

Home Education Workshops Wales Autumn 2012

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<http://edyourself.org/welshhomeedworkshopnotes.pdf> via
<http://edyourself.org/articles/welshhomeedworkshopnotes.php>

As expected, the Education (Wales) Bill introduced July 1st 2013 had no mention of home education. Plans to change the law in Wales were dropped at the start of 2013

Read the latest about home education law in Wales here
<http://edyourself.org/articles/EnglandandWales.php>

"The consultation exercise closed on the 23 November, over 550 responses have been received. I have asked my officials to undertake a thorough analysis of the consultation responses as I want to ensure all views to the proposals are fully considered.

Due to the large volume and detail of the responses this is going to take time and is not something I want rushed. In order to facilitate this process I believe it would be beneficial to delay taking forward the legislative proposals in the current Education (Wales) Bill."

Read the Minister's statement here December 2012

<http://edyourself.org/leightonandrewsstatementdec21.pdf>

Home Education Workshops, Wales, Autumn 2012

A workshop organised by home educators to discuss the Welsh Government proposals for changing the law on home education was held in Wrexham on September 14th.

Click [here](#) to read my notes from the Wrexham workshop, covering [bullet point list of what](#)

[the Government is proposing](#); [the timescale for the proposals](#); [what can be done](#) and; [summary of points raised at the September workshop](#)

[3 further workshops organised by home educators were held in October](#):

Home Education Workshop Cardiff, Monday October 8th

Home Education Workshop Llandudno, Tuesday October 16th

Home Education Workshop, Llandrinod Wells, Powys, October 17th

Summary of my views

I disagree with the suggestion that parents should have to apply to the local council for permission to home educate their children. The Government proposals are a disproportionate intrusion into family life. Existing powers regarding education, welfare and safeguarding/child protection are sufficient, but the Welsh Government may wish to address the disparity in local authority procedures - as revealed by my [Freedom of Information request, October 2012](#) The Welsh Government could usefully signpost to models of good practice.

Welsh Government Consultation Events for Young People (and adults)

I have consistently expressed the view that the Welsh Government face-to-face consultation events are a prime opportunity to put views across, in addition to talking to politicians and completing the consultation response form. At the time of the Wrexham workshop, the Welsh Government had not yet released details of the young people's workshops, but interest has been gathering as more information has become available.

3 facilitated workshops have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to gather opinions from children and young people on the proposals to change the home education law. The events are open to adults, not just to parents accompanying home educated children, and 5 out of 35 people attending the first event in Powys were professionals from education/health. [The workshop facilitators](#) are independent of the Government, but a Welsh Assembly representative will be present to gather feedback at each event.

Email wellbeingshare@wales.gsi.gov.uk

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/ourevents/homeeducationevent/?lang=en>

[Feedback from Powys event](#)

[Feedback from Cardiff event](#) and [Feedback from Cardiff event 2](#)

[Feedback from Conwy event 1](#) [Feedback from Conwy event 2](#) [Feedback from Conwy event 3](#) [Feedback from Conwy event 4](#) and [Feedback from Conwy event 5](#)

- **Thursday 18 October Powys**
 - **Friday 26 October Cardiff**
 - **Tuesday 30 October Conwy**
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Dialogue with Assembly Members

See <http://edyourself.org/articles/AMs.php> with [feedback from home educators in North Wales](#) who went to talk with their AMs. We had further feedback at the Llandudno workshop and the Cardiff workshop from home educators who have met with their AMs to discuss the proposals.

- **Constituency AMs and regional AMs**
- **Email has more chance of reaching the AM directly**
- **Keep email SHORT, with informative subject line, no attachments**
- **Email timing: AMs are out of constituency Tues,Wed,Thurs**
- **Take letters to hand over at face to face meeting**
- **Best time for meeting is Friday when AM is in constituency**
- **Invite AM to group event on Friday afternoon when in constituency**
- **You can give AMs questions to ask the Minister (click here for [possible questions](#))**
- **Ask AM about the [Children and Young People Government Committee](#) which will scrutinise draft legislation**

[1 page Summary of Welsh Government Proposals to download/paste into email](#) [Briefing Paper set out as searchable web page](#) [8 page Briefing Paper as pdf to print/download](#)

Home Education Lobbying, England 2009-10

A few years ago the Government in England tried - and failed - to change the law on home education in England. Home educators made use of [a variety of lobbying techniques](#) which included face to face meetings between home educating families and politicians the length and breadth of the country. The extent of the dialogue became apparent when hundreds of MPs stayed in the House of Commons for a late night session to present petitions against the proposals on behalf of their constituents.

MPs said the proposals were "interventionalist and far too invasive/genuine concerns/iniquitous recommendations/If enacted, the Government's proposals will, for the first time in our history, tear away from parents and give to the state the responsibility for a child's education/ill-judged recommendations/I believe that the Government should take notice of the strength of feeling on this issue and the numbers of hon. Members who have presented petitions this evening/Totally reject the Governments ham fisted attempt to over regulate this group of parents/confers undue powers of inspection-and I hope that the Government will reconsider/disappointed the Government had decided to implement some of the more controversial recommendations of the report in the Children, Schools and Families Bill/disappointed that the government supports the recommendations of the Badman review as I do not believe that there is real evidence to support the need for the recommendations/Parliament briefly flickered into life/I personally believe that the report went a lot further than it was meant to, and that it will cause long-term damage to home education/the state wrongly intervening in family life/ general concern/grave concern/ over-bureaucratic approach/it is vital that the Government does not tie parents in red tape. Parents who want to educate their children should not feel as if big brother is looking over their shoulder all the time/the proposals would effectively nationalise home education, requiring all parents who choose to home educate to seek permission every year to do so.

I believe that is a disproportionate, ill-conceived and illiberal measure"

Read more quotes

<http://www.educationotherwise.net/attachments/article/151/ParliamentPetitionagainstBadman8thDec09.pdf>

August 2009 Education Otherwise released [videos about home education](#) on [the Education Otherwise youtube channel](#)

"Mass Lobby of Parliament 2.30pm Tuesday 13 October 2009 ... expecting 274 people at the mass lobby - 144 adults and 130 children - from 128 families. A further 38 adults have expressed an interest in coming with 15 children ... looking for eight stewards who can help out on the day. It will involve arriving at 1.45pm for a meeting with the police at 2pm. Once the mass lobby starts, you will be moving among the crowd giving advice and directing people." Read more here <http://daretoknowblog.blogspot.co.uk/2009/09/mass-lobby-of-parliament-tuesday-13th.html> and <http://edyourself.org/articles/HESFESTimeline.php#timeline>

Nationwide Not Back To School Picnics, Autumn 2009. Media and MPs briefed. October 2009 Select Committee witness sessions. Further aspersions cast on methodology, research, dodgy statistics, policy-based evidence-making. Witnesses met MP Graham Stuart. Mooted idea of All Party Parliamentary Group on Home Education and mass petition to parliament from multiple constituencies. Education Otherwise Parliamentary Event House of Commons October 2009. Watch [Mass presentation anti-Badman Review petitions to parliament Tuesday December 8th 2009](#) See also [Hansard mass presentation anti-Badman Review petitions December 8th 2009](#)

2010 [Open Letter to the Guardian with 1,000+ signatories January 2010](#) All Party Parliamentary Group on Home Education Open Meeting with Ministers January 2010. Education Otherwise postcard to 600+ MPs before 2nd Reading. January 2010. Education Otherwise Position Statement January 2010 refusing to put forward any amendments to the Bill. January 2010 Public Bill Committee dominated by criticism of proposed change to law on home education. Education Otherwise tells MPs not to expect any help in implementing new measures or softening the edges. March 2010 All Party Parliamentary Home Education Group Briefing Event House of Lords. March 2010 Education Otherwise postcards to 600+ peers in advance of Second Reading Children Schools and Families Bill in House of Lords. April 2010 [Minister Baroness Morgan compelled to propose amendment against the Government's own clause 19](#), effectively ending the Government's attempt to introduce compulsory registration for home education.

Possible Questions for Minister, Leighton Andrews

Constituents can ask their Assembly Members to put a question to the Education Minister, Leighton Andrews. If you have a question about the consultation, you can email it to your AM, or you can write it out on paper to give to the AM at a face to face meeting. If the experience in England is anything to go by, home education is likely to attract a disproportionate amount of attention.

- Where is the evidence that the law on home education needs to be changed?
- Did the Government talk to local authorities about the proposed change to the law before [the public announcement in July 2012?](#)
- Has the Government carried out any research into Welsh local authorities' adherence to current Government Guidelines for home education published in 2006? (Read Welsh LAs' Freedom of Information responses October 2012 [here](#))
- When will [the proposed consultation on a new definition of suitable education](#) take place?
- Will [the proposed new definition of suitable education](#) apply to school pupils or just to home educated children and how will this impact on other primary legislation?
- When will further details be available on the right of appeal against registration being refused
- Will legal aid be available for appeals?
- Councils are to be allowed [6 weeks to consider the application](#). Will children be expected to stay in school during this time?
- If [registration is refused](#) and parents appeal, will the child be expected to stay in school during this time?
- Will children be expected to attend school [if registration is revoked](#) while parents are appealing the decision?
- What arrangements were made for notifying home educating families of the consultation events for children and young people and was it expected that local authorities would circulate details of the events to families on their list?

Assembly Members may ask Welsh Ministers at Oral Assembly Questions about any matter falling within their areas of responsibility. Questions are answered on a four week rotation, determined by ballot. Once the Minister has replied, the Member can ask one other question which is related to their tabled question. This is known as a supplementary question. Other Members may also be called to ask a related supplementary question at the Presiding Officer's discretion. If an oral question is not reached during Plenary proceedings, the Member will receive a written answer on the same day. Members can also table questions specifically for written answer by the Welsh Government or the Assembly Commission. There is no limit on the number of written questions a Member may table.

Read more here

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/plenary/business-plenary-information/types-of-plenary-business/questions.htm>

Click [here](#) for more information about the benefits of asking parliamentary questions.

Government Children and Young People Committee

The [Children and Young People Government Committee](#) scrutinises [potential legislation](#) affecting children and young people in Wales. Assembly Committees [reflect the overall representation of political groups in the Assembly](#) (see note 32) which means that Labour as governing party has a majority.

- **Chair: Christine Chapman, Labour AM** [Cynon Valley, Rhondda Cynon Taff](#)
 - **Angela Burns, Conservative AM** [Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire](#)
 - **Jocelyn Davies, Plaid Cymru Regional AM** [South Wales East](#)
 - **Suzy Davies, Conservative Regional AM** [South Wales West](#)
 - **Rebecca Evans, Labour Regional Am** [Mid and West Wales](#)
 - **Julie Morgan, Labour AM** [Cardiff North](#)
 - **Lynne Neagle Labour AM** [Torfaen](#)
 - **Jenny Rathbone Labour AM** [Cardiff North](#)
 - **Aled Roberts Liberal Democrat Regional AM** [North Wales](#)
 - **Simon Thomas Plaid Cymru AM** [Mid and West Wales](#)
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Answering the Consultation

<http://edyourself.org/articles/welshconsultationdoc.php#consultationquestions>

Click here to read my draft consultation response (work in progress!) <http://edyourself.org/walesdraftconsultationresponse.doc>

We know that Governments put "campaign responses" to one side and analyse these separately. Campaign responses tend to carry less weight when it comes to decision-making, so it's not strategic just to copy and paste, or just to tick the "disagree" box without any additional comment. This doesn't mean every single sentence has to be original; it's fine to mix and match and use some of the points that other people are making in their consultation response or to say a little bit about your personal circumstances and then to put that you endorse what another individual or group has said. Governments might reasonably predict a certain type of response from "the usual suspects", so there is more impact if the response comes as a surprise. For example if a qualified teacher or member of a teaching union were to speak out against the proposals in a consultation response, this could have more impact than a home educating parent making the same points.

Before you try and answer the consultation questions, think of all the things you want to say about the Government's proposals, talk it through with other people, and jot your points down. These are the kind of things you'd say if someone asked you why you objected to the proposals and how much of an impact it would have on your family. When you have drafted your consultation answers, check your notes. If any points have been missed, go back over the answers and see where you can add more. You can also include

additional points in "any other comments" for Question 8, but it will be more effective if you can incorporate the points into questions 1 to 7 as well.

Different Version of Paperwork for Children

The Welsh Government has [stated in its consultation document](#) that the Plain English or "easy read" version has been prepared specially for children. At the Powys workshop as part of our preparation for the Government's consultation event at the Royal Showground the following day, we discussed the difference in wording between the Plain English version of the consultation questions and the standard questions. The example we looked at was question 3 where the difference is as follows:

STANDARD VERSION QUESTION 3 DO YOU AGREE THAT HOME EDUCATING PARENTS SHOULD ENGAGE WITH THEIR LOCAL AUTHORITY TO ENABLE THEM TO ASSES THE SUITABILITY OF THEIR HOME EDUCATION PROVISION?

Plain English version Question 3 Do you agree that parents should work with their local authority to make sure home education is meeting their child's needs?

For a full set of all the consultation questions in Plain English and standard, click [here](#) to view as a web page and [here](#) to print/download a 3 page document.

Home educators attending the Government consultation event at the Welsh Showground, Powys, on the 18th October asked the organisers to record their objection to the Plain English version being the only one available at the young people's workshop.