 14, for example, you talk about the role that the unit has in testing whether our core policies are sufficiently robust. Will you explain to us the balance that the delivery unit has between being a performance-monitoring mechanism and its policy development role?

[4] **The First Minister (Carwyn Jones):** The First Minister is the only person in the Government who has an overarching role. The job of the delivery unit is to act as the First Minister's direct eyes and ears in each department. The job of the unit is not to deliver in itself but to ensure that others deliver. As part of that work, the unit will look at the manifesto of the governing party and the programme for government and will assess that what is due to be delivered will be delivered. That will involve looking at the robustness of delivery and its timing.

[5] **Eluned Parrott:** So, it is less about policy development? Your paper talks about challenging whether policies in and of themselves are likely to respond to emerging challenges and changing needs: is that a lesser role for the unit?

[6] **The First Minister:** Not in terms of policy development; that is a job for individual departments. There will be some cross-cutting issues on which the unit will provide me with reports from time to time, but its job is to ensure that delivery occurs rather than to deliver itself, or indeed to develop policy. That is primarily the role of individual departments.

[7] **Eluned Parrott:** You said in your answer that, in and of itself, its role is to ensure that others are delivering policy objectives, which makes monitoring the effectiveness of the delivery unit a little complex because, obviously, you are monitoring outcomes from a third party and the effectiveness of that partnership. It says in your statement that you do not think that it will be possible to determine what impact the unit has had until the end of this Assembly term because it is looking at longer term outcomes. How do you intend to measure success and what kind of indicators are you looking at?

[8] **The First Minister:** It would be incorrect to say that the delivery unit deals with a third party: it is intrinsically part of Government. I will use the following analogy: if we consider the Welsh Government to be a car, the delivery unit is the on-board computer. It tells the driver if there are problems, it tells the driver how well the car is performing, but you cannot judge the car's performance based entirely on what the on-board computer is doing as it does not drive the car. Therefore, the job of the delivery unit is to ensure that delivery takes place. How is that judged? It is judged when the Government delivers on the programme for government at the end of its term. That judgment remains with the Assembly and the people of Wales. The job of the delivery unit, ultimately, is to ensure that the programme for government is delivered. It is on that basis that the delivery unit and the Government of which it is an intrinsic part will be judged.

[9] **Eluned Parrott:** Going through your paper, one of the interesting points for me is looking at the idea of performance and effectiveness. You go through at length the kind of things that the unit is doing and its successes. You say that it

[10] 'is able to identify practices or behaviours which could be potential barriers to the delivery of our core priorities.'

[11] You talk about things like encouraging officials to readjust their thinking to suit changing needs, challenging bureaucracy and ensuring that process is not getting in the way of delivery. There is an awful lot of work there but it also gives a picture of a civil service that was dysfunctional before you introduced the delivery unit, if you think that there are behaviours and practices that are barriers to delivery, for example. Was it a serious concern for you that there were significant failings in the civil service as you found it?

[12] **The First Minister:** No. If you compare it, for example, to what happens in Whitehall where there are physical barriers between departments, we are a model of cross-cutting working. That said, in any large organisation there will be occasions when there will be a need to ensure that any barriers that may appear are taken down. That is inevitable. We have 140 policy divisions. That is why it is important that, in my role, I can take an overarching view and that I have a mechanism that can identify any potential issues before they arise. If you ask me whether any organisation is perfect, that is clearly not the case. That is why we have a system such as the delivery unit to ensure that if any issues arise—sometimes they are unintentional—we understand who is responsible for what. Sometimes the boundaries are not clear, as is inevitable in a large organisation. Those matters are dealt with as early as possible.

[13] **Eluned Parrott:** Identifying practices and behaviours that are barriers to delivery is a serious concern. Can you give us some examples where the delivery unit has identified such things and set them right?

[14] **The First Minister:** I clearly cannot conduct the business of government in public, but there have been occasions when the delivery unit has drawn some potential issues to my attention, which are then resolved at the earliest possible time. I think that Derek wanted to come in on this point, with your permission, Chair.

[15] **Mr Jones:** I will only add that, where the delivery unit identifies those kinds of issues, it is not left alone to try to resolve them. That is a role for me. In the context of the programme for government, if the delivery unit spots something that needs to be improved, it can turn immediately to the Permanent Secretary to help it achieve that. I must also say that we are not a perfect Government machine and there is plenty of work for me to do as a new Permanent Secretary to improve our efficiency.

[16] **Eluned Parrott:** What kind of cross-cutting issues is the delivery unit focusing on? Many of the key challenges for the Welsh Government are interdepartmental, which in itself is a challenge for the administration.

[17] **The First Minister:** I can offer some examples. First, dealing with the issue of people not in education, employment or training, we have looked at tackling poverty and tackling disadvantage, particularly for those with additional needs and issues such as Communities First and regeneration. These are all issues that cut across different departments, so it is important to ensure that there is sufficient co-ordination in order to deliver. That is what the delivery unit is able to do.

[18] **Eluned Parrott:** In looking at the role of the delivery unit in supporting and monitoring the work of individual departments, are performance delivery reports

produced for every one of the Government's departments? Are there formal structures that then report to you on an annual basis, for example, or is it more ad hoc and informal than that?

[19] **The First Minister:** I receive regular briefings from different members of the delivery unit. Those briefings then form the basis for the regular meetings that I have with Ministers. That is the way in which any issues are raised with me and they are then discussed during the course of those meetings. I would not expect the unit to produce a report itself, because the delivery unit's job is to ensure that the programme for government is facilitated, but the unit is able to provide me with the briefing that I need in order to discuss various issues with individual Ministers when I have those meetings.

[20] **Eluned Parrott:** That brings us back to the idea that one difficulty that the delivery unit will have, in terms of justifying its reason for being, is that it is reliant on the work of many other people to demonstrate the effectiveness of what it has been able to achieve. Therefore, if the delivery unit is not producing regular reports, what are you measuring it against? Who is measuring the delivery unit's effectiveness?

[21] **The First Minister:** It does produce regular briefings for me and, as a result of those briefings, I am able to discuss and examine carefully what is happening in each department. Drawing on the analogy that I gave earlier, it is a system whereby any potential problems are indicated and where the overall performance of Government can be assessed by me, but, of course, the on-board computer does not drive the car; it just ensures that the car is as efficient as possible, which is an important part of our business. Nevertheless, its job is to ensure that the programme for government is delivered. You asked the question: how do you judge the effectiveness of the delivery unit? The way to judge that is on the delivery of the programme for government.

[22] **Eluned Parrott:** Has there been any sense that there is conflict or obstruction from the departments in terms of the delivery unit's work? One way of looking at it is as your 'on-board computer', but another way of looking at it is 'the First Minister's lieutenants in our department ensuring that we are doing what we have been asked to do in the way that we have been asked to do it.' Has there been any sense of obstruction or conflict, or any sense of unhappiness from senior officials in those departments?

[23] **The First Minister:** The way that you describe it, it is not necessarily a bad thing in Government.

[24] **Eluned Parrott:** I did not say it was, but I asked whether there was a cause for conflict.

[25] **The First Minister:** If you were to ask me if there was some unease at the beginning, that may be correct. However, now that the system is well established, it is well understood. At first, people did not understand what a delivery unit was meant to do because there had never been one before.

[26] **Eluned Parrott:** Are your Ministers comfortable with it and happy to work alongside it?

[27] **The First Minister:** Yes they are and so they should be. It helps them too because it provides them with an extra level of occasional challenge or occasional advice. It means that, in my meetings with Ministers, we are able to look at issues as they arise and work through them.

[28] **Eluned Parrott:** When we come to the end of the Assembly term and you are finally assessing the delivery unit's impact, is there not a sense of inherent conflict in the fact that the delivery unit's existence is predicated on the performance of others and that if there is potentially conflict between the power at the top of the department and the delivery unit itself, there is potential for its effectiveness to be difficult to measure objectively?

[29] **The First Minister:** There is no conflict between the delivery unit and the individual departments. However, as I said earlier, the unit is set up to ensure that Government delivers. It is not possible to detach the unit from the rest of Government and to examine what it does on its own; its work is intrinsically linked with the work of Government. As I said, the way to assess the effectiveness of the delivery unit ultimately is to consider how much of the programme for government has been delivered at the end of a Government's term. That will show how effective the delivery unit has been.

[30] **David Melding:** Is there a danger in that methodology that the delivery unit could slip into being a bit of a propaganda unit, because it will want to demonstrate success rather than actually produce the evidence for success, and that it could be dragged into more political interpretations than evidence-based ones?

[31] **The First Minister:** It does not produce evidence. It is for each department to produce its own evidence in terms of indicators.

[32] **David Melding:** It validates the evidence.

[33] **The First Minister:** The evidence has to be validated in many different ways, particularly through scrutiny via the Assembly itself. It is not the job of the delivery unit to produce indicators, but the job of individual departments. However, it is its role to ensure that the indicators are robust, are being followed and to produce and assess the indicators in the annual report. A delivery unit would have no value if it were a cheerleader in that sense; it is there to root out issues and problems and to ensure that they are brought to the attention of relevant Ministers and, ultimately, to me.

11.15 a.m.

[34] **David Melding:** So, you could argue that a better measure of its success is when it produces really quite awkward examples, points the finger and says, 'We have not delivered here'.

[35] **Carwyn Jones:** Yes. I think that that is a fair point. I am sure that that will not be lost on Members of the Assembly, if that is the case.

[36] **David Melding:** We like candid answers.

[37] **Mr Jones:** I absolutely agree with that last point. I had the opportunity that a new Permanent Secretary gets to look with fresh eyes at some of the things around how my organisation works. Is there conflict and obstruction? No. However, there is an edge in these things. I think that that is a healthy edge of non-aligned challenge, as it were, across the organisation. I have also spotted an opportunity to improve the alignment between the work of the delivery unit and the heavy lifting on delivery in the organisation. I have established a group to make sure that we sit around the table as a team, as well as apply that edge so that we are sharing the same information and, if we spot something that really is important that we have to deal with, that we do that collectively.

[38] **Eluned Parrott:** Finally from me, if the role of the delivery unit is to monitor the success of the departments in delivering the programme for government, the delivery unit

itself will be judged on its success in delivering the programme for government. If I were of a cynical mindset—though of course I am not—I might say that it is in the delivery unit's interest to find a lot of problems at the beginning and to find that those problems have been solved by the unit itself towards the end of its judging period. How will you ensure that that will not be the case?

[39] **The First Minister:** I can assure the Member that problems do not all arise at the beginning of a Government's term of office; they arise over the course of any Government's term of office. They cannot be predicted. The delivery unit has to deal with issues as they arise. From my point of view, it is important for me to be able to understand, in terms of an overarching basis, what is happening across Government and to have an early warning system if there are any issues that need to be dealt with. Of course, it is not really possible to create Government departments that are entirely self-contained; there will be fuzzy edges to any of them. The delivery unit is able to examine those fuzzy edges to make sure that, if there are any issues regarding who does what, they are resolved early. At the end of this Government's term, people will judge the Government on the delivery of the programme for government. The delivery unit is absolutely key in delivering that programme.

[40] **David Melding:** I will now ask Paul Davies to lead us through the next range of issues that we want to put to you.

[41] **Paul Davies:** Rwyf am ofyn cwestiynau ynglŷn â sut mae'r uned yn gweithio yn ymarferol. Cyn imi wneud hynny, rwy'n deall mai cost flynyddol yr uned yw tua £0.5 miliwn. Yn eich tyb chi, a yw'r uned gyflawni yn cyflawni gwerth am arian?

Paul Davies: I want to ask questions in relation to the way in which the unit works in practice. Before I do that, I understand that the annual cost of the unit is around £0.5 million. In your opinion, does the delivery unit deliver value for money?

[42] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Rhaid cofio nad yw hwn yn gost ychwanegol, achos ni ddaeth pobl ychwanegol i mewn i'r Llywodraeth. Roedd y bobl sy'n gweithio yn yr uned ddelifro yn gweithio i'r Llywodraeth eisoes, felly nid ydym yn siarad am arian ychwanegol ar ben yr hyn a oedd yn cael ei wario o'r blaen.

The First Minister: You have to bear in mind that this is not an additional cost, because no additional people were brought into the Government. The people working in the delivery unit were already working for the Government, so we are not talking about additional funding on top of what was being spent before.

[43] **Paul Davies:** Sut ydych yn monitro gwerth am arian yr uned honno? A yw'r Gweinidog Cyllid yn ymwneud â monitro effeithlonrwydd yr uned? Os felly, pa mor aml ydych yn cael trafodaethau gyda hi i sicrhau bod yr uned yn effeithiol?

Paul Davies: How do you monitor value for money in relation to that unit? Is the Minister for Finance involved with monitoring the efficiency of the unit? If so, how often do you have discussions with her to ensure that the unit is effective?

[44] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Fy uned i yw hon, wrth gwrs. Nid oes modd arbed arian yn yr uned ei hunan, achos roedd y bobl hynny yn gweithio i'r Llywodraeth beth bynnag. Roeddent yn gweithio i'r Llywodraeth cyn i'r uned gael ei sefydlu. Gwerth yr uned yw sicrhau ei bod yn delio â phethau yn gyflym a sicrhau bod y blaenoriaethau yn y rhaglen lywodraethu yn cael eu cymryd ymlaen. Yn hynny o beth, rwy'n hapus iawn â'r gwaith

The First Minister: This, of course, is my unit. There is no way of saving money in the unit itself, because those individuals were working for the Government anyway. They worked for the Government before the unit was established. The value of the unit is in ensuring that things are dealt with swiftly and also in ensuring that the priorities in the programme for government are taken forward. In that regard, I am very content

sydd wedi cael ei wneud.

with the work that has been done.

[45] **Paul Davies:** Rwy'n deall bod yr uned yn dîm bach, sy'n cynnwys rhyw chwe aelod sy'n adrodd i'r dirprwy gyfarwyddwr. A allwch ddarparu ychydig yn fwy o gefndir am bob un o'r chwe aelod o'r uned gyflawni ac amlinellu eu harbenigedd a pham rydych yn meddwl eu bod yn addas ar gyfer yr uned hon?

Paul Davies: I understand that the unit is a small one that contains around six members of staff who report to the deputy director. Can you tell us a little more about the background of each of these six members of the delivery unit and outline their expertise and why you believe that they are appropriate for this unit?

[46] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Rwyf wedi gweithio gyda'r dirprwy gyfarwyddwr, Marion, am flynyddoedd. Roeddwn yn gwybod mai hi oedd y gorau ar gyfer y swydd, wrth gofio'i record hi yn sicrhau delifro mewn rôl arall, sef yn union yr hyn yr oeddwn yn mo'yn ei weld. O ran yr aelodau eraill, mae cymysgedd o dalentau ganddynt. Maent wedi gweithio mewn sawl rhan o Lywodraeth ac maent yn deall y ffordd y mae Llywodraeth yn gweithio. Trof ar y pwynt hwn at Marion am fwy o fanylion ynglŷn â'r unigolion.

The First Minister: I have worked with the deputy director, Marion, for many years. I knew that she was the best person for the post, bearing in mind her record in ensuring delivery in her previous role, which is exactly what I was looking for. In terms of the other members, they have a mix of talents. They have worked in a number of Government departments and they understand the way that Government works. On this point, I will turn to Marion, who can give more details about the individuals involved.

[47] **Ms Stapleton:** Each member of the unit has come from different parts of the organisation. They are steeped in policy development, they have a great deal of experience in delivering major policies and they came from our looking and at their performance reviews and recommendations from their senior managers.

[48] **Paul Davies:** You mention that they are steeped in policy development, but this unit is there to deliver, not to concentrate on policy. So, are you confident that these people are up to the job of delivering rather than concentrating on policy?

[49] **Ms Stapleton:** Absolutely.

[50] **Paul Davies:** Sonioch yn gynharach eich bod yn cael adroddiadau briffio. A allwch ehangu tipyn bach ar hynny a sut maent yn gweithio?

Paul Davies: You mentioned earlier that you receive briefing reports. Can you expand a little on that and how they work?

[51] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae cyfarfodydd rhyngof a Gweinidogion fel unigolion. Mae'r dogfennau briffio yn dangos i mi beth y dylem eu hystyried yn y cyfarfodydd a pha gwestiynau, ym marn aelodau'r uned, y dylem eu gofyn i Weinidogion, ac mae gwneud hynny yn fy ngalluogi i gadw llygad barcud ar yr hyn sy'n digwydd ym mhob adran ac mae'n ffordd i Weinidogion esbonio yn union yr hyn y maent yn ei wneud i ddelifro'r rhaglen lywodraethu.

The First Minister: Meetings take place between me and individual Ministers. The briefing documents demonstrate to me which areas need to be considered during those meetings and what questions, in the view of the staff of the unit, I should be asking of Ministers, and, in doing so, it is possible for me to keep a close eye on what is happening in each department and it is a means for Ministers to explain exactly what they are doing to deliver the programme for government.

[52] **Paul Davies:** Sut mae staff yr uned

Paul Davies: How do the delivery unit staff

gyflawni yn gweithio gyda swyddogion a Gweinidogion adrannau eraill, yn cynnwys sut mae'r her adeiladol hwn rwy'n credu eich bod yn sôn amdano yn eich papur yn gweithio? A allwch roi tystiolaeth ac enghreifftiau i ni o sut mae hynny'n gweithio?

work with officials and Ministers in other departments, including how that constructive challenge, as I believe that you mention in your paper, works? Can you give us evidence and examples of how that works?

[53] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Trof at Marion mewn munud i roi enghreifftiau, ond mae pob aelod o'r uned yn gweithio mewn adran. Eu rôl yw gweithio gyda'r swyddogion yn yr adran honno ond hefyd i sicrhau bod her yn cael ei roi o'r tu allan i'r adran. Os ydynt yn meddwl bod problem, maent yn tynnu fy sylw ati, ac mae'r broblem honno yn cael ei datrys yn ystod y cyfarfodydd rwy'n eu cael gyda Gweinidogion.

The First Minister: I will turn to Marion in just a second to give examples, but every member of the unit works in a department. Their role is to work with officials in that department, but also to ensure that there is external challenge coming from outside the department. If they identify a problem, they draw my attention to it, and that problem is resolved during the meetings that I have with Ministers.

[54] **Ms Stapleton:** As the First Minister has said, each member of the team covers a particular policy department. So, they have needed to become familiar with the issues and the programmes that they are delivering. They have good working relationships with the senior management team and the deputy directors. They sit on their policy boards and they attend their strategy board meetings, so they are challenging and talking to them on a regular basis about how the policies could be developed and taken forward and whether they are sufficiently ambitious. Those are the types of relationships that they have.

[55] **Paul Davies:** Faint o adroddiadau sydd wedi cael eu cynhyrchu ers 2011, pan sefydlwyd yr uned hon?

Paul Davies: How many reports have been produced since 2011, when this unit was established?

[56] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Ydych chi'n sôn am adroddiadau briffio?

The First Minister: Are you talking about briefing reports?

[57] **Paul Davies:** Ydw.

Paul Davies: Yes.

[58] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae hynny'n digwydd bob tro y mae cyfarfod. Byddwn yn dweud bod rhwng 10 a 15 wedi cael eu cynhyrchu hyd at yn awr—

The First Minister: That happens every time that there is a meeting. I would say that there have been between 10 and 15 to date—

[59] **Ms Stapleton:** Mae mwy na hynny wedi cael eu cynhyrchu.

Ms Stapleton: There have been more than that.

[60] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Bob tro y mae cyfarfod, ac mae cyfarfod pob tymor o leiaf—na, mwy na hynny. Byddwn yn dweud bod dros 20 efallai wedi cael eu cynhyrchu.

The First Minister: Every time that there is a meeting, and there is a meeting at least on the termly basis—no, more often. I would say that perhaps 20 have been produced.

[61] **Paul Davies:** Rwy'n deall eich bod yn cael cyfarfodydd dwyochrog gyda Gweinidogion bob deufis. A yw'r adroddiadau briffio hyn yn cael eu defnyddio yn y cyfarfodydd hynny? Os ydynt, sut maent yn cael eu defnyddio?

Paul Davies: I understand that you have bilateral meetings with Ministers every two months. Are these briefing reports used in those meetings? If they are, how are they used?

[62] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Maent yn cael eu defnyddio gennyf i. Cânt eu gweld gan grŵp bach, gan gynnwys y cynghorwyr arbennig a phennaeth yr uned, sef Marion, ac rydym yn defnyddio'r nodiadau briffio er mwyn cwestiynu Gweinidogion ynghylch yr hyn sy'n digwydd yn eu hadrannau. Mae'n broses ffurfiol.

The First Minister: They are used by me. They are shown to a small group of people, including the special advisers and the head of the unit, which is Marion, and we use the briefing papers in order to question Ministers on what is happening in their departments. It is a formal process.

[63] **Paul Davies:** Ym mis Rhagfyr y llynedd, mewn ateb yng Nghyfarfod Llawn y Cynulliad, dywedoch hyn:

Paul Davies: In December of last year, in a response in a Plenary meeting of the Assembly, you said:

[64] 'The delivery unit is there to identify issues as they arise, to deal with snags—and there have been snags—and to ensure that we can move smoothly to delivery'.

[65] A allwch chi ddweud wrthym pa fath o *snags* yr ydych yn sôn amdanynt?

Can you tell us what kind of 'snags' you are taking about?

[66] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Fel y dywedais yn gynharach, byddai neb yn erbyn imi siarad am fusnes y Llywodraeth yn gyhoeddus. Fodd bynnag, mae rhai pethau wedi codi nawr ac yn y man a oedd yn rhaid eu datrys er mwyn i'r Llywodraeth allu delifro. Dyna, i mi, yw un o werthoedd yr uned gyflawni, sef sicrhau, os yw problemau yn codi, eu bod yn cael eu codi yn gynnar ac, wrth wneud hynny, mae yna ffordd rwydd o ddatrys y problemau hynny.

The First Minister: As I said earlier, no-one would expect me to publically discuss the business of Government. However, things have arisen from time to time that needed to be resolved to ensure that Government could deliver. For me, that is one of the great advantages of having a delivery unit, which is ensuring, if problems arise, they are highlighted at an early stage and, in doing that, there is an easy way of resolving those problems.

[67] **Paul Davies:** Hoffwn bwyso arnoch ymhellach ar hyn. A allech chi roi rhyw fath o enghreifftiau cyffredinol inni o'r problemau sy'n cael eu cyfeirio atoch fel Prif Weinidog?

Paul Davies: I would like to press you further on this. Can you give us some general examples of the problems that are referred to you as First Minister?

[68] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Gadewch imi roi un enghraifft o nid rhywbeth sy'n broblem, ond rhywbeth a all gael ei gydlynu gan yr uned gyflawni, sef taclo tlodi. Mae'n rhywbeth sy'n torri ar draws sawl adran ac, o achos hynny, mae'n bwysig dros ben bod uned sy'n gallu sicrhau nad oes ffiniau rhwng adrannau. Gall hynny ddigwydd mewn unrhyw gorff sydd mor fawr â'r Llywodraeth. Er mwyn bod yn effeithiol yn delifro hynny, mae'n bwysig bod adrannau yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd mor agos ag sy'n bosibl. Mae gan yr uned rôl i'w chwarae ynglŷn â sicrhau, pan fo rhywbeth yn drawstoriadol, bod pethau'n cael eu symud ymlaen yn y ffordd rwyddaf.

The First Minister: Let me give you one example of not something that is necessarily a problem, but something that could be co-ordinated by the delivery unit, namely tackling poverty. It is something that is cross-cutting for a number of departments and, because of that, it is extremely important that there is a unit that can ensure that there are no barriers between departments. That can happen in any organisation that is as large as the Government. In order to be effective in delivering, it is important that departments collaborate as closely as possible. The unit has a role to play in ensuring that, where there are cross-cutting issues, things are progressed in the easiest way possible.

[69] **Mark Drakeford:** Rwyf am siarad

Mark Drakeford: I am going to turn to the

ynglŷn ag adroddiad blynyddol y rhaglen lywodraethu. Byddaf yn troi at y Saesneg wrth drafod y manylion, ond mae gennyf gwestiwn cyffredinol i ddechrau. A allwch chi esbonio mwy inni am rôl yr uned o ran paratoi'r adroddiad hwnnw?

programme for government's annual report. I will turn to English for the details, but I have a general question to begin. Could you explain more to us about the role of the unit in the preparation of that report?

[70] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Nid yw'n paratoi'r manylion yn yr adroddiad, ond mae rôl gan yr uned i ddadansoddi'r manylion am berfformiad ac i edrych ar feysydd lle mae'n rhaid cael mwy o graffu, her a chefnogaeth er mwyn sicrhau bod pethau'n gweithio fel y dylent. Nid rôl yr uned yw creu'r manylion ond i'w dadansoddi er mwyn sicrhau eu bod yn iawn.

The First Minister: It does not prepare the details in the report, but the unit has a role in analysing the details on performance and in looking at areas where there needs to be more scrutiny, greater challenge and support to ensure that things are working as they should. It is not the role of the unit to generate the details but to analyse them in order to ensure that they are robust.

[71] **Mark Drakeford:** The report is a major undertaking for the Government. It is a very substantial document.

[72] **David Melding:** We have it here, in English only. There is a Welsh version, of course.

[73] **Mark Drakeford:** Is the reward worth the effort?

[74] **The First Minister:** Only the electors can tell us that. Is the reward worth the effort in terms of indicators? The answer is 'yes, absolutely'. It is the task of each department to produce the information required to support the indicators, and, of course, it is the job of the unit to analyse that information to make sure that it is robust. It is absolutely crucial for any Government to have a process where there are robust indicators that are tested in several different forms and tested, ultimately, on the floor of the Assembly.

[75] **Mark Drakeford:** As a tool for the unit in making sure that the programme for government is delivered, how useful is that annual report to the unit in pursuit of its work?

11.30 a.m.

[76] **The First Minister:** It is exceptionally useful, because it is a way of comparing, year on year, how we are doing against those indicators. If there are difficulties with some indicators, then the unit has a role in ensuring that those indicators are improved in future years. The only way of ensuring that that is done is to have a unit that has an overarching role, to make sure that indicators are co-ordinated across departments.

[77] **Mark Drakeford:** Have you received any feedback from stakeholders or members of the public about the annual report? Does it do the job that you hoped it would in allowing people outside the Government to keep track of what the Government is trying to achieve? Does it enable them to make some assessment in their minds as to whether the Government is achieving its ambitions?

[78] **The First Minister:** We analyse the use of the programme for government through the website to see whether there are ways in which its presentation could be improved in future. The feedback is crucial. We have had positive feedback from Leighton Jenkins, assistant director of the Confederation of British Industry Wales, Robert Lloyd Griffiths, regional director of the Institute of Directors, Keith Edwards, from the Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru, and Tina Donnelly, director of the Royal College of Nursing. They have

found it useful to have a clear direction and a clear set of indicators to judge the Government against. That is not always comfortable for Governments, but that is the nature of Government. It is important. The feedback that we have had suggests that this is the right direction. The Government is able to identify clearly what it aims to do, and can be judged against that.

[79] **Mark Drakeford:** I have two slightly more general questions, First Minister. In one important sense, the whole machinery of Government is available to the First Minister as head of the Government. However, from experience, I am aware of how slender the direct resources dedicated to the First Minister's office are, compared with the resources offered by civil servants working for Ministers. The unit is very small, with just six members. Reflecting on the experience so far, how have you seen things working? I know that it is less than two years since the unit has been up and working, but does it strike you now as a unit that is about the right size? Will it need more dedicated capacity as time goes on, so that the First Minister has a resource to directly draw upon for these purposes?

[80] **The First Minister:** I do not think that there is a need to increase the resource at the moment. However, I will say that it would be exceptionally difficult to do without the delivery unit. One of the things that I found—I am not sure whether it is right to use inside information, but, you will, of course, know how the machinery works—was that there was no clear mechanism for reporting back to the First Minister directly. As the First Minister has an overarching responsibility, which is met every week through questions in the Assembly and in other ways, I felt that it was important for there to be a mechanism in place to ensure that I have what I thought was the right level of understanding, on an overarching basis. That is where the delivery unit comes into play. I ask the unit to feed information back to me on any potential issues that may arise and also to look at co-ordinating cross-cutting issues occasionally. It is then a matter for me to use that information to make sure that there is effective delivery.

[81] **Mark Drakeford:** My second more general question invites you to look ahead a little. We are living through the most difficult period for the Assembly in terms of budgets. According to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that period will extend well into the future with greater restraint on the amount of resource available to the Welsh Government. Is there a role in the future for the unit to help the First Minister to ensure that the Welsh Government remains policy driven, so that funding follows policy, rather than policy being shaped directly by whatever the financial contingencies of the time happen to be?

[82] **The First Minister:** It is inevitable that financial contingencies will affect policy. Governments will enter office with their plans, but they can never predict what their budgets will be year on year. It is inevitable, as we see budgets reducing, that Government may not be able to spend in some areas as it would have wanted. That, of course, means that Government has to prioritise. One thing that I believe that we have done is to ensure that we are supporting financially, and from a policy perspective, the major priorities of the Government. That does mean, of course, that some of the issues that are further down the list of priorities cannot be funded in the way that we would want. That is self-evident.

[83] The delivery unit also has another role in ensuring that, if there are particular issues regarding spending, they are brought to my attention as soon as possible so that they can be dealt with. In terms of the examples that I might give for that, we know that there have been cases in the past where there have been difficulties with some projects. The delivery unit will, in the future, aim to make sure that they are identified as quickly as possible so that they can be resolved as quickly as possible.

[84] **Mark Drakeford:** I will follow that up with one more question. The business of prioritising Government ambitions in an era of shrinking resources becomes an increasingly

acute job that Governments have to do, and is down to the Cabinet under the leadership of the First Minister. As that job becomes more difficult, as resources diminish, do you see the delivery unit having a job to do in advising the First Minister, so that the really difficult job of weighing up priorities becomes something that a First Minister keeps as an overarching perspective across the Government?

[85] **The First Minister:** I think that the delivery unit has a role but, of course, that role would be alongside the Minister for Finance, alongside the Cabinet collectively, and alongside my own role. Determining priorities would be a matter for the Cabinet. Assisting the Cabinet would, again, be a role primarily for individual departments, for the finance department and ultimately, in assessing the effectiveness of some projects, for the delivery unit in the future.

[86] **David Melding:** Finally, I will ask Elin Jones to ask some questions.

[87] **Elin Jones:** I will start with a general question. You have described the delivery unit this morning as an on-board computer in a car. However, the more you have talked about the workings of the delivery unit—you have talked about it allowing feedback to you as First Minister, reporting back from Government departments or from Ministers on their work on the programme for government—it has sounded more and more like a drone, hovering above Government departments, watching the work of Ministers and the work of civil servants, and sounding more like a surveillance unit at times than a delivery unit. With your fellow Ministers—and with your fellow civil servants, officials—how do you get away, culturally, from the idea that this could be seen, or could even be operating, as a report-back mechanism for the First Minister to watch you? Is that, in any case, necessarily a bad thing?

[88] **The First Minister:** That is a very Orwellian way of describing how the unit works.

[89] **Elin Jones:** I am a big fan of Orwell.

[90] **David Melding:** It is his year.

[91] **The First Minister:** However, it is right to say that there is an element of—I would not use the word ‘surveillance’—reporting back to the First Minister. There is also an element of challenge from outside. In my job, I need to be as assured as I can be that I know what is happening, in the main, in each department. That is very clear in the briefings that I get, but it is certainly useful to have another perspective, which I can look at when it comes to ensuring Government delivery across the board. I suppose that, in terms of the analogy, a car can drive without an on-board computer, but the amount of information available to the driver is much reduced. In that way, the delivery unit provides that information, and on the basis of that information—not to overlabour this—the car can be fine-tuned to become as efficient as possible.

[92] **Elin Jones:** Yes, but on-board computers break down and, very often these days, drivers cannot fix the cars and have to go to a garage, so maybe—

[93] **The First Minister:** I have not yet had the on-board computer break down.

[94] **Elin Jones:** I am not going to take the analogy any further; I will focus on the questions in front of me.

[95] Nid y rhaglen lywodraethu yn unig sy'n bwysig i chi fel Prif Weinidog, ond y rhaglen ddeddfu hefyd, ac mae cyd-gysylltiad amlwg iawn rhwng y ddwy. Beth yw rôl yr It is not only the programme for government that is important to you as First Minister, but also the legislative programme, and there is a clear link between the two. What is the role

uned yn y gwaith o gyflawni'r rhaglen deddfwriaethol?

[96] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae'r uned yn gweithio gyda'r uned ddeddfu, wrth gwrs, ond mewn perthynas â deddfwriaeth, yr uned ddeddfu sy'n rhoi cymorth i adrannau er mwyn sicrhau bod deddfwriaeth yn symud ymlaen. Wedi dweud hynny, mae gan yr uned rôl i sicrhau, os oes problemau o ran amseru deddfwriaeth, eu bod yn cyrraedd fy nesg i.

[97] **Elin Jones:** Felly, o ran yr uned gyflawni a'r uned ddeddfwriaethol yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd—deallaf eu bod yn ddwy uned ar wahân—sut, yn weithredol, mae'r ddwy uned yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd ar adegau? A oes achosion o hynny yn digwydd, ynteu a ydynt fwy neu lai yn gweithio ar wahân?

[98] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Na. Byddem yn ei ddisgrifio fel hyn: rôl yr uned gyflawni yw sicrhau bod deddfwriaeth yn symud ymlaen, ac os oes problemau ynglŷn ag amseru deddfwriaeth, fy mod i'n gwybod amdanynt er mwyn inni allu datrys unrhyw broblem sy'n codi. Wrth gwrs, mae rôl i'r uned ddeddfu i sicrhau bod deddfwriaeth yn cael ei symud ymlaen. Felly, mae'r uned gyflawni yn edrych ar beth sy'n digwydd ac os oes problemau, mae'n gweld beth yw'r problemau hynny. Gwaith yr uned ddeddfu wedyn yw sicrhau bod y problemau hynny yn cael eu datrys. Felly, mae ganddynt rôl wahanol, ond nid yw un yn gallu gweithio heb y llall.

[99] **Ms Stapleton:** The legislative programme unit reports to me, as does the delivery unit, and while the legislative programme unit is there to support the Bill teams and the timing of the legislation, the delivery unit is there to consult with the department, as the First Minister says, and to ensure that the delivery is there and that it has consulted appropriately. They work quite closely together.

[100] **Elin Jones:** Wrth i ddeddfau gael eu pasio gan y Cynulliad ac felly ddod yn weithredol—bydd hyn yn dod yn wir tua diwedd y pum mlynedd o Lywodraeth—a oes rôl wedyn i'r uned gyflawni wrth edrych ar sut mae'r deddfwriaeth yn cael ei chyflawni, ac a oes problemau wrth gyflawni'r ddeddfwriaeth?

[101] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Byddwn yn

of the unit in the work of delivering the legislation programme?

The First Minister: The unit works with the legislation unit, of course, but in terms of legislation, it is the legislation unit that advises departments in order to ensure that legislation is progressed. Having said that, the delivery unit has a role in ensuring that, if problems arise in terms of the timing of legislation, they are brought to my attention.

Elin Jones: So, with regard to the delivery unit and the legislation unit working together—I understand that they are two separate units—how, on a practical level, do they collaborate at times? Are there occasions where that happens, or do they work more or less independently of each other?

The First Minister: No. I would describe it like this: the role of the delivery unit is to ensure that legislation is progressed, and if there are any problems in terms of the timing of legislation, that I am aware of those so that we can resolve any problem that may arise. Of course, there is a role for the legislation unit in ensuring that legislation is progressed. Therefore, the delivery unit takes an overview of what is happening and if there are problems, it would identify those problems. It is the job of the legislation unit to ensure that those problems are resolved. So, they have different roles, but one cannot work independently of the other.

Elin Jones: As laws are passed by the Assembly and are therefore enacted—this will be the case towards the end of the five years of Government—is there then a role for the delivery unit in looking at how the legislation is being implemented and whether there are problems in delivering on that legislation?

The First Minister: I would expect that

disgwyl i'r gwaith hwnnw gael ei wneud gan yr adrannau, nid gan yr uned gyflawni. Felly, mae'n ddyletswydd ar adrannau i sicrhau eu bod yn monitro pa mor effeithiol yw deddfwriaeth. Nid wyf yn gweld y byddai rôl gyda'r uned o ran deddfwriaeth. Pe bai problemau yn codi o ran gweithredu deddfwriaeth, byddwn yn disgwyl i'r uned roi manylion i mi ynglŷn â beth yw'r problemau hynny. Yr adrannau sydd yn gyfrifol am ddeddfwriaeth a pha mor effeithiol yw'r ddeddfwriaeth honno.

11.45 a.m.

[102] **Elin Jones:** Ar fater arall o ran yr uned gyflawni a'r gwaith mae'n ei wneud y tu hwnt i'r rhaglen lywodraethu, ac a oes gwaith yn digwydd ar faterion nad ydynt yn y rhaglen lywodraethu, mae gwaith y Llywodraeth lawer yn ehangach na'r hyn sydd yn y rhaglen lywodraethu. O feddwl am rai o brif faterion polisi cyhoeddus y dydd yng Nghymru—yn y sector iechyd, er enghraifft, fel ail-gyflunio gwasanaethau iechyd gan y byrddau iechyd a gallu'r byrddau iechyd i gadw o fewn eu hamserlen ariannol—maent yn faterion mawr a phwysig i chi fel Prif Weinidog, ond nid oes mesurau penodol i fynd i'r afael â hwy o fewn y rhaglen lywodraethu. Beth yw rôl yr uned gyflawni yn y meysydd hynny sydd, efallai, rywfaint y tu hwnt i rai o'r mesurau penodol yn y rhaglen lywodraethu?

[103] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Yr adran fyddai'n gyfrifol am y materion hynny. Pe bai rhyw fath o broblem—er nad yw hyn wedi digwydd—o fewn yr adran, byddwn yn disgwyl i'r uned roi'r manylion hynny i mi. O ran polisi—ei ddatblygu a sicrhau ei fod yn cael ei symud ymlaen—dyletswydd yr adran yw hynny. Os bydd unrhyw broblemau, wrth gwrs, byddwn yn disgwyl i'r uned sicrhau ein bod yn deall beth yw'r problemau er mwyn inni eu datrys.

[104] **Elin Jones:** Mae'n fy nharo i braidd yn rhyfedd bod rhai o'r prif faterion sy'n ymwneud â chyflawni gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yng Nghymru yn cwmpo y tu allan i ystod waith yr uned gyflawni—er enghraifft, cyhoeddiad y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau ddoe ar awdurdodau lleol yn methu

work to be done by the departments, not by the delivery unit. So, there is a duty on departments to ensure that they monitor the effectiveness of legislation. I do not see that the unit would have a role in terms of legislation. If problems arose with regard to the implementation of legislation, I would expect the unit to give me the details of those problems. The departments are responsible for legislation and the effectiveness of that legislation.

Elin Jones: On another matter in relation to the delivery unit and the work that it does beyond the programme for government, and whether work is done on matters that are not in the programme for government, the work of Government is far broader than what is in the programme for government. Thinking of some of the main public policy issues of the day in Wales—in the health sector, for example, such as the reconfiguration of health services by the health boards and the ability of health boards to keep to their financial timetables—they are substantial and important issues for you as First Minister, but there are no specific measures to deal with them in the programme for government. What is the role of the delivery unit in those fields that may be somewhat beyond some of the specific measures in the programme for government?

The First Minister: The department would be responsible for those issues. If there was some sort of problem—although this has not happened—in the department, I would expect the delivery unit to provide those details to me. As regards policy—its development and ensuring that it is progressed—that would be the department's responsibility. If there were any problems, I would expect the unit to ensure that we understood the problems so that we could resolve them.

Elin Jones: It strikes me as slightly strange that some of the main issues relating to public service delivery in Wales fall beyond the scope of the delivery unit—for example, the Minister for Education and Skills's announcement yesterday on local authorities failing to deliver their work in the education

â chyflawni eu gwaith yn y sector addysg neu'r hyn rwyf wedi sôn amdano eisoes yn y gwasanaeth iechyd. Nid oes gan yr uned gyflawni unrhyw ffocws ar y materion hyn, er eu bod yn ymwneud yn llwyr â delifro gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yng Nghymru.

[105] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Roeddwn i'n gwybod beth oedd yn digwydd o ran hynny, felly roedd gennyf y manylion ymlaen llaw ac roeddwn wedi siarad â Gweinidogion amdanynt. Mae'n werth pwysleisio hefyd, wrth sôn am bethau fel sefyllfa'r gwasanaeth iechyd, eu bod yn faterion i'r Cabinet, ac maent yn cael eu trafod ar y lefel honno. Felly, ni fyddai'n fater i'r uned gyflawni; byddai'n fater i'r Gweinidog a'r Cabinet cyfan.

[106] **Elin Jones:** Felly, mae'n glir iawn yn eich meddwl chi mai cyflawni'r rhaglen lywodraethu yw gwaith yr uned gyflawni, nid delifro'r gwasanaethau cyhoeddus sydd o fewn eich cyfrifoldeb chi.

[107] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Adrannau sy'n gyfrifol am gyflawni'r hyn y maent yn ei wneud. Mae rôl eang i'r uned gyflawni i ddelifro'n gyfan gwbl ar y rhaglen lywodraethu sy'n torri ar draws bob adran. Mae dyletswyddau ar bawb yn hynny o beth ond maent yn wahanol. Rôl yr uned gyflawni yw sicrhau bod y rhaglen yn ei chyfanrwydd yn cael ei chyflawni ac wedyn mae'r adran yn gorfod cyflawni ei dyletswyddau fel rhan o'r portffolio.

[108] **David Melding:** First Minister, I will put a final question to you, or via you to the Permanent Secretary. I was struck when Marion Stapleton was talking about how the unit is staffed that the six members have extensive policy development experience in the various areas of the civil service from which they have been drawn. Is what we really need a team of auditors to do this sort of evaluation—a bit like the Audit Commission, if it were to look at a particular policy or public agency? I am a bit confused as to whether people who develop policy can evaluate policy, particularly its effectiveness. One of the interesting things about this whole concept is that you are trying to find out the efficacy of some of the interventions, which are often not subjected to that sort of test in the world of Government.

[109] **The First Minister:** I would argue that they are. The programme for government and the annual report give Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Government and any number of indicators that are occasionally to the Government's discomfort. It is important that Members are able to do that. Those who want to ensure delivery have to have a policy background, particularly in the area where they are looking to ensure that delivery takes place. It is important to have that background.

[110] It might help the committee if I gave some of my reasoning for the establishment of a

sector or the issues that I have already mentioned in the health service. The delivery unit does not focus on these issues at all, even though they deal entirely with the delivery of public services in Wales.

The First Minister: I knew what was happening there, so I had the details beforehand and had discussed them with Ministers. It is also worth emphasising, in talking about things like the situation in the health service, that they are issues for the Cabinet, so they are discussed at that level. Therefore, it would not be a matter for the delivery unit; it would be a matter for the Minister and the Cabinet as a whole.

Elin Jones: Therefore, it is clear in your mind that the work of the delivery unit is to deliver the programme for government, not to deliver the public services that are within your area of responsibility.

The First Minister: Departments are responsible for the delivery of their work. The delivery unit has a broad role in delivering the programme for government in its entirety, cutting across all departments. Everyone has duties in that regard but they are different. The role of the delivery unit is to ensure that the programme as a whole is delivered and departments then have to deliver on their own duties under the portfolio.

delivery unit. Having been in Government for some years, it struck me, certainly in the early years, that we were good at producing policy and strategy, but it was not always followed up in the way that people might expect. We had to avoid, to my mind, becoming—to use a phrase that I have sometimes used—a strategy factory. There were a number of examples of good delivery, but I wanted to ensure that there was a way of co-ordinating that good delivery and ensuring that there was delivery across Government, knowing that the public judges not on what you say that you are going to do, but on what you have done. The delivery unit is there to do just that: to make sure that things are done.

[111] **David Melding:** Does the Permanent Secretary wish to add anything, as he is in a good position, having come back into the structure, to cast a critical eye over this?

[112] **Mr Jones:** You suggested that you would be interested in a Permanent Secretary view. My impression is that my organisation is pretty comprehensively audited already, but I strongly believe in the integration of policy and delivery, rather than the establishment, over here, of a policy priesthood and, over there, of a separate delivery mechanism. It is one of the great opportunities for the Welsh Government to integrate the policy and delivery cycles. It is easy to fall into a loose use of policy and delivery. If we do a really good job, we will integrate the two. So, what I would like to see developed through the continuing work of the delivery unit is precisely that kind of rounded approach from individuals who understand fully the cycles of policy and delivery and who can bring that experience and element of challenge that we were talking quite a lot about earlier. Sometimes, in my experience, these things can go wrong. Usually, that is more as a result of personality than process, but, as far as the Cabinet is concerned, the First Minister creates the creative tension that is necessary and keeps it creative, and I aim to do the same at official level.

[113] **David Melding:** Finally, we have talked about the programme for government, particularly the annual report, which had 666 pages in the English version. I read earlier this week that the Northcote-Trevelyan report, which created the modern civil service, is 28 pages long, and 160 years later we are still referring to it. Is less more in terms of expecting the public or, particularly, their representatives in the Assembly to hold you to account? There is no consistency in methodology here, with different comparators and different databases used throughout. To read 666 pages, you need to set aside some time as well as have a lot of pre-existing knowledge to get through it and draw reasonable inferences. Might one of the ways of evaluating the delivery unit be to see whether this could be slimmed down a bit?

[114] **The First Minister:** It is not the Gettysburg address, that is true, but, that said, it is important that people have the ability to scrutinise the Government in detail. That may give rise to allegations that it is so big that it is difficult to get through, but if it were to be reduced, I have no doubt that the allegation would then be that we were trying to avoid scrutiny by reducing the number of indicators that we had. It is a difficult one to call. That said, in a document that big, there may well be some areas where the indicators are not to our liking, and they will be picked up by Members in scrutiny. A document with that level of detail makes the job of Government more difficult, because it is more transparent than would be the case with a document that is much smaller.

[115] **David Melding:** Thank you, First Minister; that deals with the first subject this morning.

11.54 a.m.

Tlodi Plant—Craffu ar Waith y Gweinidog Child Poverty—Ministerial Scrutiny

[116] **David Melding:** We will now move to the second subject, which is child poverty. I

should say that this subject has been suggested to us by the Chair of the Children and Young People Committee, Christine Chapman. We were grateful to Christine for replying to our letter inviting Chairs of committees to make suggestions for scrutiny. It is something that we intend to do regularly. As new officials join us, I am going to follow biblical precedent and call the last first: Elin Jones will lead us through the first set of questions on child poverty that we want to put to you.

[117] **Elin Jones:** Brif Weinidog, pa mor llwyddiannus ydych chi'n meddwl y mae eich Llywodraeth chi wedi bod o ran mynd i'r afael â thlodi plant?

Elin Jones: First Minister, how successful do you think that your Government has been in tackling child poverty?

[118] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Rydym yn gofyn i bobl roi beirniadaeth ar ôl tymor llawn y Llywodraeth, ond hoffwn roi dwy enghraifft. Rydym yn gwybod, wrth gwrs, bod lefel incwm y tŷ yn effeithio ar dlodi plant, felly mae'n bwysig dros ben sicrhau bod cyfle gan bobl i gael swydd. Rydym wedi gwneud hynny drwy gynlluniau fel *Jobs Growth Wales* a'r arian rydym wedi ei roi drwy'r gwahanol gynlluniau i greu swyddi yng Nghymru.

The First Minister: We would expect people to judge us after we have been through the Government's full term, but I will give you two examples. We know, of course, that household income levels have an impact on child poverty, therefore, it is extremely important to ensure that people have the opportunity to access employment. We have done that through schemes such as *Jobs Growth Wales* and the funding that we have provided through various schemes to create employment in Wales.

[119] Mae hefyd yn bwysig dros ben sicrhau bod pobl yn cael y gefnogaeth sydd ei heisiau arnynt er mwyn sicrhau eu bod yn cael y cyfle i fynd mewn i waith, ac felly godi lefel eu hincwm. Dyna pam rydym yn dyblu'r nifer o deuluoedd sy'n gallu mynd mewn i'r rhaglen *Flying Start*. Rydym yn gwybod, wrth gwrs, fod honno'n help mawr i dynnu teuluoedd, ac felly blant, mas o dlodi.

It is also very important to ensure that people receive the support that they require to ensure that they have the opportunity to access employment and therefore raise their income levels. That is why we are doubling the number of families that can enter the *Flying Start* programme. We know, of course, that that is of great assistance in pulling families, and therefore children, out of poverty.

[120] **Elin Jones:** I ailofyn fy nghwestiwn mewn ffordd wahanol: pa mor llwyddiannus ydych chi'n meddwl y byddwch chi yn taclodlodi plant erbyn diwedd eich pum mlynedd?

Elin Jones: To ask my question again in a different way: how successful do you think you will be in tackling child poverty by the end of your five years?

[121] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae'n anodd dweud. Mae targedau gennym ni ac nid ydym yn edrych i'w newid. Rydym yn deall nad yw pob twlsyn gennym ni er mwyn delio â thlodi plant. Rydym yn gwybod ein bod yn cael ein heffeithio gan economi'r byd, a'n bod yn cael ein heffeithio gan bolisïau Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig. Nid yw hynny'n meddwl y dylem eistedd yn ôl a dweud nad oes dim y gallwn ei wneud; rwyf wedi rhoi dwy enghraifft i chi, ac mae sawl un arall, lle mae cefnogaeth wedi cael ei rhoi i deuluoedd er mwyn sicrhau bod plant yn cael eu tynnu mas o dlodi.

The First Minister: It is difficult to say. We have targets and we are not seeking to change them. We understand that we do not have all the tools to deal with child poverty. We know that we are affected by the global economy, and that we are affected by the UK Government's policies. That does not mean that we should sit back and say that there is nothing that we can do; I have given you two examples, and there are a number of others, of where support has been provided to families in order to ensure that children are pulled out of poverty.

[122] **Elin Jones:** O ystyried y drafodaeth rydym newydd ei chael ynglŷn â'r uned gyflawni, sut ydych yn gweld ei rôl o gydlynu polisi a delifro ar daclo tlodi plant ar draws adrannau'r Llywodraeth?

Elin Jones: Considering the discussion that we have just had about the delivery unit, how do you see its role in co-ordinating policy and delivering on tackling child poverty across Government departments?

[123] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae rôl gryf gan yr uned ddelifro. Carl Sargeant yw'r Gweinidog sydd â chyfrifoldeb o ran tlodi, ond mae'r uned wedi bod yn gweithio er mwyn sicrhau bod y pwnc hwn, sy'n drawsbynciol, yn cael ei dynnu at ei gilydd o dan ymbarél y cynllun gweithredu.

The First Minister: The delivery unit has a robust role. Carl Sargeant is the Minister with responsibility for poverty issues, but the unit has been working to ensure that this crosscutting issue is drawn together under the umbrella of the action plan.

[124] **Elin Jones:** Fel Llywodraeth, rydych wedi penderfynu cynnwys tlodi plant yn y cynllun gweithredu ar drechu tlodi ehangach. Mae'r penderfyniad hwnnw wedi cael ei feirniadu gan rai; er enghraifft, mae Comisiynydd Plant Cymru wedi datgan rhywfaint o bryder gan fod posibilid o golli'r pwyslais ar daclo tlodi plant o'i wneud yn y modd hwnnw. A allwch chi roi hyder i ni nad yw'r ffocws penodol ar dlodi plant wedi cael ei golli o osod y polisiau hyn mewn gwaith ehangach o daclo tlodi yn gyffredinol?

Elin Jones: As a Government, you have decided to include child poverty in the action plan on tackling wider poverty issues. That decision has been criticised by some, including the Children's Commissioner for Wales, who expressed concern in relation to the possible loss of emphasis on tackling child poverty as a result of its inclusion in that wider agenda. Can you give us confidence that the specific focus on child poverty has not been lost as a result of the inclusion of these policies within the wider context of tackling poverty in general?

[125] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Rydym yn gwybod, wrth gwrs, fod tlodi plant yn rhan bwysig o dlodi yn gyffredinol. Rydym yn gwybod, er enghraifft, os ydym yn codi lefel incwm oedolion mewn teulu, mae'n helpu i dynnu plant mas o dlodi hefyd. Nid wyf yn credu ei bod yn bosibl rhoi ffocws unigol ar dlodi plant heb ystyried y cefndir o ran tlodi yn gyffredinol. Dyna pam mae gennym gynlluniau fel Cymunedau'n Gyntaf a *Flying Start* er mwyn helpu teuluoedd, ac felly helpu plant.

The First Minister: We know, of course, that child poverty is an important element of poverty in general. We know, for instance, that if we raise the income level of adults in families, that helps to take children out of poverty. I do not think that it is possible to focus singularly on child poverty without looking at the wider issues of poverty in general. That is why we have schemes such as Communities First and Flying Start, in order to assist families and thereby assist children.

[126] **Elin Jones:** Mae gan Fesur Plant a Theuluoedd (Cymru) 2010 rôl i'w chwarae yn y maes polisi hwn. Pa ganlyniadau sydd wedi cael eu cyflawni hyd yn hyn yn dilyn cyflwyno'r Mesur hwnnw?

Elin Jones: The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 has a role to play in this policy area. What outcomes have been achieved to date following the introduction of that Measure?

12.00 p.m.

[127] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae'r dyletswyddau'n drwm arnom, ond rhoddaf un ffigur a all fod o help. Ers 2009, mae canran y plant sy'n byw mewn teuluoedd sydd yn ddi-waith wedi cwmpo, ac mae'r bwlg rhwng Cymru a Lloegr wedi culhau. Mae

The First Minister: We have great responsibility in this area, but I can provide you with one figure that may be of assistance. Since 2009, the percentage of children living in workless families has fallen, and the gap between England and Wales has narrowed.

hynny'n rhoi rhywfaint o galonddid i ni ynglŷn â'r cyfeiriad, ond, wedi dweud hynny, mae'n anodd iawn gwybod beth fydd yn digwydd yn y dyfodol o gofio'r hyn sy'n digwydd ar lefel Brydeinig ac Ewropeaidd.

That gives us some encouragement as to the direction of travel, but having said that, it is very difficult to know what will happen in future given what is happening at both the UK and European levels.

[128] **Elin Jones:** Nid wyf yn siŵr a ateboch chi'r cwestiwn ynglŷn â'r hyn a oedd wedi cael ei gyflawni o gyflwyno'r Mesur plant a theuluoedd. Sut yr ydych yn dadansoddi'r hyn sydd wedi cael ei gyflawni o gyflwyno'r Mesur hwnnw?

Elin Jones: I am not entirely sure whether you answered the question in relation to what has been achieved in implementing the children and families Measure. How do you interpret what has been achieved in implementing that Measure?

[129] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae'n ddyddiau cynnar o ran y Mesur ei hun, wrth gwrs. O ran y pethau sydd wedi cael eu cymryd ymlaen o ran sicrhau ein bod yn cwrdd â'r dyletswyddau sydd yn y Mesur ei hun, yn gyntaf, mae'r Gweinidog addysg a'r Gweinidogion eraill yn edrych ar gulhau'r bwlch addysgol sy'n codi rhwng plant o gartrefi tlawd a phlant yn gyffredinol, gan sicrhau ein bod yn edrych ar dlodi plant yn y ffordd fwyaf eang. Er enghraifft, maent yn edrych ar ofal plant sy'n rhan o, nid yn unig *Flying Start*, ond cynlluniau eraill hefyd. Felly, mae cynlluniau sydd wedi cael eu cymryd ymlaen o ran hynny. Gofynnaf i Kate ychwanegu at hynny.

The First Minister: Of course, it is early days as regards the Measure itself. In terms of those things that have been taken forward to ensure that we meet our responsibilities under the Measure itself, first of all, the Minister for education and other Ministers are looking at narrowing the educational gap between children from poorer families and children generally, to ensure that we look at child poverty in the broadest terms possible. For example, they are looking at childcare, which relates not only to Flying Start, but also to other schemes. So, schemes have been taken forward in that regard. I will ask Kate to give us more detail.

[130] **Ms Cassidy:** Of course. Another aspect of the children and families Measure was to put a child poverty strategy duty on other public bodies. One of the things that we have done has been to look at how public bodies, such as local authorities and health bodies, have incorporated child poverty as a priority in their plans. Single integrated plans are being produced locally now, and we are looking at how well people have built child poverty as a priority into those plans. Clearly, we need other partners to take this forward as well.

[131] **Mark Drakeford:** Brif Weinidog, mae Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig wedi cyhoeddi ei bwriad i ddiwygio'r mesurau tlodi plant. Beth yw barn y Llywodraeth yng Nghymru ar y bwriad hwn?

Mark Drakeford: First Minister, the UK Government has announced its intention to amend the child poverty measures. What is the opinion of the Welsh Government on that intention?

[132] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Rydym yn ystyried ar hyn o bryd beth ddylai ein hymateb fod i'r ymgynghori sy'n cymryd lle, ond nid oes gennym gynlluniau ar hyn o bryd i newid y mesurau.

The First Minister: We are currently considering what our response should be to the consultation that is taking place, but we have no plans at present to change our measures.

[133] **Mark Drakeford:** A ydych yn becsio o gwbl y bydd y newidiadau yn San Steffan yn tynnu'r sylw oddi ar dlodi fel rhywbeth yn ymwneud ag incwm yn unig, gan drial creu rhyw fath o stori newydd yn y maes hwnnw?

Mark Drakeford: Are you concerned at all that the changes in Westminster will draw attention away from poverty as something that is related solely to income, by trying to create some sort of new story in that area?

[134] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae *track record* Gweinidogion yn y blaid lywodraethol yn Llundain lan at nawr wedi bod yn gymysg. Rwy'n cofio Keith Joseph, flynyddoedd yn ôl, yn dweud y dylai fod rhyw fath ar fesur gwahanol o ran tlodi o gofio nad yw pobl mor dlawd yn gymharol ag yr oeddent yn y 1930au. Rwy'n credu bod peryglon yn hynny o beth. Ond, fe gawn ni weld beth yn gymwys fydd y mesur y byddant yn ei gyflwyno yn y dyfodol. Ni fyddwn am weld unrhyw newidiadau a fyddai'n cuddio'r problemau yr ydym yn gwybod eu bod yno, ac nid yn y Deyrnas Unedig yn unig, ond mewn sawl gwlad yn Ewrop.

[135] **Mark Drakeford:** Yma, yng Nghymru, nid yw'r Llywodraeth wedi cyhoeddi'r gyfres o ddangosyddion tlodi plant er mis Tachwedd 2010. Pam nad yw'r Llywodraeth wedi cyhoeddi'r ffigurau hynny?

[136] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mwy neu lai, mae'r ffigurau wedi cael eu tynnu i mewn i'r rhaglen lywodraethu ac i'r ffordd o fesur pa mor effeithiol yw'r rhaglen honno. Wrth ddweud hynny, rydym wedi gofyn i'r sefydliad polisi newydd edrych ar y strategaeth tlodi plant, ac, wrth gwrs, byddem yn mo'yn sicrhau bod y sefydliad yn cynhyrchu'r data er mwyn cymharu lle yr ydym gyda sefyllfa gwledydd a rhanbarthau eraill yn Ewrop. Bydd yr adroddiad hwnnw ar gael cyn bo hir, a bydd yn cael ei ystyried eto yn ystod y flwyddyn hon. Wedyn, bydd data newydd ar gael er mwyn inni gymharu ein hunain yn erbyn rhannau eraill o Ewrop.

[137] **Mark Drakeford:** Pryd yr ydym yn gallu disgwyl i weld y ffigurau hynny?

[138] **Ms Cassidy:** This year. Not very long hence; before the summer recess, anyway.

[139] **Mark Drakeford:** Hoffwn ofyn rhywbeth mwy cyffredinol, Prif Weinidog.

[140] The Institute for Fiscal Studies says that, by 2015, all the progress made in reducing child poverty in the decade between 1998 and 2008 will have been wiped out. Against that background, is it sensible for the Welsh Government to have separate targets for reducing child poverty in Wales? The Welsh Government seems to be trying to roll a stone up a hill with the gradient constantly becoming steeper.

[141] **The First Minister:** It is perfectly correct to say that the gradient is becoming steeper and steeper, but that does not mean that we should stop trying to get up the hill. I will not

The First Minister: The track record of Ministers in the governing party in London has been mixed to date. I remember Keith Joseph saying some years ago that there should be a different kind of poverty indicator, given that people were not as poor, comparatively, as they were in the 1930s. Such an approach is risky. However, we shall have to see exactly what sort of indicator they will bring forward in the future. I would not want to see any changes that would mask the problems that we know exist, and not only in the United Kingdom, but in several European countries.

Mark Drakeford: Here in Wales, the Government has not published the suite of indicators for child poverty since November 2010. Why has the Government not published those figures?

The First Minister: More or less, the figures have been drawn into the programme for government and how we assess the effectiveness of that programme. Having said that, we have asked the new policy institute to look at the child poverty strategy and we will, of course, want to ensure that the institute produces the data for us to compare where we are in relation to other nations and regions in Europe. That report will be available soon, and will be considered again during this year. New data will then be available so that we can compare ourselves against other parts of Europe.

Mark Drakeford: When can we expect to see those figures?

Mark Drakeford: I would like to ask a more general question, First Minister.

pretend that it will be easy. I will not pretend that, somehow, we can do things in Wales that will mitigate entirely the damage, I would argue, that has been done in London. We know what the figures are showing us—that there are immense challenges in terms of families living in poverty across the UK. We know what the figures are telling us in terms of people's income levels across the UK, and it will be very tough—there is no question about that—to reduce the number of children living in poverty. That said, we intend to use, as I have outlined, every tool that is at our disposal in order to look to meet those targets.

[142] **Mark Drakeford:** In an era when the living standards for Welsh families in 2017 are expected, in the Westminster Government's own projections, to be where they were in 2000, is it all the more important for the Welsh Government to go on using its own resources in spending programmes that have an impact on what used to be called the social wage—those things a Government can do that mean that families do not have to spend their own money on those things? Free breakfasts in primary schools would be an obvious example of a social-wage measure. There are a range of those across the Government's portfolio—do you think that those things are likely to become even more important instruments in addressing child poverty in the future?

[143] **The First Minister:** Yes, I do. We know that the take-up of free school breakfasts is up to 75% in terms of availability across Wales. We know that, for many families and children, it gives them the opportunity to have a meal at the start of the day. There are many families who find it exceptionally valuable, particularly in difficult economic times, that that should be done.

[144] One thing that we cannot do in the medium to long term is in-fill cuts made at Westminster. We had to do it with the council tax benefit, because we felt that it was the right thing to do, but the difficulty that we always face is the demand on our budgets. When we see those budgets being reduced, there is a limit to how much we can back-fill, because of the money that we are losing. Otherwise we will end up paying from the Welsh budget for many items that were previously paid for by the UK Treasury. One example is the issue of housing benefit. We anticipate that a growing number of people will become homeless. Saving on housing benefit is a saving to the UK Treasury. If more people become homeless, they become people who have to be helped, ultimately, from the Welsh budget. So, effectively, it is a saving for the UK Treasury and an extra cost for the Welsh budget. We have seen that with the council tax benefit, and we will see that with housing benefit, I believe, and that is not sustainable in the long term.

[145] **Mark Drakeford:** I have one final question in this area. It is often said that £1 invested early on in a child's life to create the conditions in which that child will be able to make the most of their opportunities in life will be worth many times more than £1 invested in trying to rescue the situation after the damage has been done. I wonder whether you would like to say a bit more about the Welsh Government's approach to investment in early years across the portfolios and whether you think that, even in difficult times, that is the strategy that is most likely to be successful in the long term in addressing child poverty.

[146] **The First Minister:** Yes, I do, and the foundation phase is obviously another example of that. It is exceptionally important, to my mind, that children get the best start in life, regardless of the economic conditions. You are absolutely right to say that money invested in the young pays dividends in years to come, for any number of reasons, in terms of their ability to increase their income in the future and to acquire the confidence that they need to acquire skills in the future. Ultimately, something that I have seen is that, where young people do not get the right level of support or opportunity, they often drift into the criminal justice system, and that is a cost to the taxpayer as well as a great personal cost to them and to society as a whole. Anything that can be done to divert children away from that path is very much welcome. It is certainly right to say that it is a wiser investment to spend that extra £1,

as you put it, on the young, than to give that extra £1 to the richest in society.

[147] **Paul Davies:** Rwyf eisiau gofyn cwestiynau i chi ynghylch rôl eich Llywodraeth mewn perthynas â Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig. Fodd bynnag, cyn i mi wneud hynny, rwyf eisiau dod yn ôl at rai o'r cwestiynau yr oedd Mark Drakeford yn eu gofyn i chi yn gynharach ynglŷn â thargedau, oherwydd nid wyf yn glir iawn pam nad ydych yn gosod targedau clir, oherwydd mae'n amlwg bod Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig wedi gosod targedau clir er mwyn mynd i'r afael â thlodi plant. Rydych chi wedi ei gwneud yn amlwg eich bod eisiau canolbwyntio ar ddangosyddion tlodi plant. Byddwn i'n dychmygu bod rhaid i chi osod targedau er mwyn gwneud yn siŵr bod eich Llywodraeth yn cyflawni. Pam nad ydych chi'n gosod targedau clir?

Paul Davies: I would like to ask you questions about your Government's role in relation to the UK Government. However, before I do that, I would like to return to some of the questions that Mark Drakeford asked earlier in relation to targets, because I am not clear why you do not set clear targets, because it is obvious that the UK Government has set clear targets to tackle child poverty. You have made it quite clear that you want to concentrate on indicators of child poverty. I would imagine that you would have to set targets to ensure that your Government is achieving in that regard. Why are you not setting clear targets?

[148] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae dangosyddion yn sicrhau bod pobl yn gallu gweld sut mae pethau'n mynd o flwyddyn i flwyddyn. Mae'n anodd iawn creu targedau cadarn oherwydd nid yw'r twls gyda ni i sicrhau ein bod yn gallu cyrraedd y targedau hynny. Nid ydym yn rheoli'r system fudd-daliadau na'r system drethi, felly mae'n anodd creu targedau pan nad oes pwerau gyda chi yn y meysydd hynny. Wedi dweud hynny, mae'n bwysig bod dangosyddion er mwyn i bobl allu gweld beth yw'r *trend* yng Nghymru, ac, wrth gwrs, mae'n bwysig dros ben bod pobl yn gallu gweld, drwy'r rhaglen llywodraethu, pa effaith mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn ei chael ar y dangosyddion hynny.

The First Minister: Indicators ensure that people can see how things are developing, year on year. It is very difficult to create robust targets because we do not have the tools to ensure that we can achieve those targets. We have no control over the benefits system or the taxation system, so it is difficult to generate targets where you have no powers. Having said that, it is extremely important that there should be indicators so that people can see what the trend in Wales is, and, of course, it is very important that people can see, through the programme for government, what impact the Welsh Government is having on those indicators.

[149] **Paul Davies:** Felly'r rheswm nad ydych chi'n gosod targedau yw oherwydd nad yw'r arfau gyda chi i ddelio â'r mater hwn yn y lle cyntaf. Mae hynny'n fy arwain at y cwestiwn nesaf sydd gennyf, sef: a ydych chi'n credu bod yr arfau gyda chi, fel Llywodraeth, i fynd i'r afael â thlodi plant?

Paul Davies: Therefore, the reason you are not setting targets is because you do not have the tools to deal with this matter in the first place. That takes me on to my next question, which is: do you believe that you have the tools as a Government to get to grips with child poverty?

[150] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Nid ar gyfer popeth; mae hynny'n amlwg. Fodd bynnag, byddai cael popeth yn golygu cael rheoli'r system fudd-daliadau a threthi, ac, yn fy marn i, ni fyddai hynny o les i Gymru. Pam? Pe baem yn rheoli'r system fudd-daliadau, ni fyddai'r cyllid gennym i wneud yr hyn y byddwn ni'n mo'yn ei wneud beth bynnag, oherwydd byddai'r cyllid yn dal i ddod o

The First Minister: Not for everything, clearly. However, having everything would mean taking control of the benefits and taxation systems, and, in my opinion, that would not be of benefit to Wales. Why? If we were to take control of the benefits system, we would not have the funds to do what we want to do in any case, because the funding would still come from London. It is very

Lundain. Mae'n bwysig dros ben, yn fy marn i, fod gennym system fudd-daliadau ar draws Prydain Fawr gyfan. Wedi dweud hynny, mae'n bwysig dros ben ein bod yn defnyddio'r pwerau sydd gennym—un enghraifft o hynny yw *Flying Start*—er mwyn sicrhau ein bod yn gallu dylanwadu mewn modd positif ar fywydau plant wrth iddynt dyfu lan.

[151] **Paul Davies:** Ar wahân i fudd-daliadau, felly, a ydych chi'n credu y dylech chi, fel Llywodraeth, gael mwy o gyfrifoldeb i daclo'r broblem hon, ac, os felly, pa fath o gyfrifoldeb ychwanegol hoffech chi ei weld er mwyn mynd i'r afael â thlodi plant?

12.15 p.m.

[152] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae'n anodd iawn gwybod pa fath o gyfrifoldebau y byddai'r Llywodraeth yn mo'yn heb fod y cyllid yn dod hefyd. Byddai'n ddechreuad pe byddem yn gweld system o gyllido Cymru drwy newid fformiwla Barnett er mwyn sicrhau bod gennym y lefel o gyllid y dylem ei chael gydag unrhyw system newydd. Byddai hynny'n help. Mae pwerau yn un peth, ond mae arian yn rhywbeth arall. Er mwyn sicrhau y gallwch ddefnyddio pwerau, mae'n bwysig eich bod yn cael yr arian i wneud hynny.

[153] **Paul Davies:** Felly, efallai y byddech yn derbyn mwy o gyfrifoldebau pe byddai'r arian yn dod gydag ef. Ai dyna'r hyn rydych yn ei ddweud?

[154] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Dyna sylfaen yr hyn yr ydym wedi ei ddweud i ran 2 Silk, wrth gwrs. Rydym wedi dweud, pe byddai unrhyw bwerau newydd yn dod i'r Cynulliad neu'r Llywodraeth, byddem am weld y gyllideb yn dod gyda hwy. Credaf fod hynny'n rhywbeth hollol synhwyrol.

[155] **Paul Davies:** Byddwch chi a fi yn anghytuno ar yr hyn y mae Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig yn ei wneud i ddiwygio'r wladwriaeth les. Fodd bynnag, a ydych yn derbyn y gellid dadlau bod rhai o'r diwygiadau y mae Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig yn eu gwneud yn mynd i roi mwy o gyfrifoldebau i chi fel Llywodraeth? Rwy'n deall, fel rhan o'r diwygiad, y bydd

important, in my view, that we have a benefits system for the whole of the UK. Having said that, it is very important that we use the powers that we have—one example of that is *Flying Start*—in order to ensure that we can have a positive impact on the lives of children as they grow up and develop.

Paul Davies: Benefits aside, do you believe that you, as Government, should have more responsibility to tackle this problem, and, if so, what kind of additional responsibilities would you like to see to get to grips with child poverty?

The First Minister: It is very difficult to know exactly what responsibilities the Government would want without the funding following them. It would be a start if we could see a change in the funding of Wales by an amendment to the Barnett formula to ensure that we have the level of funding that we should have with any new system. That would help. Powers are one thing, but the funds are another. In order to ensure that you can use powers, it is important that you have the funds.

Paul Davies: So, you would perhaps accept more responsibilities if the funding accompanied them. Is that what you are saying?

The First Minister: That is the basis of what we have said to Silk part 2. We have said that, if any further powers are provided to the Assembly or the Government, we would want to see the budget devolved with them. I think that is entirely sensible.

Paul Davies: We will disagree on what the UK Government is doing to reform the welfare state. However, do you accept that we could argue that some of the reforms that the UK Government is putting in place will give greater responsibilities to you as a Government? As I understand it, as part of the reform, there will be a redefinition of the benefits criteria, such as free school meals.

ailldiffernïo *criteria* budd-daliadau, megis prydau ysgol am ddim. Bydd hynny'n dod yn gyfrifoldeb i chi fel Llywodraeth. A ydych yn derbyn, felly, y bydd rhai o'r diwygiadau yn rhoi mwy o gyfrifoldeb i chi er mwyn i chi allu taclo tlodi plant?

[156] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Roeddem yn gwybod hynny. Gwnaethom godi hyn fisoedd yn ôl gyda'r Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau ond nid ydym wedi cael ateb. Es i i gyfarfod Cydbwyllgor y Gweinidogion yn Llundain gyda Leighton Andrews ychydig fisoedd yn ôl. Yn ystod y cyfarfod hwnnw, nid oedd atebion i'r cwestiynau hyn. Y broblem yw, wrth gymryd hyn ymlaen—gan roi y gwahaniaethau rhyngom ynglŷn â pholisi i un ochr—nid yw Whitehall wastad yn ystyried beth yw'r effaith ar yr Alban a Chymru ynglŷn â *criteria* megis prydau ysgol am ddim. Felly, rydym yn edrych ar ba *criteria* fyddai'n cael eu defnyddio yng Nghymru. Mae hyn yn rhywbeth yr ydym wedi gwybod amdano ers misoedd.

[157] **Paul Davies:** A ydych yn cytuno bod y cyfrifoldeb ychwanegol hwnnw yn mynd i fod yn bositif o'ch ran chi? A ydych yn credu y gall hynny fod yn rhywbeth positif yn hytrach na negatif?

[158] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae'n gyfrifoldeb a allai fod yn bositif oherwydd nid oes cost ynghlwm wrtho. Yr hyn rydym yn pryderu yn ei gylch yw pan fyddwn yn cael cyfrifoldebau nad ydym wedi gofyn amdanynt heb y gyllideb yn eu dilyn. Mae budd-daliadau'r dreth gyngor yn enghraifft o hynny, lle daeth 90% o'r gyllideb er bod y cyfrifoldeb i gyd wedi cael ei drosglwyddo i ni. Rydym i gyd yn gwybod beth ddigwyddodd o achos hynny. Mae hynny'n beth da dros ben i'r Trysorlys, ond yn beth gwael dros ben i Gymru. Nid wyf erioed wedi dadlau na ddylem gael cyfrifoldebau ariannol. Mae hynny'n amlwg yn ôl yr hyn y dywedodd y Llywodraeth i ran 1 Silk. Fodd bynnag, mae'n bwysig dros ben bod setliad teg ynglŷn â'r cyllid sy'n dod o'r Trysorlys, ac nid ydym, yn fy marn i, yn y sefyllfa honno eto.

[159] **Paul Davies:** Yn ôl eich papur, rydych yn credu y bydd diwygiadau Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig yn cael

That will become your responsibility as a Government. Do you accept, therefore, that some of the reforms will give you greater responsibility so that you can tackle child poverty?

The First Minister: We knew about this. We raised this months ago with the Department for Work and Pensions but we did not receive a response. I went to the Joint Ministerial Committee in London with Leighton Andrews some months ago. During that meeting, there were no answers to these questions. The problem is, in taking this forward—let us put to one side the differences between us on policy—Whitehall does not always take into account the impact on Scotland and Wales in relation to criteria such as free school meals. So, we are looking at what criteria will be used in Wales. This is something that we have been aware of for some months.

Paul Davies: Do you agree that that additional responsibility will be a positive thing from your point of view? Do you believe that that can be a positive thing rather than a negative thing?

The First Minister: It is a responsibility that could be positive because there is no cost attached. What we are concerned about is when we are given responsibilities that we have not requested without the budget following them. Council tax benefit is an example of that, where 90% of the budget was devolved although the entire responsibility was devolved to us. We all know what happened as a result of that. That is an excellent thing for the Treasury, but a very poor development for Wales. I have never argued that we should not have fiscal responsibilities. That is clear from what the Government said to Silk part 1. However, it is very important that there should be an equitable settlement with regard to the funds provided through the Treasury, and, in my opinion, we are not at that point as of yet.

Paul Davies: According to your paper, you believe that the UK Government's reforms will have a negative effect on child poverty.

effaith negyddol ar dlodi plant. Yn ôl chi, bydd nifer y plant mewn tlodi yn cynyddu rhyw 6,000. A allwch chi ddweud ble mae'r dystiolaeth i hynny?

[160] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Rydym yn credu y bydd dros £50 biliwn yn cael ei dynnu allan o'r economi yng Nghymru. Bydd hynny'n cael effaith mewn sawl ffordd. Mae'n rhaid inni hefyd gofio bod y newidiadau yn mynd i effeithio ar deuluoedd sy'n gweithio a'u plant. Byddant yn colli budd-daliadau, ac, er eu bod yn gweithio, bydd hynny'n golygu y bydd llai o arian ganddynt. Mae hynny'n golygu y bydd potensial y bydd mwy o blant yn mynd i mewn i dlodi. Mae hynny'n rhywbeth, yn fy marn i, sydd yn esbonio ei hunan. Os ydych yn tynnu arian oddi wrth deuluoedd, mae llai o arian ganddynt ac mae risg, felly, y byddant yn troi'n dlawd.

[161] **Paul Davies:** Mae risg, fel y gwnaethoch ddweud, ond ble mae'r dystiolaeth i hynny? Dyna'r cwestiwn rwy'n ei ofyn.

[162] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae'n amlwg, os ydych yn cymryd budd-daliadau oddi wrth bobl, yn enwedig y rhai sy'n gweithio'n barod, bydd eu hincwm yn cwmpo. Rwy'n sôn am y rheini sy'n ennill y lleiaf mewn cymdeithas. Nid yw'n od i ddweud y bydd gan deuluoedd lai o arian—er bod llawer ohonynt yn gweithio—ar adeg y mae costau ynni a llety, er enghraifft, yn cynyddu, a chyda llai o arian, mae mwy o deuluoedd yn mynd i droi'n dlawd. Mae hynny'n weddol amlwg.

[163] **Paul Davies:** Rydych wedi'i gwneud yn glir, fel Llywodraeth, nad yw'r arfau i gyd gennych i fynd i'r afael â thlodi plant, felly mae'n bwysig bod eich Llywodraeth chi a Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd er mwyn gwneud hynny. Efallai bydd dulliau gwahanol gan y ddwy Lywodraeth, ond sut y bydd hynny'n gweithio'n ymarferol? Pa drafodaethau ydych chi'n eu cael gyda Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig i sicrhau bod y polisïau yn Llundain ac yng Nghaerdydd yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd i fynd i'r afael â'r broblem?

[164] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae llawer o gysylltiad wedi bod rhyngom ni a Llundain.

According to you, the number of children in poverty will increase by around 6,000. Can you tell us where the evidence for that has come from?

The First Minister: We believe that over £50 billion will be taken out of the Welsh economy. That will have a huge impact in a number of ways. We must also bear in mind that the changes will impact upon working families and their children. They will lose benefits, and, although they are working, that will mean that they will have less money. That means that there is a potential that more children will fall into poverty. That, in my opinion, is self-explanatory. If you take money away from families, they have less money and there is a risk, therefore, that they will fall into poverty.

Paul Davies: There is a risk, as you have said, but where does the evidence come for that? That is the question that I am asking.

The First Minister: It is apparent that, if you withdraw benefits from people, particularly those who are already in work, their income will fall. I am talking about those who earn the least in society. It is not strange to say that families will have less money—although many of them are working—at a time when energy and accommodation costs, for example, are increasing, and with less money, more families will fall into poverty. That is quite obvious.

Paul Davies: You have made it clear that, as a Government, you do not have all of the tools needed to tackle child poverty, so it is important that your Government and that of the UK collaborate in order to do so. The two Governments might have different methods, but how will it work on a practical level? What discussions are you having with the UK Government to ensure that the policies in London and Cardiff work together to tackle the problem?

The First Minister: There has been a lot of contact between us and London. There is a

Mae cyfarfod yr wythnos nesaf o Gyd-bwyllgor y Gweinidogion ac un o'r pynciau trafod fydd tlodi plant, os cofiaf yn iawn. Fodd bynnag, nid oes llawer o gytuno rhwng y Llywodraethau ynghylch y ffordd ymlaen. Rydym wedi bod yn edrych ar y ffyrdd y bydd y newidiadau'n effeithio ar Gymru, ac un enghraifft yw'r effaith ar blant sy'n cael bwyd am ddim yn yr ysgol. Mae sawl enghraifft o gydweithio rhyngom ni a Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig, ond yn y maes hwn, bach iawn o gytuno sydd ynglŷn â'r ffordd ymlaen.

[165] **Paul Davies:** A yw'r trafodaethau hynny'n digwydd yn gyson?

[166] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Wrth gwrs. Mae nifer o lythyrau wedi'u hanfon yn ôl ac ymlaen ac mae trafod wedi bod yn y JMC, fel y byddai pobl yn ei ddisgwyl. Er mai bach iawn o gytuno sydd ar y ffordd ymlaen ynglŷn â budd-daliadau, mae'n rhaid trafod materion rhwng Llywodraethau.

[167] **Mark Drakeford:** First Minister, I have asked you this before, but as it has arisen in the last set of questions, I wanted to seek a further assurance from you. In England, the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, has suggested that the change to passporting arrangements under universal credit will be an opportunity to restrict access to free school meals to the first two children in any family. Can you give an assurance that, in the child poverty context in Wales, you have no thoughts of us following the same path?

[168] **The First Minister:** I can give that assurance. I have not heard about that, I must say, but it seems to be an exceptionally Darwinian approach to life that the first two children get free school meals and the others do not. I am not going to try to explain the logic of that, but I can certainly give you the assurance that you seek.

[169] **David Melding:** To follow up on one area, in response to Paul Davies, you said that, as the national wealth declines, you are likely to see an increase in child poverty and that benefit reform also brings a danger of that. However, given the way in which we currently define child poverty, that is not necessarily so. It is justified as 60% below median income. I thought that that was one of the things that the UK Government would look at, because it sees the perversity of sticking to that as a definition. You could fail to capture those people who become worse off but who are not classified as being in poverty anymore, because all that has happened is that median income has fallen. So, will you be co-operating at the JMC to, perhaps, see a suite of more sophisticated measures of child poverty?

[170] **The First Minister:** We are open to suggestions as to how the definition of child poverty can be improved, as long as it does not lead to the definition being blurred. Indeed, we will be working on a response to the UK Government's proposals for the definition of child poverty.

[171] **Eluned Parrott:** I want to move on to the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 and your response through that to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In your paper, you said that you want to see a deepening of a rights-

meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee next week and one of the issues for discussion, if I remember correctly, will be child poverty. However, there is not much agreement between the Governments on the way forward. We have been looking at ways in which the changes will affect Wales, and one example is the effect on children who have free school meals. There are many examples of collaboration between us and the UK Government, but on this matter, there is little agreement on the way forward.

Paul Davies: Do those discussions happen constantly?

The First Minister: Of course. Several letters have been sent back and forth and there has been discussion in the JMC, as people would expect. Although there is very little agreement on the way forward on benefits, it is essential to discuss matters between Governments.

based approach to child poverty. Can you explain to us the meaning of the phrase ‘a deepening of a rights-based approach’ and how that differs from the approach that you have taken previously?

[172] **The First Minister:** We have to understand that children have the right to seek not to be brought up in poverty. That means that children have the right to expect Government, at all levels, to do all that it can in order to alleviate and remove that poverty. If someone asked me ‘what have you done?’, I would point to schemes such as Jobs Growth Wales, Flying Start and the early years programme as ways in which we are helping to lift children and their families out of poverty.

[173] **Eluned Parrott:** How does that rights-based approach differ from what you were doing previously? Surely, previously, interventions were designed to do exactly those kinds of things.

[174] **The First Minister:** It creates an expectation that these things will be done. It is important, as the Measure has outlined, that there is a legal expectation on Government to do what it should do to alleviate child poverty. That takes it a step further than merely saying ‘we’re going to do it as a matter of policy’. This is ‘we are going to do it because the law requires it’.

[175] **Eluned Parrott:** The 2011 Measure requires Welsh Ministers to give due regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. That convention places a duty on Governments to promote proactive behaviour in tackling child poverty. Critics would say that embedding child poverty across Government, rather than having a distinct focus on it, might lead to actions on child poverty being less proactive rather than more proactive. How do you respond to that?

[176] **The First Minister:** This is the argument for a Minister for poverty. I think that there are dangers in it, and I will explain why. To me, child poverty, and poverty in general, is a cross-cutting issue. There is always a danger in Government that, if you create a department, people will assume that that department does everything in that field. Poverty, and child poverty particularly, is beyond that; it is something that should be tackled across departments rather than be compartmentalised in one department. Although there is a Minister with a responsibility role, the delivery comes through the delivery unit, and also through a number of departments. If you look at the tackling poverty action plan, for example, it is a plan being taken forward through delivery by a number of departments. The danger is—it is never clear, because you have to have portfolio Ministers—that if you have somebody who is responsible solely for poverty, it will no longer be seen as an important cross-cutting issue, which it is.

[177] **Eluned Parrott:** I understand and have some sympathy with what you are saying, but it remains the fact, does it not, that child poverty is a consideration for all your Ministers, potentially, but is not the primary driver, necessarily, for any of your Ministers? The Minister with responsibility in this area is Carl Sargeant; is that correct?

[178] **The First Minister:** Yes.

[179] **Eluned Parrott:** He is the Minister for Local Government and Communities and we have had legislation before the Assembly from him on issues ranging from local government bye-laws to the active travel Bill, in front of us at the moment, to council tax measures. However, we have not had any substantive work on the same kind of scale on child poverty. Would you say that it is not the primary area of his portfolio?

[180] **The First Minister:** I would think that anybody who comes into politics has a burning ambition—I would hope so—to deal with poverty, and he is no exception. The

tackling poverty action plan will be refreshed in June, and work has been ongoing on that. It might help, Chair, if I explained how, on a practical level, the issue is dealt with in different departments. There is a cross-Government programme board, at director-general level, which deals with the issue of poverty and the tackling poverty action plan. It is jointly chaired by the Minister for Local Government and Communities and the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services. There are also senior poverty champions in each department, whose role is to assess each department's current commitments to see whether they can do more to contribute to the tackling poverty agenda. There is a system in place to ensure that cross-cutting issues are taken forward in each department.

12.30 p.m.

[181] **Eluned Parrott:** Do teams or individuals have that as a specific role, or is being the champion for that area part of a much bigger role that they have?

[182] **Ms Cassidy:** The champions were picked in their departments. They often have a role that has a big contribution to make anyway. For example, somebody who is working on youth engagement and reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training is also a poverty champion. It is a subject that is relevant to most people's work. It is not the only thing that they do, but they provide a co-ordinating point and have been good in energising that work across each department.

[183] **Eluned Parrott:** The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 started to apply to policy and legislation in 2012. It will be applied to all Government functions in about a year's time. How do you expect the structures within Government departments to change in order to prepare for that?

[184] **Ms Cassidy:** It has to be woven into everybody's work. It is not for me to change the structures of the organisation. I do not think that it would require that change. The rights-based approach was a matter of policy well before it became a matter of legal requirement. It is already ingrained in people's work. In my area, people work on youth justice and it has always been a part of how they approach that subject.

[185] **Eluned Parrott:** Forgive me, Chair, I will repeat myself, because I did not get a clear answer that I understand. You talk about the implementation and a move towards a rights-based approach. We all understand what a rights-based approach is, and we all understand the reasons why you would want to do that, but what I do not understand is what approach you had before you had a rights-based approach.

[186] **Ms Cassidy:** We had a rights-based approach before, but it is now statutory. Is that a fair answer? People had been working in the Welsh Government on the basis of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child well before the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 was introduced. However, giving something statutory force ensures that it will happen. People have been trained in order to do that.

[187] **The First Minister:** There is an analogy to be drawn with the Human Rights Act 1998. Convention rights were enforceable before the Human Rights Act 1998 came into being, but the Act directly incorporated aspects of the convention into the different jurisdictions in the UK, which were, as far as the public were concerned, easier to enforce. There is a similar analogy here. The approach was there before the Measure came into place. The Measure enshrined that approach in the law and made it clearer.

[188] **Eluned Parrott:** On how that has worked, one thing that the first commencement Order has introduced is the children's rights impact assessments as part of the process. Regulatory impact assessments were discussed at our last committee meeting, when you said

that you were not entirely happy with their robustness. Are these children's rights impact assessments being carried out with the level of depth and rigour that you would wish to see, or would you like to see them improved as well?

[189] **The First Minister:** I have no reason to doubt the rigour of those assessments, bearing in mind that they carry legal force and that there are certain consequences if those assessments are not carried out robustly.

[190] **Eluned Parrott:** What kinds of resources are put into developing those assessments? When those impact assessments come to us, they often seem to be very brief documents and are sometimes subject to challenge by third-party organisations that say that the impact is greater than or different to what has been stated. Are there opportunities for people to engage in that development process?

[191] **Ms Cassidy:** Yes, of course. There are opportunities that build on existing practice. A programme of training was undertaken throughout the Welsh Government when the rights Measure was introduced, so that all staff familiarised themselves with the obligations. When advice is put to Ministers, it evidences what consideration has been given to the impact of that policy and proposal on young people. In the way that policies are developed and consulted upon, there are particular approaches to ensure that children and young people are consulted and involved in that. For example, on the legislation that is currently being developed around ending violence against women and domestic abuse, children from a secondary school have been engaged in a project to run consultation events in their own school on that subject. That is just an example of the way in which this is built in right from the outset, rather than being something that is stuck on at the end.

[192] **Eluned Parrott:** Returning to the idea of proactive action from the Government, you say in your paper that you anticipate having the biggest impact on child poverty through educational attainment, childcare, teams that work with families, and employment. You mention some of the programmes—for example, Flying Start, moving from the very young children and moving those into schools, and things like the pupil premium and free school breakfasts—through which you aim to tackle child poverty. However, the way we measure child poverty is not absolute and, as we have already discussed, it is comparative. How do you make sure that resources are targeted to improve the lot of the children who are disadvantaged, as opposed to all children, thereby moving everybody's attainment upwards, if you see what I mean? At the moment, free school breakfasts are not targeted at the most disadvantaged children. In fact, I use them myself as a very welcome—thank you—source of free childcare in the morning.

[193] **The First Minister:** I welcome your endorsement of free school breakfasts.

[194] **David Melding:** Do you welcome it even just on that basis?

[195] **The First Minister:** Indeed so. The question is how do we target. I would suggest that Flying Start is an example of targeting: £55 million over the next three years to support its expansion, and the capital budget is now £19 million. Local authorities have also been allocated £42 million for Families First in 2012-13, and it is worth emphasising that that is an uplift compared with the money that they received under the former Cymorth programme. Just over £43 million has been made available for local authorities in 2013-14. The rationale behind Families First is to develop a team-around-the-family approach, as it is described, to provide support at the earliest point possible. All local authorities now have those teams in place. So, what we have tried to do in terms of Families First and Flying Start is to target those who need help the most and who need that assistance at the earliest possible stage of life. Yes, there are some schemes in Government that are universal. Free prescriptions is an example of such a scheme, and free bus passes are not means tested. Also, we know that there

will be a need to target specific sections of the population. In terms of child poverty, there are two schemes there that do just that.

[196] **Eluned Parrott:** Returning to this idea of targeting, when resources are limited, in order to reduce the inequalities, which is essentially what tackling child poverty is all about, you need to make sure that you are focusing the interventions that you are delivering on the children who are most in need, rather than spreading it between children who do not necessarily need it. In terms of Flying Start, what criteria are used to target individuals who may benefit from this programme? Is it done on a geographical basis or is it done on an individual basis?

[197] **Ms Cassidy:** The areas are selected on the basis of households receiving income benefits. So, it is already targeted on a geographical basis, which corresponds pretty well with the clusters in Communities First as well, which is also targeted on the basis of areas of deprivation. Within that, it is possible to ensure that the programme is operated so that we make sure that we reach the families most in need within that area. All families are eligible, but we try to make sure that the families who most need it are the ones who are encouraged to take it up.

[198] **Eluned Parrott:** How is that done? I am intrigued by this idea of areas and how specific you are in terms of areas and how robust or up-to-date your data is? Obviously, you have changes in populations and new housing developments, for example. I took part in a number of activities with my young children, designed for deprived families, because I have a Barry postcode, and the assumption was that it is a deprived area. However, mine is not a particularly deprived family, but I accessed things that were designed to tackle inequality. So, how defined are these things? How accurate is your targeting? Are you certain that you are improving that targeting to ensure that the children who need it most get the resources most?

[199] **Ms Cassidy:** The basis for targeting is data that come from the Department for Work and Pensions on the income levels of those families. We have data from the Welsh index of multiple deprivation, which looks, in terms of Communities First, at the areas that are in the top 10% of areas of deprivation in Wales. When you have that approach, you cannot target it so much that you exclude and do not allow families who happen to live in that area to participate, because you do not want it to become ghettoised and something that is only available to people who can prove that they have a certain level of deprivation. It has to be available to all, but targeted as best we can. In fact, one reason the Communities First clusters are based on a slightly wider area is that we did not want to have such tight boundaries around things that they would exclude people who were still in poverty but just the other side of the street. It is a difficult thing to balance, but we are improving the way that we do it.

[200] **Ms Marks:** The Communities First clusters are based on the 2011 Welsh index of multiple deprivation, and that is refreshed on a regular basis. Clearly, we want to target the areas of highest levels of deprivation, bearing in mind that we need some flexibility around that because not all the poorest people, or the people who need assisted or targeted programmes, live within those areas. We have moved on from the criticism in the past around very tight boundaries to help people on the periphery of those areas as well.

[201] **Eluned Parrott:** How do you identify and target resources to help people who are living in poverty within a more affluent area?

[202] **Ms Marks:** It is based on a very specific area around the LSOAs, and even within some of the most affluent areas, there are some pockets of deprivation. Cardiff is an interesting example in that there are a number of Communities First clusters that are very deprived. Some of them are next to very well-off areas. However, the resources that we then put in are based on those cluster areas and the lead delivery body's assessment of what is

needed in those particularly deprived communities. Clearly, the cross-over between them is helpful from time to time, but we aim to get it to those 10% most deprived areas.

[203] **Eluned Parrott:** Finally, how do you target resources at individuals living in poverty in rural areas who, by definition, will not be part of a cluster?

[204] **Ms Marks:** There are a number of ways in which the help goes to the rural areas. It does not very much go through the Communities First programme because the levels of deprivation within the Welsh index of multiple deprivation are based on concentration of numbers of people in poverty, rather than rural areas. The assistance to rural areas goes through other programmes such as the rural development plan.

[205] **Mark Drakeford:** I did not want to leave this line of questioning without putting on record the positive reasons why the Welsh Government opts selectively for universal services as a way of tackling child poverty. We know that universal services are much more effective at reaching those families who need them the most. So, they are economically and socially more effective. For example, had the Welsh Government, instead of adopting a universal rights-based approach to free swimming for children, decided to have a poor children's queue to get in free, while other people paid, I imagine that we would know two things. One is that poor people would not join that queue because of the stigma, and secondly, we would lose that really big advantage that we have in an increasingly polarised society of having places where children from all sorts of backgrounds are able to come together and share common experiences.

12.45 p.m.

[206] Is not one answer to the question that Eluned raised with you earlier about the difference the point that what is distinctive about a rights-based approach is that the opposite of it is a needs-based approach, where people have to parade their poverty in order to get access to particular services? The reason that the Welsh Government has a rights-based approach to poverty is that children have a right to free swimming, free breakfasts in primary schools and free access to museums and galleries. That is just a very different way of thinking about the way that we tackle poverty among children.

[207] **The First Minister:** I could not improve on what the Member has said.

[208] **David Melding:** Thank you for that very succinct answer, First Minister. I commend your ability to not always repeat things—

[209] **The First Minister:** I have been accused of being terse in the past, Chair, but I am trying to avoid that without being too long-winded.

[210] **David Melding:** I would like to finish this session, which I think has been very helpful. It is quite right that we have put various views to you. There are probably no more important subjects to face in terms of the reduction of poverty, and particularly reducing child poverty. I was interested, when I looked at the statistics, to see that, in the first 10 years of devolution—or roughly up to 2010, as there are not much data since then—the best progress by far was made in Scotland. Wales pretty much compares with the reductions that are in England and Northern Ireland, although our base was higher, unfortunately. However, the Scots seem to have done something that has not been emulated elsewhere. I just wonder whether it is the delivery unit or your officials here who are dealing with this policy. Has anyone tried to look at why Scotland did so much better than the rest of the UK over that period?

[211] **Ms Cassidy:** I can deal with that question. One could point out that Scotland had

slightly more money, but in addition to that—

[212] **David Melding:** Yes; they would have at the start of this period. That would not have changed their relative—

[213] **Ms Cassidy:** The approach that Scotland has taken is a kind of appreciative inquiry approach, building on the positives of communities and building capacity, which is not that dissimilar from the approach that we are taking. Clearly, we are willing to continue that dialogue with Scotland in order to learn from them. We do that on a UK basis—on a four-countries basis—but we will specifically go to Scotland to look in more detail at what they are doing.

[214] **David Melding:** Would it be worth doing a more rigorous piece of work? Unless the data are deceptive, Scotland is better than twice as good in terms of reducing child poverty than anywhere else in the UK. Presumably, they are doing some things that have been more effective.

[215] **The First Minister:** Perhaps I could write to you, Chair, in terms of examining what has happened in Scotland, and perhaps outline a view on what has happened there and the reasons for that.

[216] **Ms Cassidy:** I should add that—

[217] **David Melding:** I think that we would welcome that. I put it in the context that we, according to these data that I have been quoting, are not out of alignment with England and Northern Ireland. I am not trying to put us in sharp relief and say that we are in a much worse position. It may be the case that Scotland has really discovered a suite of measures that has taken it to a higher performance, and we should seek to emulate that if a review confirms it.

[218] I think that that concludes the session. Once again, First Minister, I thank you for your participation, for the way that you have approached this session and for the answers that you have given. I am also very grateful to your officials. I must apologise to Kate Cassidy and Eleanor Marks because, in the switchover halfway through, I did not introduce them. You have both participated and helped our work. Once again, First Minister, thank you for your attendance today.

12.50 p.m.

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r
Cyfarfod
Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from
the Meeting**

[219] **David Melding:** I move that

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

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

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 12.50 p.m.

The public part of the meeting ended at 12.50 p.m.