



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

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

Dydd Mercher, 20 Tachwedd 2013
Wednesday, 20 November 2013

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Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi 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

Leighton Andrews	Llafur Labour
Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Janet Finch-Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Gwyn R. Price	Llafur Labour
Jenny Rathbone	Llafur Labour
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Lindsay Whittle	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Bernadette Bowen Thomson	Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr, Cymru Ddiogelach Deputy Chief Executive, Safer Wales
Steve Chapman	Cydlynnydd Atal Masnachu mewn Pobl Anti-Human Trafficking Co-ordinator
Angelina Rodriques	Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr, Black Association of Women Step Out Deputy Chief Executive, Black Association of Women Step Out
Hannah Wharf	Cyngor Ffoaduriaid Cymru Welsh Refugee Council
Mike Wilkinson	New Pathways New Pathways

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

Leanne Hatcher	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Hannah Johnson	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

Claire Morris

Clerc
Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:14.
The meeting began at 09:14.*

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Christine Chapman:** Bore da, and welcome to the Assembly's Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. I remind Members that, if they have any mobile phones, or anything, they should be switched off, because they affect the transmission. We have not received any apologies this morning.

09:15

Sesiwn Graffu ar Fasnachu Mewn Pobl: Steve Chapman, Cydlynnydd Atal Masnachu Mewn Pobl Scrutiny Session on Human Trafficking: Steve Chapman, Anti-Human Trafficking Co-ordinator

[2] **Christine Chapman:** I would like to welcome Steve Chapman, who is the anti-human trafficking co-ordinator. Welcome, Mr Chapman; thank you for providing the paper in advance. Members will have read the paper, so, if you are happy, we will go straight into questions. I see that you are content to do so; thank you.

[3] I want to start off with a question just to understand what your priorities are for tackling human trafficking in Wales. Could you just outline those as a starting point?

[4] **Mr Chapman:** Yes. The priority, really, is about getting an evidence base, because one of the issues that I find is that human trafficking is perceived by many people to be a hidden crime. It is under-reported, and all I can say is that people are not looking hard enough. Without knowing what the evidence base is, it is very difficult to channel activities and resources. Last year, in the national referral mechanism, only 34 cases of human trafficking in Wales were referred, 10 of which were of children. My big issue, when I go to meet partners, particularly the police, but also local authorities and other people, is that, and I ask how many cases they have in their area, when they are in single numbers, it is very difficult to engage people. So, it has been one of my main priorities to build an evidence base.

[5] On top of that, since taking up my role exactly a year ago today, one of the issues that I found was that there was a lack of infrastructure in place. So, one of my priorities has been to establish a leadership group made up of enforcement and support organisations. However, the key leaders in those organisations include Jeff Farrar, who is now chief constable of Gwent Police and represents the police forces, and people such as Keith Towler, who is the children's commissioner. They also include many people from other organisations from outside Wales: the Gangmasters Licensing Authority and the Home Office send their main people. From that leadership group, we have formulated a delivery plan, because it is all about delivery. There has been a lot of rhetoric on this subject, but I am hoping that you are now seeing things on the news—this time last year, there were no operations that the police were undertaking. I can confidently say today that, in every police area in Wales, there are operations taking place.

[6] **Christine Chapman:** Certainly, I think that the profile of this issue has gone up.

[7] **Mr Chapman:** It is about raising the profile. For me, it is a bit like *Groundhog Day*, because, in a former life—I am sure that Members around the table will recognise this—I saw that domestic abuse was in a pretty similar state to human trafficking. It was under-reported, victims did not have the confidence to report, and, dare I say it, organisations were not trained or equipped to deal with this. So, I am taking on many of the lessons from the domestic abuse agenda.

[8] **Christine Chapman:** Just to follow on from that, if you have not already mentioned them, what specific actions have you taken to consolidate the work of the previous anti-human trafficking co-ordinator? Is there anything different?

[9] **Mr Chapman:** I think that the main difference is that Bob Tooby was very much engaged in the police arena and was working with Gwent Police. As you know, I am a civil servant, and I am firmly embedded in the Welsh Government. I work within the violence against women and domestic abuse teams. I think that I am right where I should be, at the centre, and I think that I am in a better role, but, yes, I have consolidated some of Bob's work, particularly in raising awareness, where he did a sterling job. It is about getting out there and getting those messages out there, and that is, dare I say it, to the general public as well as professionals.

[10] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Peter, did you want to come in here?

[11] **Peter Black:** Thanks, Chair. You have outlined some of the challenges that we face in Wales, specifically the lack of infrastructure and awareness of human trafficking. Are there any other specific challenges that Wales faces in terms of fighting human trafficking?

[12] **Mr Chapman:** I think that we have the necessary pillars there. For enforcement, we now have the National Crime Agency, which was launched on 4 October. It is now in a position to drive this agenda. It is one of the priorities of that agency. The police have now got Operation Eagle, which is for all forces in Wales and England. In each force, there is a single point of contact. That has been very good because that is getting the message across to enforcement. However, it is not all about enforcement: it is about support. One of the priorities that I put in place was for our first-responder organisations. I am quite pleased and proud to say that we have BAWSO and New Pathways, which are Welsh non-governmental organisations that are there to deal with victims, who, dare I say it, do not always want to give their stories and come into the national referral mechanism to officials like the police or social services. In many incidences, the countries where they come from have a corrupt police force or the officials are not as professional as our officials. By having BAWSO and New Pathways, I feel that victims can confidentially consider themselves for the NRM. We have already seen the number of referrals going up in Wales. I cannot give you the exact, official details but, in 2012, 34 cases were referred; as of yesterday, 37 cases have been referred in Wales this year, so we have already gone past the 2012 figures. That is based on the first three quarters of 2013.

[13] **Peter Black:** The strategic round-table report in 2012 noted that

[14] 'local authorities did not always appear to be aware of their responsibilities to people who have been trafficked or take referrals seriously'.

[15] As a councillor, I know that this is not the sort of thing that comes up in council meetings or when you talk to officers. Are local authorities taking their role seriously?

[16] **Mr Chapman:** Yes, they are, sir. The Minister invited the chief executive of Denbighshire County Council, Mohammed Mehmet, to lead the public services leadership group in Wales on human trafficking. I can tell you that the chief executive is pushing the

report by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers to his colleagues out there. Also, I am engaging with local authorities. In the Welsh Government, we have a number of community cohesion co-ordinators with whom I work very closely and they work with all 22 local authorities, so we are raising awareness. In addition to the leadership group, we now have a number of localised groups for operational matters. Gwent has had one for a number of years; I think that it is fair to say that the Gwent consultative group has been in place for a couple of years now, and it is very good. We also have groups now in Cardiff, Bridgend and in west Wales in Swansea, and we have a group being formed in north Wales as we speak. We have recruited our first regional co-ordinator, Jim Coy, who is working in north Wales and started two weeks ago. He is going to put a group together there. We are going to introduce a group in the Dyfed-Powys area in the very near future. So, it is about getting those grass-roots groups in place. They are multi-agency. They are made up of local authorities, police, health and non-governmental organisations. It is about getting those grass-roots connections; that is the key to it.

[17] **Peter Black:** I think that you said that you are a lone voice trying to co-ordinate this from Wales, without a team beneath you. Do you think that the human trafficking work is properly resourced? Are local authorities and the various other authorities putting the resources in to tackle it properly?

[18] **Mr Chapman:** I think what it is, sir, is that, once we identify a critical mass, I think that resources will be directed there. If I could speak for children, they are mandatorily referred into the national referral mechanism. There are resources there for safeguarding. I would say, while I cannot exactly say for certain, that there are resources there for those. As regards adults, it is about the critical mass. With such low numbers, I have to prepare people for this but I also have to keep on reinforcing it. If I do not reinforce this message, those pillars for receiving support will not be there, and that is the last thing that I want. So, while I cannot give you a 100% answer, what I would say is that people are alert to it and, so far, with the numbers that we have had, there have been no issues with resources. However, it is about continuing to reinforce.

[19] **Jenny Rathbone:** I was delighted to hear your earlier statement about how this is not about grandstanding, it is about operational work. That is excellent. I wonder whether you could just discuss with us the complex relationship with the immigration service. It has targets for deporting people and I wondered how your very important work interfaces with its work, which is to get people to leave the country.

[20] **Mr Chapman:** The first difference, as you know very well, is that there is this misconception that people-smuggling encompasses human trafficking. The Home Office immigration service is there to deal with immigration crime. What I can say is that I have the director of the Home Office for Wales sitting on our leadership group; I work with it and I am working now with people on its enforcement wing, because what I want to get over is that, in many cases, we do not want people being seen as offenders when, in actual fact, they are victims. This is a hearts-and-minds issue. It is not a battle; it is something that I am making sure that they understand.

[21] Many times, victims will comply with authority, they will not challenge it, because, where they come from, they have seen that people in authority will do something very nasty to them. I speak with the immigration service regularly now to say, 'When you go to a brothel, the girls in the brothel, in many cases, will not be offenders, they will be victims of crime.' The young people who have been working in nail bars and on cannabis farms who have been arrested are not the offenders; they are victims. It is good that we are working with the Crown Prosecution Service, because, as you know, a number of cases have been overturned.

[22] I am working on an initiative with the probation service and the National Offender Management Service to ensure that people who have been sentenced are re-interviewed and, if they are victims, that the necessary action is taken. In many cases, people will plead guilty because they are in fear of the traffickers. They will plead guilty to the offence, because they are told to plead guilty, and they go to prison. If they inform on the traffickers, the traffickers have their passports and they know where their families live, particularly overseas. We are not talking about sending someone around to have a quiet word with them; we are talking about violence and sometimes, death. So, I am working with the immigration service. I am quite pleased to see that I have the director on our leadership group, and, at a grass-roots level, I am dealing with the service locally.

[23] **Jenny Rathbone:** That is all very good news. Safer Wales was quoted in a BBC Wales article in April as suggesting that your post was too closely aligned to the Welsh Government to be truly effective. Would you like to comment on that? Do you think that it was thinking of the link with immigration at the time?

[24] **Mr Chapman:** I think that the situation is this: of course I am aligned to the Welsh Government; I am employed by the Welsh Government, and I am very proud of that. Before I answer your question fully, may I say that the Welsh Government is doing things here in Wales that are not taking place across the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland, Scotland or England? I am the only anti-human trafficking co-ordinator in place. I am involved in and giving evidence to the modern slavery Bill review group and, as you may or may not be aware, the Home Office plans to introduce a fourth session Bill next May. In that Bill, there will be the introduction of an anti-human trafficking commissioner. The role will be independent. I know that, on 17 October, my Minister went to an extraordinary meeting of the inter-departmental ministerial group, which was held in 10 Downing Street, and the Prime Minister revealed his plans for this modern slavery Bill and that he plans to introduce a UK anti-human trafficking commissioner.

09:30

[25] We welcome the fact that the UK has woken up to this. We will certainly work with it. Part of the commissioners' work in the non-legislative part of the Act is to look at introducing what they call regional co-ordinators, and guess what—they are looking at what we are doing here in Wales. So, I would like to think that we are ahead of the curve. Yes, I am working and supporting my colleagues in the rest of the UK on what we are doing here. We are seen as demonstrating good practice. I can tell you that people contact me regularly from around the UK to find out what we are doing.

[26] **Jenny Rathbone:** So, your location in the Welsh Government offices is a plus rather than a minus.

[27] **Mr Chapman:** I think that it is very much a plus, and we should be proud to say that we are leading the way.

[28] **Jenny Rathbone:** Previously, the post was located in one of the police services. Is there a danger then that the police lose focus on this important issue?

[29] **Mr Chapman:** No, I do not think so. The fact is that I have a number of stakeholders and the police are one of many. No organisation in itself can crack anti-human trafficking. I work very well with the police. Jeff Farrar, who has been promoted now to chief constable, who used to lead for the police forces across Wales, has now handed that responsibility on to his deputy, Lorraine Bottomley, who attended our leadership group yesterday. For the Association of Chief Police Officers, the portfolio lies with the Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Police, Shaun Sawyer. I am in regular contact with Shaun Sawyer, because we

cannot sit here in Wales being too smug; I am sure that there will be some good ideas outside. So, yes, I am working with them. I am closely working with all agencies, but I would not want to say that the police are any higher up the pecking order than anyone else. In Wales, we are providing the best possible support to victims, so we are very much aligned to the people who provide that support, whether it is health, social services or our non-governmental organisations. I think that you can be sure of that.

[30] **Christine Chapman:** Mark, is your question on this topic?

[31] **Mark Isherwood:** On the challenges.

[32] **Christine Chapman:** If you want to come in first, I will then bring Gwyn in.

[33] **Mark Isherwood:** Just briefly, how do you measure your performance? How do you measure the need and outcomes?

[34] **Mr Chapman:** Basically, as I said earlier, most people want evidence bases. It is about prioritising resources, which costs money. I am building that evidence case. By having two Welsh NGOs, we will make sure that our reports to the national referral mechanism go up. We are also making sure that there is training for first-responder organisations, whether that is the police, local authorities or health. So, that is going on. I am garnering a number of organisations, including the school liaison officers, so that they can teach not only children in school, but also teachers. It is a case of raising the profile. As I said earlier, it is very much like the domestic abuse agenda. A decade ago, there were very low numbers but, through awareness raising, people then thought that we had an epidemic, when, in actual fact, it was ethical reporting. People felt confident to report.

[35] It is not just on reporting that my success is measured; I think that it is also measured on the work that we are doing to prevent it. It is our priority in Wales to make our country hostile. We want victims to come forward but we want to keep a lid on the offences. After Operation Imperial—the Gwent case where the man was held in captivity for 13 years—I think that that will send out a message that, in Wales, we do not tolerate this. It is a bit of a Damocles sword. I would like to make myself redundant and deal with it, but I realise that we are on a journey. We are no longer at the start of the journey, because we have moved from rhetoric and we are now seeing operations and delivery. I think that that is something that we can be proud of.

[36] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning. You touched upon the work of local government, the police and the UK departments. Do you also work directly with international agencies?

[37] **Mr Chapman:** Yes, we do. I sit with the Minister on the inter-departmental ministerial group, which includes the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development. Also, I am in contact with colleagues in Europe and all over the world on this. So, it is the case that we deal with them, because, with trafficking, some of our people come from abroad—I apologise for not saying this in my opening remarks. Trafficking is not just about people coming from overseas to Wales; it is about people being trafficked from the UK abroad and it is about internal trafficking, whether it is people being trafficked around our towns in Wales or taken from towns in Wales across the UK—that is internal trafficking. However, yes, I am personally aligned to it.

[38] **Gwyn R. Price:** Is your role affected by the limitations of devolution—for example, criminal justice and employment law? Is it affected at all by that?

[39] **Mr Chapman:** No, I do not think that it is. If I ever did see any blockages, I would know where to go to sort them out. I think that, if anything, it has been positive, in that I am

sitting here in front of you today as the only co-ordinator in the UK.

[40] **Christine Chapman:** Lindsay, did you want to come in?

[41] **Lindsay Whittle:** Yes. You touched earlier, in response to Peter Black's question, on the SOLACE report, and one of the recommendations was that there should be a lead trafficking officer in each local authority. Am I correct in assuming that the problem is stronger in the cities, as opposed to the Valleys and the rural areas, or is it a different type of problem in the Valleys and the rural areas? How are the 22 local authorities in Wales performing? Have they all appointed a lead officer yet, please?

[42] **Mr Chapman:** What it is, basically, is that we would like a single point of contact in each local authority. It would depend on what kind of trafficking it is, whether it is child trafficking or adult trafficking. Human trafficking manifests in a number of categories and a victim can fall into—we should not put people into boxes—any category. We have sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, criminality exploitation, child exploitation and a form of exploitation that, so far, we have no knowledge of it happening in Wales, but it has happened elsewhere in the UK, and that is the harvesting of human tissue and organs. So, yes, I have a single contact point in local authorities, but depending on what the case would be, it could be escalated to a chief officer. However, for training and general communications, I do it through our community cohesion co-ordinators, and we are linking in with local authorities.

[43] The SOLACE report was, as you know, in 2009, and I have spoken to the chief executive in Denbighshire about it. It needs refreshing. We have seen a number of chief executives change, and the landscape of human trafficking has changed. I understand that that could be a possibility.

[44] **Lindsay Whittle:** You have mentioned the issues of cannabis farms, brothels et cetera. I am puzzled that nail bars are always mentioned in this. I have never visited a nail bar, you will be pleased to know—

[45] **Mike Hedges:** I am surprised.

[46] **Lindsay Whittle:** Yes, that is right. However, they seem very high street. Cannabis farms and brothels are not, but nail bars seem very high street. What is the issue there?

[47] **Mr Chapman:** Not every nail bar has someone who has been trafficked, but it is an outlet—it is somewhere where people from particular ethnic backgrounds have the skills and abilities to work in nail bars. However, I would not want to say that every nail bar is involved.

[48] **Lindsay Whittle:** No, I am sure that you are right. I understand that you work with Welsh Ministers and the Children's Commissioner for Wales very closely. There is lots of new legislation coming out. How are you working together to tackle this new legislation?

[49] **Mr Chapman:** You always have to have an understanding of what is coming up. If I can have any input at an early stage, that is where I am best placed to influence. It is you who make the legislation by my influencing you. I think that that is it. Next week, I am going to Westminster for an evidence review session on the modern slavery Bill. So, I think that Wales has a really good case to put forward.

[50] **Lindsay Whittle:** Is there much cross-border work?

[51] **Mr Chapman:** Yes, they come to see us regularly.

[52] **Lindsay Whittle:** That is good.

[53] **Christine Chapman:** Lindsay asked you about the lead trafficking officer in each local authority. I do not want you to name individual local authorities, but are they all consistent in their approach in terms of priorities, or are they inconsistent?

[54] **Mr Chapman:** I think that it is like anything new: when local authorities are told that they have got to do something, it is finding the right person, and then I have to make sure that it is the right person, because there is nothing worse than having to work with someone who has not got the passion that I have. The police are probably the best example. On Operation Eagle, they changed their single point of contact a lot until we got the right fit. It is getting to work with people. There was a question earlier about whether this was about the Valleys, towns or cities; I would say that it is all over. You are likely to bump into it anywhere. It is not just the big cities. There was the case in Marshfield—it is a rural area. So, yes, it can be anywhere. With local authorities, we are right at the beginning of this with some organisations, and it is about winning hearts and minds. Normally, for the people who act as single points of contact, it is not their full-time function. In this age of multitasking, it is one of their priorities, but I have to make sure that, in every case, I am on their radar. I get calls from all over, and I go all over Wales as well. Our last conference was in north Wales. We have another conference coming up in Bangor, and then west Wales. It is about engagement.

[55] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** You mentioned a single point of contact within local authorities, and you also mentioned strategic, multi-agency working. Do you work through the community safety partnership?

[56] **Mr Chapman:** Yes. In actual fact—and this is a real plus—I am in the community safety division of the Welsh Government. I am in the violence against women and domestic abuse team, so I deal with all 22 local authorities. I used to be a community safety manager, so I still have those contacts.

[57] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I am sure that we have met before, because I was the cabinet member for community safety from 2004 to 2007 in Conwy.

[58] **Mr Chapman:** Yes, and I gave your community officer some advice.

[59] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Are you involved, then, in the compilation of the community safety strategy for each local authority, and on a regional basis?

[60] **Mr Chapman:** Yes I am, and it is about getting on that agenda. If it is on people's agenda, the work gets done. If you are on the commissioner's agenda and on the local strategy boards—if you are mentioned there—you know that things are going to get done. It is really a case of making all those positive links, yes. I was speaking to your community safety managers up there, and I know what you have done in north Wales.

[61] **Mike Hedges:** I have two very brief questions. Are you satisfied with the seniority of the lead trafficking officer in local authorities, and are they in a position where they can get something done? The second question, which is related to it, is: would it help if local authorities appointed a lead cabinet member for this as well?

[62] **Mr Chapman:** I will answer that back to front. I know that some authorities have appointed a lead on this. In Cardiff, councillor Lynda Thorne is the lead, and I am aware that several other authorities may be doing that. The chief executives are ultimately responsible and, working through the chief executive of Denbighshire, I have got it on their agendas. The people I have to work with are very much at the operational level, and I am sure that, if there are issues, they will get escalated.

[63] **Mike Hedges:** If I can come back to my second question: do you think that all local authorities should appoint a lead cabinet member? Would that be helpful?

[64] **Mr Chapman:** It is a decision for local authorities. I am not political, but I would welcome it if one is appointed, because it is on their agenda, is it not? Obviously, I cannot have any influence, because I am not a politician.

[65] **Mike Hedges:** You would, however, welcome it.

[66] **Mr Chapman:** Yes. I would welcome anyone who comes on to my agenda. I will work with any person, because this is such a heinous offence committed against us human beings by human beings.

[67] **Christine Chapman:** As a committee, we are in a position to make recommendations, so we could say that that would be a recommendation.

09:45

[68] **Mr Chapman:** Any recommendations would obviously have to go through my Minister. I am sorry that I cannot be drawn on this matter, but, you know, I accept everybody's support.

[69] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Right, let us move on now to Leighton.

[70] **Leighton Andrews:** May I just ask you about support for victims? Are you satisfied that it is consistent across Wales, given that you said that the problem exists across Wales?

[71] **Mr Chapman:** Yes, sir; that is one of the issues on which I want to make sure that everything we do is consistent across Wales. Our support is delivered to victims through BAWSO as the first responder. It has a footprint across Wales and, yes, it is consistent.

[72] **Leighton Andrews:** It is consistent?

[73] **Mr Chapman:** I have heard nothing to the contrary.

[74] **Leighton Andrews:** Okay. What about between different kinds of groups that may be victims of trafficking? Is the support consistent for those different kinds of groups?

[75] **Mr Chapman:** Again, I have heard nothing to the contrary. There are different groups, and, as we know, some victims will need more support than others, particularly with mental health issues. Some victims just want to be free and to go home, whereas other victims will need more, as we see in the case involving the person from Marshfield who is receiving extensive support.

[76] **Leighton Andrews:** How is the victims' use of the national referral mechanism working?

[77] **Mr Chapman:** With such low numbers, it is about the confidence to report to it. That is why I am very pleased we have BAWSO and New Pathways. We are putting in steps there for people to come forward and be confident to report. Why victims do not report is that they feel intimidated by the traffickers, because they are holding their passports, they know where their families are, and they will threaten violence and death. Some people feel that, because they had been caught committing a crime, they will go to prison—they do not see themselves as victims; they see themselves as offenders. It is a case really of building that confidence. As we have done with domestic abuse here in Wales, we will do with human trafficking.

[78] **Christine Chapman:** I have just one question, Steve. Obviously, we have talked about the victims and the awful things that happen behind the scenes; how proactive are the police forces in trying to get behind that, to find out from potential victims whether there are problems? Do they just wait for people to come to them, or would they do some sort of investigation?

[79] **Mr Chapman:** There are operations going on. The National Crime Agency is leading operations that are global, as well as here.

[80] **Christine Chapman:** I am just talking about on, say, a local basis. We have talked, for example, about nail bars or brothels, et cetera.

[81] **Mr Chapman:** The police are out there looking for cases, yes.

[82] **Christine Chapman:** Is that without having any particular evidence?

[83] **Mr Chapman:** Yes. You know, a lot of times, cases come into the police's grasp through people—members of the public—reporting things, and they are acted on. Yes, we have trained the police.

[84] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Janet, did you want to come in?

[85] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Just following on from Mark and related to that point, it is about the evidence base, really. Where is your evidence to show whether they do actually go through the national referral mechanism—you know, the new first responders? How do you know which system is working for people to come forward?

[86] **Mr Chapman:** With such low numbers, it is very difficult, but I do now have—

[87] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** When you say 'such low numbers', what—

[88] **Mr Chapman:** There were 34 last year across Wales. There are 37 to date this year, and these are all over Wales. I cannot say that the majority are in one place or another place. They are right across the categories of trafficking, be it sexual exploitation, labour exploitation or whatever. It really is about building that up. So, what I am doing is this: I have support now from a researcher from Welsh Government, and we are looking at building secondary datasets, because it is about collecting data about people who do not go into the NRM—it is finding out those details.

[89] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Earlier this year, we had illegal razor clam harvesting taking place in my constituency, and there was a lot of language in the newspaper reporting about 'gangmaster' crime. I remember that, at that time, I was in touch with the Welsh Government and the Minister, Alun Davies, and the local authority. The response was very much that an investigation was going to take place about whether it was gangmaster crime, but trying to find out any further information on that has been a nightmare.

[90] **Mr Chapman:** Paul Broadbent, the chief executive of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, has given me one of his deputies to work with me in Wales. Mark Heath is a member of our leadership group. The authority also sends people from various levels within its organisation to our multi-agency groups across Wales—the Cardiff group, et cetera. So, we are in touch with it. However, it is about building that evidence base up.

[91] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes, but the point that I am making is that this was an illegal activity that involved hundreds of people suddenly descending on a very small part of

Llanfairfechan and residents are even asking me now what has happened, whether it was gangmaster crime and whether it will happen again during the season for razor clams. It caused quite a stir in a very small village when, suddenly, this illegal activity was undertaken by people who were presumed to be a gangmaster organisation.

[92] **Mr Chapman:** When a raid takes place, anyone who is identified as being involved in human trafficking is asked. The other thing is that you have to volunteer yourself to go into the national referral mechanism. This is something that the new modern slavery Bill is looking at making mandatory. However, if a person does not want to be referred, then they go on their way. It is a sad indictment, but that is the case. I want to capture the data relating to those people because I can then say, confidently, 'We have had this number of cases'. However, a person has to want to refer themselves.

[93] Without breaching any sub judice rules, there was a case recently in Cardiff where two men were arrested for running prostitutes. In the case of two of the victims who had been rescued, all they wanted to do was to go back to their own country; they did not want to go into the NRM. I have secondary data now, because I am collecting it through secondary data systems, but we cannot just rely on the NRM data.

[94] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** So, would you have been aware of the incident that I talked about?

[95] **Mr Chapman:** No. Well, I would have been aware of operations; yes.

[96] **Peter Black:** I am going to ask for some informed speculation. You talked about 37 referrals through the NRM; is that the tip of the iceberg? How many cases do you think are out in Wales on this?

[97] **Mr Chapman:** I get asked this a lot, and it is the tip of the iceberg, but I do not know what size the iceberg is—whether it is a Titanic-killing iceberg or whether it is smaller. However, my gut feeling is that there are a lot more people. For instance, in the example that I just gave you, the two girls did not refer themselves. I have other examples as well. In the Marshfield case, which is also sub judice so I cannot talk too much about it, a couple of the people who were rescued did not want to go through the NRM. So, we do not have those as primary data. So, my evidence base is going to be two-pronged; it is going to be primary data and secondary data.

[98] **Peter Black:** What does your secondary data tell you?

[99] **Mr Chapman:** It tells me that a lot more than 34 people reported last year. However, I do not have the actual data yet. I am working with all agencies; I am working with health, probation services, the police, local authorities and with our non-governmental organisations, because we have previously not captured that information. With BAWSO and New Pathways, it is only since March this year that they have been first responders. So, I am working with the Salvation Army, which had the contract before for supporting victims. I am trying to get these data together. It will not just be a case of collecting data to say how many we have; the data will clearly direct our future operations and activity.

[100] **Mike Hedges:** The strategic round-table report on human trafficking Wales from 2012 highlighted a need to move beyond awareness-raising and training. How can this be achieved? Where do we go next?

[101] **Mr Chapman:** I think that we are doing it, sir. We are seeing operations now. At the time of that report, there were either no operations or they were very limited. We are now seeing that the police, the National Crime Agency, as it is now, and the Gangmasters

Licensing Authority are operating. I would also like to say that, from that awareness-raising, we are now seeing people reporting. As I said about domestic abuse, a decade or so ago probably some of us around this table may not have made that call if we saw something about domestic abuse. Now, we are confident and we know the right numbers. In that awareness-raising, the 999 and 101 operators have been trained.

[102] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rydych wedi Rhodri Glyn Thomas: You have
sôn am— mentioned—

[103] You will need the translation equipment.

[104] **Mr Chapman:** I am sorry.

[105] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rydych wedi Rhodri Glyn Thomas: You mentioned the
sôn am y nifer o achosion sy'n cael eu number of cases which are officially referred
cyfeirio'n swyddogol atoch—34 y llynedd a to you—34 last year and 37 this year.
37 eleni.

[106] **Mr Chapman:** I cannot hear it.

[107] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** You should be on channel 1.

[108] A ydych chi'n clywed y cyfieithu Are you hearing the translation now?
nawr?

[109] **Mr Chapman:** I am hearing it now, yes.

[110] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rydych wedi Rhodri Glyn Thomas: You mentioned the
sôn am y nifer o achosion sy'n cael eu number of cases that are officially referred to
cyfeirio'n swyddogol atoch—34 y llynedd a you—34 last year and 37 this year. What are
37 eleni. Beth yw'ch blaenoriaethau chi fel your priorities as co-ordinator—is it to work
cydlynnydd wedyn—ai gweithio gyda'r with those official cases that are referred to
achosion swyddogol hynny sydd yn cael eu you, or do you want to deal with the wider
cyfeirio atoch chi, neu a ydych am ddelio situation that exists? That is, we are talking
gyda'r sefyllfa ehangach sy'n bodoli? Hynny about hundreds of people, and we could be
yw, rydym yn sôn am gannoedd o bobl, a talking about thousands of people, who are
gallem fod yn sôn am filoedd o bobl, sydd yn part of this process. What are your priorities
rhan o'r broses hon. Beth yw eich as co-ordinator?
blaenoriaethau chi fel cydlynnydd?

[111] **Mr Chapman:** My first priority, when we find out about cases, is to find out where those cases are—in what part of Wales they are and in what category they are—to make sure that it is resourced right, and to make sure, if it is not already happening, that people are held to account in dealing with it. So, what I do say is that I am aware of cases when they happen. I am in a position where I get notified of all cases. If the number of cases goes up, I will have to put in a more formal structure, but with the numbers as they are now, it is about dealing with a telephone call or I meet the senior investigating officers. When we build this infrastructure, which we have to do, it is a case of building up that expertise with senior investigating officers.

[112] This is a Wales first. I was part of the team, with the police and the Crown Prosecution Service, that put together a specialist two-day course for senior investigating officers who deal with human trafficking. We have rolled the pilot out and, from 2014, the courses will be rolled out across Wales to all senior investigating officers. It builds on the experience of existing senior investigating officers, because we want to make sure that there

are no loopholes. In many cases where organised crime is involved, they know all the tricks, so we want to make sure that we have covered all the loopholes, that traffickers are convicted, and, importantly, that their assets are confiscated and that the money goes back into the system to support Victim Support operations and maybe equipment. We are rather proud of that—this is a Wales-first course. The rest of the UK is looking at us and is going to adopt that course for senior investigating officers.

[113] I am aware of the cases at the moment, but if the number of cases reaches a critical mass, I will probably have to have someone to assist me to deal with it. The good thing about being in at the beginning of anything is that all the lessons are learnt, because we are very good at spreading good practice, but we also want to know what has not worked and make sure that we do not make those mistakes across Wales.

[114] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Pe baech yn ymddangos gerbron y pwyllgor hwn mewn blwyddyn, beth fydddech yn gobeithio gallu dweud wrthym eich bod wedi ei gyflawni yn y swydd o fod yn gydlynnydd? **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** If you appeared before this committee in a year, what would you hope to tell us that you had achieved in your role as co-ordinator?

[115] **Mr Chapman:** I would hope that we will not have to wait a decade or so to get to the position that we are in with domestic abuse. I would hope that with all those lessons, everything that is going on, the support that I get from Welsh Government and other organisations, we will be in a much better place. I do not think that we should be too tied down to numbers. What I would like to see is that when we do have cases, that they are highlighted, that they are prosecuted and that assets are taken off people.

10:00

[116] We send out this message to traffickers: ‘Do not come to Wales; we know who you are and we are going to deal with you’. I also like to think that we are sending this message of hope out to victims: ‘Here in Wales, when we do rescue you, we will provide you with the best possible support and try to get your life back to normal.’

[117] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yn y dyfodol agos, heb eich clymu chi’n ormodol i faint o flynyddoedd, a ydych chi’n hyderus y gallwn ni reoli’r sefyllfa yng Nghymru? **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** In the near future, without tying you too much to how many years, are you confident that we can manage the situation in Wales?

[118] **Mr Chapman:** Yes, I am. I was involved at the outset with action on domestic abuse, when we started a lot of initiatives here in Wales. We had things such as the multi-agency risk assessment conferences—the MARACs—and the specialist prosecutors and specialist courts. I feel confident that I will make good progress, and I know that, when my term ends, I would like to pass on the baton and make sure that, eventually, we eradicate it. However, let us face it: slavery has been around a long time, and there are more people now in slavery than there have ever been at any point in history. So, it is a challenge for all of us to work together.

[119] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you, Steve. We have no more questions, and I think that that was a nice note to finish on. So, I thank you for coming to the committee this morning and providing your evidence. We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy, but thank you, once again, for attending.

[120] **Mr Chapman:** Thank you very much for your continued support.

[121] **Christine Chapman:** We will break now for about 15 minutes. If we could come back by 10.20 a.m., we will start the session a bit earlier.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10:02 a 10:22.
The meeting adjourned between 10:02 and 10:22.*

**Sesiwn Graffu ar Fasnachu mewn Pobl: Cynrychiolwyr o'r Fforwm Rheng
Flaen Atal Masnachu mewn Pobl ar gyfer Cyrff Anllywodraethol yng Nghymru
Scrutiny Session on Human Trafficking: Representatives of the NGO Anti-
Human Trafficking Frontline Forum Wales**

[122] **Christine Chapman:** We will now reconvene. In the second item today, we are taking evidence from the NGO Anti-Human Trafficking Frontline Forum, Wales. I warmly welcome our panel. We have with us Bernadette Bowen Thomson from Safer Wales, Angelina Rodriques from BAWSO, Mike Wilkinson from New Pathways, and Hannah Wharf from the Welsh Refugee Council. I extend you a warm welcome. Members will have read the paper, so are you happy for us to go straight into questions? I see that you are content with that.

[123] I will start. Obviously, during the previous session, we took evidence from Steve Chapman, who is the co-ordinator. I wonder whether you could make a comment on how successful you think that this role has been thus far. It is up to you as to who you want to speak on this, as a panel. You will not need to touch the microphones as they will come on automatically.

[124] **Ms Rodriques:** I think that there is clear evidence that there has been a lot of raising awareness around human trafficking, which was not happening before. At least we are now getting people around the table, having discussions about what human trafficking is all about and having those conversations. I also think that, for us, as an organisation, which is now a first responder, that was definitely pushed by the anti-human trafficking co-ordinator. We have set up regional fora around Wales, which was not happening before; so, that has been a success through the anti-human trafficking co-ordinator. I do not know whether anyone else would like to say something.

[125] **Ms Thompson:** One of the advantages of having the co-ordinator is that it has provided a context that has allowed growth and more recognition of this issue across Wales and beyond. Having the development, as Angelina said, of those regional groups, such as the south Wales group—the Western Bay group—that has been established, and having the anti-human trafficking leadership group, provides a mechanism for agencies like ours to be able to highlight issues, and a framework that will be listened to beyond our boundaries as an organisation. I think that that is a huge advantage.

[126] **Christine Chapman:** I know that we are going to pick up some specific issues now; other Members will have those. Before I finish my questions, I just want to ask you how you feel that Wales's approach to human trafficking compares with that of other countries.

[127] **Ms Wharf:** I would just say that it is brilliant to have this leadership and this clear commitment. We were all discussing earlier how great it is to have this role of the co-ordinator, and it shows a clear commitment from the Welsh Government to this. However, we cannot be complacent in that. We have this leadership role, but it is very much tied to Government. We have serious questions about accountability and independence. If you look beyond the borders of Wales—we are doing really well—across Europe, you see that there are really good examples of more independent anti-trafficking co-ordinators, such as the role in Finland and in Norway, where they have really clear accountability mechanisms and they are very independent. They are pushing this forward a lot further and a lot faster than we are. I would ask, although it is a great start: can we take it to the next step and make this an

independent commissioner role? I have been in communication with ECPAT, so, if you want more information on that, I can send you more information on the logistics of what we are calling for in terms of a commissioner, rather than a co-ordinator.

[128] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Sorry, Mark, did you want to come in? I think that I took your question.

[129] **Mark Isherwood:** In fact, you just mentioned international comparisons. How effectively do you feel that Wales is working internationally, both within the UK and with the other home nations, but also beyond? I am conscious that when the Minister made a statement in the past regarding trafficking into Wales, he was identifying, at that point, the west as the main entry point, from Ireland, namely southern Ireland—Eire. So, internationally, what contact has there been on that, particularly regarding where the main inflow is coming from? If it is Ireland, how have we developed those links there?

[130] **Ms Wharf:** I would not know. At the Welsh Refugee Council, we work very much with dispersal patterns coming more from England, rather than from Northern Ireland at the moment. So, I would not be able to comment on patterns from—

[131] **Ms Rodriques:** Obviously, there needs to be some work done. I would not be able to comment on that kind of thing. We are supporting a lot of people, and the highest numbers are probably coming through from Nigeria; so, I do not know that I would be able to comment on that.

[132] **Mark Isherwood:** I do not think that these were Irish people. These were people who were being trafficked through Ireland for access purposes.

[133] **Ms Rodriques:** I think that there needs to be more work on that, and it is definitely linked, because that is how a lot of people are getting through. I do not think that we have really got it yet, in terms of how we are working together in trying to deal with that.

[134] **Mark Isherwood:** You represent NGOs. How effectively is the co-ordinator working with NGOs, and how effectively are you all working together and with other agencies to address the need?

[135] **Ms Rodriques:** We are involved, as an NGO, in a lot of training of other organisations about how to identify and deal with issues, if you have somebody, around trafficking. The co-ordinator is working a lot with us on that. We are also part of the leadership group that is based at our NGO's office, which is the BAWSO office, in Wales, so we have that link there. We are taking the lead—because we cover all of Wales—in making sure that the training is going around the different agencies. That is led from the leadership group as well.

[136] **Mr Wilkinson:** There is certainly a lot of co-operation between NGOs, and a mutual will to take this forward and pool our expertise. As an organisation, our expertise is addressing sexual violence, so we are working jointly with these other organisations here and with others to take forward the awareness-raising from our own points of reference. I think that that is working well. For me, the main benefit of having a co-ordinator in place is related to the fact that, as NGOs, historically, we have always worked in partnership and worked well, and it has sometimes been difficult to get statutory bodies around the table to look at issues that we already know are there. I think that the co-ordinator's role has helped that. With the leadership group, looking at not just the membership, but the calibre and rank of the people around the table, people are certainly taking this issue seriously and are taking us seriously. That is a major step forward; it really is.

[137] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. I have a supplementary question from Leighton Andrews.

[138] **Leighton Andrews:** I think that you have to do a lot more to persuade me that the role needs to be independent. What are the specific powers of the relevant roles in Finland and Norway?

[139] **Ms Wharf:** Hang on. I cannot tell you exactly off the top of my head. I have some paperwork somewhere.

[140] **Leighton Andrews:** Hang on a minute. You said to us that you think that those function better because they are independent, but if you cannot tell me what the powers are, how do I know that it is not the fact that they have different powers that makes them function more effectively?

10:30

[141] **Ms Wharf:** I do not have the paperwork to hand, but I can send that to you.

[142] **Leighton Andrews:** We are here to scrutinise, and now we have heard a statement in evidence that I do not think has been followed through.

[143] **Ms Wharf:** To independently monitor and assess the measures adopted by the Government to tackle human trafficking, we report annually to Parliament on the success of these strategies and make recommendations for improvements. A commissioner would be a statutory body with authority to request information—

[144] **Leighton Andrews:** That does not answer my question. Could we have a note, please, on the powers in Finland and Norway, so that we can actually make a judgment about this, and not have it asserted?

[145] **Ms Wharf:** Of course I can. I am sorry if I do not have the exact—

[146] **Christine Chapman:** If you could send us a note, then, Hannah, that would be useful to substantiate the comment you made about the powers.

[147] **Ms Wharf:** Absolutely.

[148] **Ms Thomson:** Just in terms of other countries, there are some areas of work around the guardianship of unaccompanied minors that are happening in Scotland, which I think we can look at to see whether that would be applicable here. When we consider social justice and protection of unaccompanied minors in Wales, there is a lot that we could maybe take from the Scottish model to be able to see how we can enhance and safeguard more of our young people.

[149] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae'n ymddangos i mi eich bod yn dweud bod y ffaith bod gennym gydlynnydd wedi bod yn fanteisiol, ond mae awgrym wedi cael ei wneud, o leiaf, y gallai comisiynydd a fyddai'n fwy annibynnol o'r Llywodraeth yn fwy effeithiol. Roedd y cydlynnydd a oedd yn cyflwyno tystiolaeth i ni yn gysurus iawn gyda'i berthynas gyda'r Gweinidog perthnasol yn Llywodraeth Cymru.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: It appears to me that you say that the fact that we have a co-ordinator has been beneficial, but there has been at least a suggestion that a commissioner who was more independent of the Government would be more effective. The co-ordinator who gave evidence to us was very comfortable with his relationship with the relevant Minister in the Welsh Government. Reference has been made to

Cyfeiriwyd at yr Alban a'r hyn y gallem wneud yn wahanol, hwyrach petai gennym gomisiynydd a oedd yn fwy annibynnol. A oes gennych unrhyw dystiolaeth arall a fyddai'n awgrymu y gallai person sy'n fwy annibynnol o'r Llywodraeth, fel y Comisiynydd Plant Cymru a Chomisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru, fod yn fwy effeithiol?

Scotland and what we could do differently, if we had a more independent commissioner. Do you have any additional evidence that would suggest that a person who is more independent of Government, such as the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Commissioner for Older People in Wales, could be more effective?

[150] **Christine Chapman:** Who wants to answer that?

[151] **Ms Thomson:** I think that, importantly, in terms of whether someone is independent of Welsh Government or not, the key thing for me is how we make sure that the role is accountable, and how we make sure that the actions we want to see delivered for Wales are delivered, and where that accountability lies. I hope that I am being clear enough in what I am saying, but I think that we need to look forward, beyond the next couple of years; we need to have quite a clear direction of travel for where we want to see this whole work go in Wales. Part of that involves bringing this on board across devolved and non-devolved areas of work. In terms of this moment in time, I would rather, in terms of our organisation, for those lines of accountability, and that plan for the future of what those priorities are, to be very clear, distinct and measurable, so that we can actually see and measure change and the shift over time.

[152] In terms of whether someone right now needs to be independent, I think that we still have quite a way to go to bring on board agencies and service areas across Wales and across our statutory and third sector partners. Part of that links to what Angelina was saying about making sure that people are aware of the issue, and even that they accept that the issue is there, because the data development side of the work, we know, is missing. There is a lot that has been going on, but there are also a lot of gaps in the data because the intelligence is within agencies such as ours. We have had bits that are tiny, and there are bits with other organisations, where they are picking up indications of human trafficking but are maybe not identifying it. Some work has been done on the back of some training with some ethnic minority and Traveller support services, just in Cardiff, and some of the narrative of patterns that people were identifying that was coming from there were really shocking when you see that that, actually, is trafficking. I am surprised that that was not picked up, but, then, we were sitting there looking at it from an anti-human-trafficking perspective.

[153] The independent question in terms of commissioning is, I think, about making sure that we really have clear lines for what we want to see over the next few years. Part of that then helps to make it more accountable.

[154] **Jenny Rathbone:** It is the role of public services to enforce the rule of law, so I am struggling to understand why it is not appropriate for the human trafficking co-ordinator to be located in Government, because that is the appropriate place, surely, for enforcing the law in relation to human trafficking. Safer Wales was quoted on BBC Wales back in April stating that the role of the anti-trafficking co-ordinator is too closely aligned to the Welsh Government to be truly effective. That may not have been said by you, but are you able to elaborate on why somebody in Safer Wales thought that?

[155] **Ms Thomson:** There is a context in which that person was speaking, and it was more about accountability. A clip was shown that took it slightly out of that context, and that was about being able to hold to account—not necessarily accountability for the role of the anti-human trafficking co-ordinator, but accountability beyond that role as well, linking in to local government across Wales and ensuring that the accountability framework is there. That is what it is about. There was a comment about teeth, I believe, and it was in that context that it

was being talked about. So, it was actually welcoming the fact that there is an anti-human trafficking co-ordinator, but it was also recognising that it was now about giving more powers and teeth to the whole purpose of that agenda in being able to truly hold to account. That links back to what I was saying about having a very clear forward plan for the priorities for Wales and what we want to see for our nation's development in the future. When we align that with the principles of social justice in particular and with what we see already happening, you can see how, actually, we are in a really good position to do that. So, it was more linked to giving them the tools to be able to enforce more accountability.

[156] **Leighton Andrews:** Sorry; what tools?

[157] **Ms Thomson:** That could be, for example, mechanisms. When the anti-human trafficking co-ordinator started, we welcomed that role, but one of the things that we thought could be a useful mechanism in that—a useful add-on, which I think is what will maybe happen in the development of his role—is to be able to draw from a very local base. For example—

[158] **Leighton Andrews:** Sorry; what tools?

[159] **Ms Thomson:** You know, if we think of MARACs—the multi-agency risk assessment conferences—we know that there are recognised routes with that when you are looking at cases so that you can identify maybe where there are lessons to be learned. So, it is more about being able to capture that and—

[160] **Leighton Andrews:** Why is that made better by being independent of Government?

[161] **Ms Thomson:** No, no; we were not saying that. Jenny asked—

[162] **Leighton Andrews:** Yes, but I want to understand the tools. I just want to see the linkage here.

[163] **Ms Thomson:** I was asked about why we were saying about the role having more teeth and more strength. That is different from independence.

[164] **Leighton Andrews:** I am not quite sure what these tools are, though—*[Inaudible.]*

[165] **Ms Thomson:** What we were stressing was to be able to enable the role of the anti-human trafficking co-ordinator to go in to find out what has been happening on the ground locally, for example, which does happen, and to go beyond that and raise issues where there are gaps, for example serious gaps in safeguarding and bring them back in.

[166] **Leighton Andrews:** Why can the co-ordinator not do that now?

[167] **Ms Thomson:** We were not talking about independence in the comments—

[168] **Leighton Andrews:** No, no; but why can the co-ordinator not do it now?

[169] **Ms Thomson:** I believe that he can, and that is why we are saying that, in the next two years, we need to identify clear priorities, so that we can make sure that there is a line of accountability, not just for the post, but actually for the whole area of work. For example, I know that in Cardiff, we have tried to develop a system whereby people who we believe are at risk of trafficking, or we believe that they have been trafficked but are not at the moment coming forward and are therefore not suitable for the NRM, are able to be case-managed by multi-agencies so that we support them. It is about those kinds of accountable mechanisms that span beyond one agency identifying it, and for the co-ordinator to be able to have more

routes into that, which is what I believe is happening. So, for the next couple of years, we need to tighten that accountability.

[170] **Christine Chapman:** Bernadette, obviously we did take evidence from Steve Chapman earlier and these are some of the areas that we questioned him on. For example, the links with local authorities. You might want to have a look at the evidence for information.

[171] **Jenny Rathbone:** It is clearly important that the mechanism is in place for victims not to fall between two different agencies, whether those services are public, private or voluntary. At the moment, it would appear that you have some really tight networks and clear pathways. Mr Chapman is clearly accountable to the National Assembly for Wales, as that is why he came to talk to us today. We would need a lot more evidence about the holes, if you like, in his accountability in relation to non-devolved areas, really, before we can make the case for legislation. At the moment, it seems to me that the post is appropriately based in Government and, from the evidence we have heard so far this morning, a lot of very positive work is going on. Hannah, you were making rather strong statements on this and I am unclear as to where the problem lies at this stage.

[172] **Ms Wharf:** Can we be tasked with that? I have had three days—well, one day—to prepare for this, so I would very much like to be tasked with taking that back to my desk, looking into that further and being able to help to provide further evidence and information on that. I will take that back.

[173] **Jenny Rathbone:** I am sure that you could send us a note, but obviously we are not then in a position to scrutinise you on it.

[174] **Ms Wharf:** No, I know.

[175] **Ms Rodrigues:** Those are probably things that we need to look at as we move forward. However, at this moment in time, for an organisation that, maybe, has been dealing with trafficking for around the last five years, to us, this is a positive thing because we have never had anybody who would push that lead around Wales and make people understand that trafficking is happening in Wales and looking at how we will deal with it. So, we welcome that and I agree with Hannah, but there are other things that we need to look forward to in the future and put it in our plan of action. However, at this moment in time, at least we have the role and somebody is talking about it. I attend many meetings on human trafficking, as BAWSO is the lead agency that is providing support, so it is a positive thing.

[176] **Christine Chapman:** As a committee, obviously we want to take evidence on other specific areas, so I will finish this section now. I want to move on to Jenny. Jenny, do you want to come in at all?

[177] **Jenny Rathbone:** We have probably, for the time being, covered my questions.

[178] **Peter Black:** In terms of the challenges facing Wales as a whole, what are the main challenges and how are we responding to them?

[179] **Ms Thomson:** There are challenges, or opportunities, depending on how we look at it. There are a few. There are funding implications if we want to identify victims as early as possible. Early identification means that we are able to see people while they are still going to be accessing devolved services more. So, for example, they may have needs in relation to housing, or needs that are social services or health-related. Therefore, there will be funding implications in terms of a challenge for the Welsh Government. However, I also think that what is becoming clear in Wales—and I am seeing shifts happening in the UK—is that Wales has made a very bold statement by having the co-ordinator. As Hannah mentioned earlier, it is

a really positive statement that Wales has made in terms of saying that this is important. That is a really good thing. However, we need, in the UK, for that to be recognised centrally so that some of our non-devolved issues are also recognised in relation to the importance of anti-human trafficking work. There are some risks or some challenges to make sure that we do not undermine some of the work that is happening in Wales as a result of, maybe, differences between devolved and non-devolved priorities. I am thinking there about delivery funding issues in relation to the delivery of contracts with UK Visas and Immigration, immigration borders and criminal justice. What we do not want are targets or contracts that could conflict with or undermine some of the work that we are trying to achieve in Wales.

10:45

[180] However, I also see that there could be an opportunity—this is where the role of the anti-human trafficking co-ordinator could be really important—for acting as that link between what is happening in the devolved and the non-devolved areas of work. For example, if we are able to identify people earlier, we will potentially produce a cost benefit further down the line, so there will be less interaction with criminal justice services and border agencies, for example. There may be mechanisms by which we can have open discussions to ask whether things such as the proceeds of crime can come back to be used on early identification of people who have been trafficked, and be a bit more creative in how we make sure that services are there earlier, so that we do not need to wait for people to go on. So, although they are challenges, I also see them as opportunities. If we want to push down hard on human trafficking at a UK level, it may open up those pathways.

[181] **Peter Black:** When you are talking about funding issues, there are two distinct funding streams here. The statutory agencies, such as local authorities, the police et cetera, are funded to deal with statutory issues, and then there are third sector organisations, such as you, which take a lead role on behalf of the Welsh Government as a first referral point. Are you saying that either or both of those are underfunded to do those roles?

[182] **Ms Rodrigues:** The more that we raise awareness and the more people identify trafficking, there will have to be more accommodation provided for victims. At the moment, the Government is providing a project through BAWSO for three women, but as more and more people identify trafficking, there will need to be more funding to provide accommodation in Wales to support the clients.

[183] **Peter Black:** So, there are 37 referrals this year. That is not a huge number, is it?

[184] **Mr Wilkinson:** The problem, and it is not unique to Wales with the subject matter, is identification. The process has to start with awareness raising through all organisations. That is key problem: no-one really knows the scale of this—it is an unknown quantity. So, trying to make decisions based on something that you cannot grasp hold of is sometimes difficult. However, we know that the scale is a heck of a lot more than the 37 national referral mechanism referrals from last year. Already this year, we are seeing an increase—our organisation has made four referrals during the past month.

[185] **Peter Black:** Is the awareness raising underfunded?

[186] **Ms Thomson:** The awareness raising and training are developing really well nationally. There will be half-day introductory training across Wales. It is going to be corporate and branded, which is really positive, and it will give out a very clear Welsh message. Alongside that, there will be day-long training targeted at practitioners on the ground. All that will be linked into identification and what to do about it. There are also talks currently about developing postgraduate training options, which I hope and believe will include some leadership training as well, because we know—

[187] **Peter Black:** Where is the underfunding then?

[188] **Ms Thomson:** It is about the support services and it is about what we do. For example, I referred earlier to a small bit of training done with ethnic minority and Traveller education support services. Out of 85 people who attended a one-hour training session, 48 people had stories that related to potential trafficking. That was just a little snapshot of people who, once you start raising awareness, are more likely to come into contact with this area of work. That will put demand on support services to pick up and explore that, and that includes the statutory sector and the third sector.

[189] **Peter Black:** So, what you are saying is that, at the moment, for the current level of demand, we are okay, but because you anticipate a big increase in demand, you think that we need to increase resources. There is no current underfunding, but you anticipate that resources will need to be increased in the future.

[190] **Ms Thomson:** It would be difficult to say that the current situation is fine when we are talking about training that was only delivered a few months ago. If 48 people had stories to tell about children who are accessing our education services, we need to proactively investigate that—that is obviously statutory. We need to raise awareness of those agencies, which I think we are able to do, but that is already putting demands on services across the third sector and the statutory sector in terms of being able to do that.

[191] **Peter Black:** Do you have any specific examples of someone who has not been able to access the service currently because the funds are not there?

[192] **Ms Thomson:** Yes, two women came into Safer Wales a month or so ago. We worked closely with BAWSO on the case. They came to us because they were exploited through prostitution. They were trafficked into the country. The immediate response was that they ended up staying for the first night in accommodation separately. Part of that was about new networks. They came in; they presented. Some of that is about making sure that early identification happens, which did take place; some of that is about having properties available, which there were. It took time because of the demands on the properties of the services. Trying to free up space to give them a safe space to stay created a delay, which meant that, because they needed it immediately at that point, they went back to the property. That is not a fault, necessarily, of the organisation; it is just literally the logistics of trying to manage when you have a small number of properties. So, it is just a small indication, but I think that, if we are looking beyond right at this moment, over the next couple of years, we should bear in mind that there are likely to be implications as a result of awareness raising and as people become more aware of the services and they turn up.

[193] **Jenny Rathbone:** Simply arguing that we need more resources for this is really not going to resolve the problem, is it? All public services are under huge stress, and there are 12,000 people on the waiting list for homes in Cardiff. This is a very difficult area to manage. How does your work interface with the work of the immigration service, whose task is to actually have targets to remove people from this country?

[194] **Ms Wharf:** It adds a whole other layer of complexity and challenge to this area of work. Some of the things that are coming out of the cases that we work with are, unfortunately, a lack of referral mechanism between the Home Office and the National Asylum Support Service, the housing providers or with us. So, there is this gap there. I am thinking of a particular case of a woman who went into BAWSO housing. She was a survivor of trafficking. She then made her claim for asylum, but as soon as she made that claim, the funding stopped with BAWSO. So, she went straight into NASS housing, provided by the Home Office in Clearsprings. Then, very quickly, her claim for asylum was turned around,

she was granted leave to remain, and she had 28 days to be able to move on from NASS housing, which was not safe or appropriate—this is out of our hands here—and it was not what she needed. Within those 28 days that she has to be moved on to further housing, we ended up with another stumbling block with the local authority. We have explained that she is a victim of trafficking and that she needs priority housing, but she was not on the priority list for local authorities. So, she is left in this limbo. She cannot go back to BAWSO because the funding is dependent on her not having received this month in secure housing with NASS. So, there is not a joined up approach going on there, and that is a real challenge for the coordinator's role at the moment.

[195] **Christine Chapman:** I think that Mark wants to come in.

[196] **Mark Isherwood:** Has Peter finished?

[197] **Peter Black:** Yes.

[198] **Mark Isherwood:** BAWSO's evidence talks about the postcode lottery of services and refers to 40% of trafficking victims being male. What do you believe is the general picture and the proportion of victims who are male, female, or minors? Of the children, how many are trafficked on their own or with parents? You are using figures such as 40%; what database are you using for this?

[199] **Ms Rodrigues:** We use our own internal database. We have a database on which we store information on everybody who comes through to BAWSO services. We do not specifically deal with children who have been trafficked; we deal with women. Some women who come through to us are either pregnant or have a young child with them. We deal with more women. We are slowly seeing men coming through in our project, but the biggest percentage is women; not men. Over the last week, we have seen three men who have come through to our service, through our trafficking project.

[200] I just want to make clear that we have two trafficking projects. We have one that is funded by the Welsh Government and one that provides support through the Salvation Army. We have a contract with the Salvation Army, so anybody from the UK could come into our project through that contract, but the majority of people we see are women. There is a recent Salvation Army report that states that there is a large increase in the number of men who need accommodation, which is why we have started to provide some sort of support and accommodation for men.

[201] **Mark Isherwood:** What proportion do you believe are trafficked for sexual exploitation, and what proportion for other labour exploitation?

[202] **Ms Rodrigues:** I would say, from the clients that we have had through our service, probably about 95% are for sexual exploitation and the other—

[203] **Mark Isherwood:** Is that male and female?

[204] **Ms Rodrigues:** Not males; no. Males are trafficked for labour exploitation and women for sexual exploitation and we have had a few for domestic servitude.

[205] **Mr Wilkinson:** I just want to add that the clients that we have seen through our trafficking project have been predominantly female. However, in terms of what type of exploitation, it is not just sexual exploitation; they could be used for a variety of purposes. Sexual exploitation is the most prominent, but quite often, during the daytime, they could be doing something completely different, such as forced labour, domestic servitude, or whatever. So, they are exploited to the maximum potential.

[206] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rydych wedi disgrifio i ni sefyllfa lle mae nifer helaeth o asiantaethau yn gorfod delio â'r sefyllfa oedd hyn, gydag unigolion sy'n cael eu hunain yn y sefyllfa hon. A oes ffordd fwy effeithiol o gydlynu hynny? Ai gwaith y cydgysylltydd, ynteu rhywun arall, fyddai sicrhau bod yr asiantaethau yn cydweithio er mwyn sicrhau bod y bobl hyn yn cael y math o ddarpariaeth sydd ei hangen arnynt?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: You have described a situation to us where a vast number of agencies have to deal with these situations, with individuals who find themselves in this situation. Is there a more effective way of co-ordinating that work? Is it the work of the co-ordinator, or somebody else, to ensure that all of these agencies collaborate to ensure that these people receive the kind of provision that they need?

[207] **Ms Thomson:** There are some areas of good practice that we are already seeing emerge. From a Wales-wide perspective and the co-ordinator role, it would be good to have oversight of it and be able to spread some of that practice and identify mechanisms that have been successful in supporting people, as well as where that is not happening.

[208] However, the particular example of good practice that I think is worth highlighting is what is happening now in Cardiff. I know that you would have seen the multi-agency response pathway. What has been really important here is that the commitment in Wales to all of this has enabled local drivers. I do not think that we should take away the importance of people, locally, who will drive and push this area of work. A lot of us have wanted more work to be done in this area, because you see it coming through in our services, and quite often, you want ways of making it much more open and transparent. The example in Cardiff not only looks at how we case manage and how we look at a case that goes through the NRM mechanism and clearly identify someone who is being trafficked, but also looks at people who are suspected of having been trafficked. That is where I think that it is really important, particularly because we know that there is under-reporting in NRM data of what is really going on, because some people will choose not to go down the NRM route, but also it will pick up those areas where people are not sure and, hopefully, stop people from falling through the net between services.

11:00

[209] So, I do think that there is good practice out there and how that is being managed within the local authority is that the local authority has recognised the vulnerability related to trafficking and it has accepted that it is its responsibility, particularly in relation to emergency homelessness and social services emergency duty teams. So, it allows the response to happen. What it also does is allow us to try to keep people safe; so, it allows us to share information that, otherwise, might have been held within only one or two organisations. It makes it much more open and allows more links into things like health services when people may present in a different way again.

[210] **Ms Rodrigues:** The way that I think that it is linked is because, as part of the leadership group, a part of our role is to look at victim care and I think that by setting that up as the leadership group from the anti-human trafficking co-ordinator, we can make sure that these things are spread. With the regional fora that have already been set up, we can make sure that everybody is working together to try to spread this around Wales, so it is more of a co-ordinated approach. What we do not want to have is little pockets of stuff happening just in Cardiff, but not anywhere else, and I think that with the role of the co-ordinator, you can make sure that things are Wales wide and that everybody is getting around the table and having that support.

[211] **Mr Wilkinson:** I think that that is essential, because the nature of trafficking is that people are transient—they are moved from one area to another. So, having an area of good

practice in Cardiff, you have got to link up with your colleagues in Swansea and Newport, mid Wales and north Wales, because these people are not likely to stay in one place. So, it needs to be a joined-up approach, with everybody doing the same thing in the same area. I think that we are getting there. I think that Cardiff will probably be the model that we could replicate elsewhere. It is early days, but it is working well.

[212] **Ms Rodriques:** However, I think that it is his role to make sure that that does happen and that it is not just focused on one area.

[213] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rwy'n edrych ar y patrwm yng Nghaerdydd, sydd dal yn ymddangos yn hynod o gymhleth i mi, ond yr awgrym yn y fan hon, o leiaf, ydy o'r adeg mae unigolyn yn cael ei gyfeirio at y gwasanaethau yng Nghaerdydd, o fewn 24 awr, mae modd lleoli'r person hwnnw neu honno mewn lleoliad diogel. A ydy hynny'n digwydd yn ymarferol?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I am looking at the pattern in Cardiff, which still appears to be very complex to me, but the suggestion here, at least, is that from the time when an individual is referred to the services in Cardiff, within 24 hours, that person can be located in a secure location. Does that happen in practice?

[214] **Ms Rodriques:** Yes, because we have a 24-hour helpline, so if somebody was at risk of being trafficked, we could take them into our project, as long as we had the spaces. If not, we could find them another space. It would work exactly the same as if you had a client suffering from domestic abuse. This meeting might not be able to be called immediately, but regarding the safety of that person, we would find somewhere for that person to be safe for that evening.

[215] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Would that be within 24 hours?

[216] **Ms Rodriques:** Yes. If it was not within one of our projects, then we would have to look to see whether there was another project elsewhere, but, again—

[217] **Ms Thomson:** I think that the key area there, as well, is people who are suspected. It is about having that information. We talked earlier about picking up intelligence and knowledge of what is going on, and I think that the question was asked about what the reality is out there. Nationally, there is the joint investigation team development board, which will be looking at intelligence, and, obviously, that goes beyond Wales's boundaries. However, I think that this kind of structure allows us to pick up on information and intelligence around the people who are perpetrators, as well as victims, to be able to feed into those systems. One of the things that strikes me with this approach is that we use this system for people who are exploited through prostitution: if they get assaulted, we have an ugly mug system, so that anonymised intelligence can go to the police as well as, if they give their consent, intelligence with their personal details on it. That has helped to catch the perpetrators of those kinds of crimes. Similarly, there is potential here to develop and work closely with these kinds of mechanisms to feed intelligence into this joint investigation team development board, and I think that that will start to give us a true picture, including those areas where agencies say, 'I think there's something not quite right here'. It kind of allows us to tackle head-on some of the comments that we have heard, where people say, 'Oh, I thought that was just a cultural norm or practice'. It allows us to address issues as they come up, to make sure that people are kept safe.

[218] **Christine Chapman:** I have Gwyn, then Janet, and then Lindsay. So, Gwyn, do you want to start?

[219] **Gwyn R. Price:** Going on to the multi-agency approach, I know that you work with your colleagues across Wales and other parts of the country, and internationally, but I was

concerned to see that people were falling through the gaps. How do you think we can address that by working with the co-ordinator?

[220] **Mr Wilkinson:** Just very simply, it sounds like an obvious thing, but it is about people being aware. It is not just about people who are practitioners, working in this field, supporting people, because we know that there is a problem. It is about people the likes of those who go round to read the gas meter and who collect the bins being aware, so that, if they go to a premises, they might notice something that is not quite right. The key is awareness raising, and you will then start to get a true picture, because people will start to recognise this and make appropriate referrals—and we are seeing it time and time again. This week, we saw a case in which a social worker contacted us very concerned about three Polish ladies. They had come to the attention of the police, who did not recognise a very obvious potential trafficking issue. We were able to intervene with social services and go back to the police and say, ‘Look, have you looked at this?’ and the answer was, ‘Yes, okay; we did not realise that’. This is now an NRM referral and these people are now in safe accommodation, whereas they did not have safe accommodation before. It is just about people being aware—sometimes, you cannot see the things that are hidden in plain sight. I think that that is a very basic answer, but it is the way forward.

[221] **Ms Rodrigues:** To give another example, people do not realise that, actually, behind that woman with a baby sat in a corner of town and begging for money is probably a trafficking gang, and she has had to go out there and do that. It is just about raising the awareness of the public—do you know that that is happening?—and where to be able to report it, so that you can just pick up the phone and say, ‘Okay, I am suspicious of this’, and then let the agencies have that conversation and maybe agree to pick up those people who someone has phoned about.

[222] **Gwyn R. Price:** I am concerned, because I am not sure that we have been given the evidence that all the agencies are working and clicking together at this moment in time, and people are falling through gaps.

[223] **Ms Wharf:** They are. We are only two and half years in on this co-ordinator role and everything starts with this general awareness, which Mike is talking about, and general awareness is great, but it has to be backed up by rigorous information sharing, rigorous referrals and rigorous systems and operations. That is starting to happen, but I know that, this week, our women’s caseworker who works with trafficking victims in the Welsh Refugee Council said that the police did not pick up on a case and did not make the referral. So, we have a long way to go to make sure that people are not going through those gaps.

[224] When it comes to working with the Home Office, and housing providers in particular, it is about that information sharing, and it is about more than just awareness; it is also about acting on that awareness and having accountability mechanisms that, again, uphold the implementation of information sharing and referrals.

[225] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** We talk about multi-agency approaches, but I sometimes wonder whether there are too many agencies. How do you draw the parallel as to which agency does what, and does it become a little bit complex then? Most agencies also work on a 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. regime, and this follows on from a point that Rhodri mentioned: if someone presents at 2 a.m. or at 10 p.m., how do they know who to go to?

[226] On training, I know that Women’s Aid is doing work on trafficking, and you mentioned offering training to other agencies. How much of the actual funding that we have in place goes towards training as opposed to actually helping people on the front line when they need that support? Also, I am not talking about annual strategic plans that just get written up to tick a box and are then put on a shelf, but I am getting a distinct impression about the

role of the co-ordinator. You have talked about your data collection, but does the role of the co-ordinator involve the writing up of a strategic framework? I do not like too much structure because it then becomes overly bureaucratic, but there needs to be somewhere where these data are collated that would tell me whether we have too many agencies, which ones are working and which are not, and what processes are working and which are not, so that when that one person needs that help, that help kicks in automatically. It is probably fair to say—

[227] **Christine Chapman:** Is that a question, Janet?

[228] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I have given about three.

[229] **Christine Chapman:** Yes, I have four written down, anyway.

[230] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes, four. That is what this is about. We want to know what is working and what is not working, so that that one person does not fall through the net. Cardiff is probably better set up for this than north Wales, for example, and if someone was to present in north Wales to my local authority, what is going to convince me that they will get help after 5 p.m. and that it is not going to be too complex for the multi-agencies? It comes down to this collection of data. Is that the role of the co-ordinator, and are you supposed to be feeding into that? How does it all work? I am getting a little bogged down by the complexity of it all.

[231] **Ms Rodriques:** That is part of the journey. The co-ordinator's role has only been in place for a year or so. We have been delivering anti-trafficking projects for about five years and reporting something to someone different. This is something that we are learning from and trying to develop on the journey, but the intelligence stuff is part of the co-ordinator's plan as to how we gather data and how we look at this. We centralise the data that we have and put them together, then someone else looks at that. So, we feed in our data and other people would feed in their data. I cannot sit here and say that it is all perfect—we are all learning on the way. I feel it, because we are running around trying to attend meetings—

[232] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Are there too many agencies?

[233] **Ms Rodriques:** It depends on what role they have, and for anyone sitting around the table having a discussion at this stage, it is a case of, 'Thank you; thank God that someone is taking time to come out and have discussions about it', because, before, it was just not happening.

[234] **Mr Wilkinson:** As long as each agency is adding something—. For our part, we run four of the six sexual assault referral centres in Wales. So, someone referred to BAWSO may need a forensic medical examination at 3 a.m., and we provide that and BAWSO provides the accommodation. If someone comes through one of our SARCs and we identify that there is a potential trafficking issue, BAWSO can provide the accommodation. It is not about the amount of agencies—it is about people bringing their own expertise to work together as a whole. It is something that we are doing well here. I do not think that there are too many agencies.

[235] **Christine Chapman:** I just remind—

[236] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I would like answers to the questions that I have asked.

[237] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, I am going to come back to those. I remind Members that we have about five minutes left. So, I ask for very concise questions so that we have time for the witnesses to answer. We have looked at the issue of too many agencies. There was also the issue of the 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. nature of the provision. Does that happen and do you

agree with what Janet said, or is there 24-hour provision? I think, Angelina, that you were saying that it was 24/7.

[238] **Ms Rodriques:** We have 24-hour provision, but I would like—

[239] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Is that across Wales?

[240] **Ms Rodriques:** Yes, across Wales. We are across Wales, but it is about people knowing that BAWSO exists, what it does and that you can ring up. That is part of the training and raising awareness so that people know. Part of what we are trying to do with the training is to give people a contact number if they have someone who may have been trafficked, but are not 100% confident yet that that is case. However, if they did ring, we would provide somewhere for them to stay or look elsewhere—we would not just leave them.

[241] **Christine Chapman:** Going back to Janet's question about the amount of money going into training as opposed to front-line provision, could you comment on that?

[242] **Mr Wilkinson:** Our front-line services are funded through Comic Relief. We got six-month pilot funding through a Ministry of Justice grant scheme, but without the Comic Relief money, we would not have the people in place, and the three Polish ladies that I spoke about would not have been supported. There is funding out there, but we are having to go to philanthropic organisations to get that funding at the moment. There are distinct funding grant schemes for sexual violence and female genital mutilation, and all kinds of different things. At the moment, I do not think that there is much funding for anti-human trafficking.

[243] **Ms Rodriques:** We have one support worker in our anti-trafficking project and the other is funded by the Salvation Army.

11:15

[244] **Ms Wharf:** There have been changes in the Assembly support model and, as of April, the Welsh Refugee Council will no longer be able to provide a children and young people's support caseworker. We would very much like to raise the issue of guardianship again. Training is very important, as is raising awareness. I think that we are at a point where we have lots of agencies around, because we are trying to raise lots of awareness. I think that you are right: the next level is for that strategic objective analysis to happen, which I hope that the co-ordinator has the powers to do—I am sure that they do—so that they are then able to look at that analysis and ask, 'What is good practice, what is bad practice, what can we draw on and what can we further to be able to strengthen this issue?'

[245] **Ms Thomson:** May I also add to that, because there are also gaps? We have services that work with women engaged in off-street prostitution. We know that there are issues with on-street prostitution, and we know that there are issues with some of the off-street parlours. On the support services needed there to deliver very safe services, there is very little out there when we look across Wales. It is an issue that extends beyond human trafficking, but we know that there are human-trafficking issues that we need to start identifying there. As we have heard, and, as we have seen through the data, the level of sexual exploitation is quite significant. So, there are definitely gaps out there. It can get picked up in other areas, so the training is important. It is difficult to say which one we should lose for the sake of the other. However, there are certainly gaps in being able to be proactive in identifying people at risk.

[246] **Christine Chapman:** Leighton, you have a question.

[247] **Leighton Andrews:** Yes. Your organisations are all doing really important and difficult front-line work. You have illustrated this morning what happens when there are gaps

in services, or when someone's status changes and what that can lead to. May I ask whether you are confident that, first, the geographical spread of support is there? Secondly, do you feel that different groups of people, maybe in specific positions, are adequately supported, or are there gaps in the support for people from different backgrounds?

[248] **Ms Thomson:** I think that I have just mentioned one gap, and I think that that is a Wales-wide gap, in terms of some of the off-street work, in terms of how to engage and how to engage safely beyond delivering a healthcare service, for example, to look at a safe service.

[249] **Ms Rodriques:** Geographically, no, we do not have the spread.

[250] **Mr Wilkinson:** Certainly, Wales presents some challenges geographically for all of the services that we provide. With an issue such as human trafficking, which we feel, or suspect, is hugely under-reported and under-identified, that makes those challenges, certainly in rural areas, a lot greater.

[251] **Christine Chapman:** What about the different groups?

[252] **Ms Wharf:** Children and young people would be a gap, for me. I am not sure about the Wales-specific data, but, in terms of the UK-specific data, about a quarter of victims or survivors are children and young people.

[253] **Ms Thomson:** I would also flag up some of the internal trafficking issues in relation to children. We run a very small service for young girls. We have identified some of those issues, and that is a very small service. There is work; some of that work can be done with mainstream services and through tying up some of the information that is already known—those feelings in your tummy that something is not quite right. I think that that links to having a place where people can feel able and safe to ask the questions that, maybe, they are not asking at the moment. That may be with one of the agencies, which will say, 'Actually, I think that that is a strong indicator, and we need to do something about it', but that kind of critical friend around scrutinising cases and issues as they arise is really important.

[254] **Ms Rodriques:** I think that there is also a gap with regard to people who are put through the criminal justice system as victims of a crime, when they are actually victims of trafficking, and that is how they have got themselves in that position. I remember sitting in a meeting where somebody said that there has been an increase in Vietnamese boys going into Cardiff prison. I do not think that the question of whether those boys have been trafficked has been looked at, because they have done a criminal activity.

[255] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. We are running very short of time now. Lindsay, did you want to come in?

[256] **Lindsay Whittle:** Yes. I just have a quick question, Chair. In your letter to us, you said:

[257] 'There is a lot of evidence to demonstrate of close collaboration with the police.'

[258] I would expect that. [*Laughter.*] You also said:

[259] 'However, engagement with other departments such as health and education is lacking'

[260] and you think that that

[261] 'is vital because in some instances they are the first port of call for victims of

trafficking.’

[262] I have to say that that surprised me a little bit and I would be interested to hear a little bit of evidence on that. We heard from the previous witness that local authorities have a lead officer—I think that we were informed that every local authority has a lead officer. Do you think that health authorities should have a lead officer as well? Do they? I do not know. Mike, you mentioned that it is the duty of everyone. I will refer to a case, not of human trafficking but of severe child abuse in Caerphilly, the town where I live, which was picked up by a carpenter working for the local authority who visited the house. All other agencies failed to pick that up. I think that it is the duty of us all to do something similar in relation to human trafficking as well.

[263] **Mr Wilkinson:** Absolutely.

[264] **Ms Rodriques:** I will just answer the question on the police first. Yes, we are getting more response in working closely with the police. We were in a meeting yesterday talking about reception centres and, if there was a big raid based on intelligence that had come through, how we would all work together in ensuring that the victims were supported, as well as the evidence. Therefore, we are starting to work closely with the police. Education, again, is a sector where we need to work more closely. People need to know that, if a child comes into school, college, or wherever, how they would identify them. It goes back to that point about re-educating everybody that human trafficking is an issue. Where do we put it on the education agenda? Again, it is another thing that teachers, maybe, or others have to look out for. As regards health, we are starting to come around the table and have discussions about this. Again, these are things that we are starting to develop. They were in our meeting yesterday. Yes, there could be a lead person, or at least somebody to go to within your organisation, if you felt that there was somebody you needed to be able to answer questions for you, if people do not understand or do not know about it.

[265] **Ms Thomson:** I do think that people are hearing this message more. There are some risks. I believe that, if we want to show strong leadership in this area, there should be identifiable people who are recognised as having the responsibility within agencies such as health and local authorities, because that allows and facilitates ownership and engagement and helps to navigate through organisations when that is necessary. In yesterday’s meeting on reception centres, the emergency contingency planning people were there from health, so that is quite a positive start. However, I think that there is quite a bit of work to be done. Sometimes, too much weight is placed on recording official data and not enough on picking up on the intelligence that is out there and maybe some of the other information that is being held—the ‘I don’t think something is quite right here’ kind of intelligence. It is much harder to convince people if they are only relying on the official data to give them the picture. If we think back a few years about domestic abuse and domestic violence, for example, we knew that there was huge under-reporting and the whole point was to hear the stories and those feelings that people have that something is not right. It needs to go beyond that.

[266] I think that there is work to be done to really get buy-in in terms of recognising somebody as potentially being trafficked and not just saying, ‘Oh, well they have chosen to leave the county’ or ‘They have chosen to move on’. I do not think that there is an easy answer, but I think the more of a multi-agency approach we have towards that, the better. We need to make sure that we link with people such as the police and crime commissioners also, so that they send a strong message across the police forces about the importance of this and how that fits with policing locally.

[267] **Ms Wharf:** I have just one last point to add about the important role of social services and the need for multi-agency work that involves social services. Maybe that is the next step.

- [268] **Lindsay Whittle:** As well as information sharing, which I think is absolutely vital.
- [269] **Christine Chapman:** We will move on now, then, to the next section. Leighton, did you want to come in?
- [270] **Leighton Andrews:** I have asked my questions.
- [271] **Christine Chapman:** Right. Janet, did you have anything?
- [272] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Not really. We have talked about victims, and we have talked about geographical inconsistency. I think you can move on to the next one.
- [273] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Mike, did you want to come in?
- [274] **Mike Hedges:** The strategic round-table report on human trafficking in Wales in 2012 highlighted a need to move beyond awareness raising and training. Mr Chapman spoke to us earlier and said that that has already been achieved. Do you agree with him?
- [275] **Mr Wilkinson:** I would say that it is work in progress.
- [276] **Ms Wharf:** There are areas where that has started. I think we need to keep track of what is effective in those areas. We will probably find that, over time, there will be tweaks so that we can make it more streamlined. I think that you saw the Cardiff flow diagram. There are ways in which we can make that much tighter and more effective, I am sure.
- [277] **Mike Hedges:** It could not be made simpler, surely? [*Laughter.*]
- [278] **Ms Wharf:** As Angelina said, this is part of the journey and there are some pockets of practice out there that we can learn from. The key is to bring it together and look objectively at it to see what is most effective, and not to lose sight of being proactive about that and make sure that we target areas where we know that there is a known risk of higher levels of human trafficking.
- [279] **Ms Wharf:** To add to that, it is not a one-stop-shop on awareness; it is a trickle, trickle, and you have to carry on delivering, year on year, annual programmes to raise awareness. Training needs to take a route from one to two, to three to four, and back again. You cannot just stop at that.
- [280] **Mike Hedges:** As politicians, one of the things that we have been told is that, by the time we get bored of saying something, that is when it starts to impinge on the people who we are trying to make aware of it. Do you find the same thing?
- [281] **Ms Thomson:** We will learn from you.
- [282] **Mike Hedges:** That would be a first. [*Laughter.*]
- [283] **Ms Thomson:** Definitely. Certainly, all of us here also work within the domestic violence and abuse area, and we are still saying messages that we said many years ago.
- [284] **Ms Wharf:** Some people just will not listen. However, just to add to that, in terms of the impact that it is having, referrals are increasing. We are getting more referrals through, so we are seeing the impact of that awareness raising; it is making an impact.
- [285] **Mr Wilkinson:** Certainly, in relation to domestic abuse and sexual violence, some of

the Welsh Government's high-profile campaigns on those issues have been really effective. It would be great to see something along those lines on human trafficking.

[286] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Roedd y cyd-gysylltydd, wrth gyflwyno'i dystiolaeth, yn hyderus bod modd rheoli'r sefyllfa yng Nghymru. A ydych chi'n rhannu'r hyder hwnnw? **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** The co-ordinator, in presenting his evidence, was confident that there was a way of managing the situation in Wales. Do you share that confidence?

[287] **Mr Wilkinson:** It depends what he means by 'managing'.

[288] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Well, 'controlling', presumably. Do you believe that it is possible to control the situation, or are we still going to have hundreds and thousands of misplaced people in Wales?

[289] **Mr Wilkinson:** It is possible to make Wales more of a hostile environment for people who want to engage in trafficking. As to whether you will ever eradicate trafficking, I think it is an ambitious aim. All that we can do is try to make our country as hostile as possible and support people as well as we can.

[290] **Ms Rodriques:** The traffickers are one step ahead. This is serious criminal activity.

[291] **Ms Thomson:** There is huge money involved.

[292] **Ms Wharf:** It is also about, not so much a hostile environment, but the safety of Wales and Wales being that safe place in which to report. Although it would be great in an ideal world to stamp out all human trafficking, I do not think that our aim should be to do that, but more to have huge increases in the amount of reporting that we have, which then has repercussions on resources, of course, but it is about having a safe and supportive Wales.

[293] **Ms Thomson:** I think that that is achievable. If we are really committed to this, we can introduce safe mechanisms, so that, when someone is identified, they are kept safe and are allowed to develop. We have a history in Wales of working together to do that and I think that we should build on it and re-establish the multi-agency risk assessment conferences in Wales, which we know are successful at keeping people safe and reducing risk. We can recognise that, so I think there is a possibility of that.

[294] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** The realistic picture is that you can control the situation as far as those people who are referred to you are concerned, but there will always be others out there who will not contact or will not be referred to the services.

[295] **Mr Wilkinson:** There will always be an element of that, but we can certainly do a very good piece of work in terms of prevention; that is about looking at your at-risk groups, targeting those, certainly from our point of view, involved in internal trafficking, given that we are seeing a lot of predominantly young females from Valleys areas being trafficked in Newport, Cardiff or wherever without even realising that they have been trafficked. It is the kind of boyfriend, lover boy syndrome. So, there is a large piece of work that we can do about preventive work. It is always going to be largely reactionary to what is going on.

[296] **Christine Chapman:** On that note, we have no more questions. I thank you very much for coming this morning to answer the Members' questions. We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy. Thank you all for attending this morning.

11:30

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o Weddill
y Cyfarfod**
**Motion Under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the
Remainder of the Meeting**

[297] **Christine Chapman:** I move that

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

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

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11:31.
The public part of the meeting ended at 11:31.*