

Email from individual regarding the Legislative Consent: Children's Wellbeing and Schools

Dear Children, Young People and Education Committee members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill (CWS Bill) and its proposed application in Wales. I urge the Children, Young People and Education Committee to seriously reconsider supporting a Bill that risks doing more harm than good to the families it claims to help.

As a parent of a child with sensory processing difficulties, I have experienced firsthand how conventional schooling environments can fail to meet certain needs. Home education has allowed us to create a learning environment that supports my child's wellbeing and development — something that may not be apparent through standardised local authority assessments. This is why I believe strongly that families must retain the autonomy to choose and shape their child's education, without undue pressure or oversight from authorities unfamiliar with the individual child's needs.

1. Lack of Parliamentary and Public Scrutiny

The Bill has not undergone appropriate scrutiny — in Westminster or in Wales. Home educators were excluded from giving oral evidence, and many written submissions raising concerns were not even published. The Bill's late extension to Wales came after the opportunity for amendments had passed, depriving both the Welsh public and elected representatives of the chance to examine or challenge its impact.

2. Erosion of Parental Rights and Educational Freedom

The Bill represents a profound shift in responsibility for defining "suitable" education and what is in the "best interests" of a child — away from parents and towards local authorities (LAs). This change is being made without sufficient oversight, training, or accountability for the decision-makers involved. Local authorities, many of whom already struggle to manage existing responsibilities, cannot be assumed to be impartial or adequately resourced to take on this extended role.

3. Discriminatory and Dangerous Deregistration Restrictions

The proposed requirement for LA permission to deregister a child under investigation — even in cases where no wrongdoing has been found — risks delaying or denying children access to appropriate education. Investigations under Section 47 often result in no findings of concern, yet the Bill would still restrict parental choice during that time.

4. The Register and Data Concerns

The compulsory register proposed is not just a list of names; it includes extensive, personal, and detailed information about children, their educational provision, and anyone involved in their learning. This level of data gathering is disproportionate, intrusive, and undermines the flexibility that makes home education so responsive to a child's individual needs.

Moreover, the Bill carries the threat of fines or even imprisonment for parents who fail to comply with unclear, bureaucratic demands — turning administrative paperwork into a criminal justice issue. This is neither supportive nor just.

5. No Redress or Accountability for LA Overreach

Currently, families have no access to an independent complaints process, arbitration, or tribunal when LAs overstep their legal remit. This Bill would give more power to LAs without offering any protections to families when mistakes or misuse of authority occur. For many, the only recourse would be a stressful and costly court process — which most families cannot afford to pursue.

In summary, I believe the current legal framework already provides sufficient powers to safeguard children when used correctly. This Bill creates an imbalanced system that will punish compliant, caring families while doing little to address the real cases of concern it purports to target.

Please do not support this Bill in its current form. Its extension to Wales is rushed, its implications far-reaching, and its impact on home-educating families unjust.

Thank you for your time and attention.