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Guide to Wales CME Database

THIS WAS WRITTEN BEFORE THE RELEVANT LAW WAS COMMENCED AND THE SMALL SCALE PILOT BEGAN IN APRIL 2025. SEE <https://edyourself.org/pilot-areas-wales-cme-database/> SEE ALSO WELLBEING BILL NOW APPLYING TO WALES <https://edyourself.org/wellbeing-bill-applying-to-wales/> THIS PAGE WAS ARCHIVED AT THE END OF MARCH 2026 [LINK]

This page gives an overview of the Wales children's database pages on this site including my consultation response submitted on 22.4.24. In January 2024 Wales announced plans for a children's database with a public consultation. This consultation CLOSED on 25.4.24. After the consultation closes the government will consider the next steps. If the proposals are taken forward there will be a pilot in a limited area first.

Introduction

The first page I wrote about the database is here <https://edyourself.org/wales-cme-database-consultation> Local authorities will get lists of children living in the area from local health boards and GPs. When the local authority spots a name on the list it does not recognise, it will enter the child's details on a database of “**children potentially missing education**” which is to be called “the CME database” The page has **links to all the consultation documents** plus a summary of what each document contains. The consultation does not require full names or email addresses but it does ask for the first part of a postcode. Edited on 1.4.24 to highlight that the school census information includes nursery schools.

Legal Powers

The second page I wrote about the database is here <https://edyourself.org/legal-powers-for-childrens-database-wales/> The Welsh government hopes to bring into force **section 29 of the Children Act 2004** which is already on the books. **Section 29 provides for extensive data sharing**. It goes much further than the present CME database but once section 29 is in force it will enable the government to **make regulations** adding more and more powers. In England **the same law was used for ContactPoint**.

Details

The third page I wrote about the database is here <https://edyourself.org/details-childrens-database-wales/> The government hopes to make a **distinction between “a list” and “the database.”** School children will be on **the list** from health but regardless of how much school they have missed **no school child will go on the actual database**. In addition, local authorities will only get **limited information from health initially**, so they will have to follow up with **further enquiries**. The full information required for the current database is set out on the page.

List vs Database

The fourth page I wrote about the database is here <https://edyourself.org/2024-wales-database-compared-with-2020/> It **unpicks the government's claim that the revised proposals** are less disproportionate, **firstly** on the grounds that the database itself will be **smaller** (see above point about **list vs database**) and **secondly** because health

services **initially** will only have to provide the child's details, not information about the parents (although local authorities will still have to **collect the remaining information** later) **New in 2024** is the fact that the information sharing duty **will also apply directly to family doctors** as well as to local health boards.

Data Sharing Purpose And Scope

The **fifth page I wrote about the database** is here <https://edyourself.org/data-sharing-childrens-database-wales> It asks **what happens with the lists** that are not used for the database and whether the lists will be used for **other purposes**. The page examines **required** versus **permitted disclosure** since **at present the database only covers information that MUST be shared** but under section 29 health professionals could be **given permission** to share far more if it was deemed necessary "for the database". I also note that **Additional Learning Needs [ALN]** appears as a database entry for the first time in 2024. Both the previous and current versions of the regulations **are set out on the page**, enabling an accurate comparison.

Home Educated Children

The **sixth page I wrote about the database** is here <https://edyourself.org/wales-database-impact-children-already-known> Something which is not mentioned in the consultation materials is the impact on **home educated children who are already known** to the local authority. Any time there is the slightest doubt or query about the home education, the local authority could say **it appears the child MAY not be receiving suitable education** which requires "a **CME record**" to be completed for the database.

Section 175

The **seventh page I wrote about the database** is here <https://edyourself.org/childrens-database-wales-law-but-not-law> I **rewrote this page on March 30th to make it clearer about section 175 and section 25**. Senedd wants to **make a children's database compulsory** but only for a few children. A children's database could be made under section 25 or 28 of the Children Act 2004 or under section 175 of the Education Act 2002. Section 175 is mentioned in the CME consultation document and the draft regulations specify only school-age children, so **it is assumed that only s175 is intended at this point**. Section 175 says "A local authority] shall make arrangements for ensuring that their education functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children." Once section 29 is brought into force **it will enable section 25 to be added**.

GP Information Not Needed

The **eighth page I wrote about the database** is here <https://edyourself.org/gp-data-half-a-million-children-wales/> Every year individual GP practices will have to give the local authority a list of all school-age children registered at their surgery. 98% of the children on GP lists will be registered at a school so **98% of the data disclosed is not necessary for the database**.

GP Information Duplicates LHB Information

The **ninth page I wrote about the database** is here <https://edyourself.org/why-include-gps-in-wales-database/> Under the CME database proposals local health boards [LHBs] will be required to share information about children, but for some reason the Welsh government wants GPs to share information as well, even though it is a condition of the contract that GPs must supply up-to-date patient lists to LHBs so **the information will already be held by LHBs**. Adding GPs may be so that local councils can see which is the registered GP practice for any school-age child in the area **without having to ask the parent** or to enable the local authority will be able to make **follow up enquiries with the individual doctors surgery** in order to complete the database records.

Stretching The Law

The tenth page I wrote about the database is here <https://edyourself.org/limit-of-cme-law-wales/> The Welsh government is currently seeking to stretch the law on children missing education, changing the legal definition without changing the law. The law says CME is about children who **are not** receiving suitable education. Wales wants CME to mean children who **might possibly not be** receiving suitable education. **Wales appears to be testing the limits of existing legislation.**

My Consultation Response

The last page I wrote about the database before the consultation ended is here <https://edyourself.org/consultation-response-cme-database-wales/> where I shared my consultation response submitted on 22.4.24

GMC Consultation Response

On May 23rd I put a summary of the General Medical Council views on my blog <https://edyourself.wordpress.com/2024/05/23/gmc-response-wales-cme-database-consultation/>

Pilot Areas

I subsequently published a page about the measures being tested in a small number of pilot areas for a year beginning in March 2025 <https://edyourself.org/pilot-areas-wales-cme-database/>