

**P-05-922 Withdraw the proposed home education guidance, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 29.02.20**

I believe that the evidence already submitted covers what I need to say, but to reiterate:

The Minister has made very clear that she has every intention of introducing mandatory meetings between parents of home educating children and LAs. She has made even clearer that she has every intention of mandating interviews with children, by LAs. This notwithstanding the clear advice from David Wolfe QC that such a mandate would be unlawful.

The consultation appears to me to be little more than lip service, as the Minister has remained firm in her resolve in respect of mandatory meetings, notwithstanding the significant majority of consultation submissions not supporting that decision.

It is particularly important to home educating families that they are not treated as if they are abusive families. The mandate of interviews with children and meetings with families without the ability to choose whether to take part, or not to take part, is greater intrusion than a family would suffer if being assessed by social services as a result of concerns over significant harm, or risk of significant harm to their children (Children Act 1989 s47). Mandatory assessment under the Children Act 1989 s47 requires a Court order. Assessment under the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, without parental consent, also requires a Court order.

These proposals and the Minister's clear intent to introduce them, would single out home educating families disproportionately, by treating them as abusive families and be certain to destroy respectful relationships built up between good quality education staff and home educating families.

There is no coherent rationale, nor evidence base, for introducing mandatory meetings with home educating parents, or their children.

It is my view and that of the signatories to the petition, that the guidance should be withdrawn and redrafted to reflect the sound legal advice obtained.

Whilst we are dealing with the current crisis, we obviously cannot meet, but can I remind you that I would welcome the opportunity to give face to face evidence to the committee, alongside PHEW, as soon as such a meeting is safe to proceed with. .

Yours

Wendy Charles-Warner