



**ADSS Cymru**

Yn arwain Gwasanaethau  
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru

Leading Social Services in Wales

## **Joint Statement by Association of Directors of Education for Wales and Association of Directors of Social Services for Wales.**

Children in Wales deserve excellent services, and they should live in a Wales where leaders proactively promote children's rights. Children, and their wellbeing must be at the heart of everything we do.

The Association of Directors of Education for Wales (ADEW) and All Wales Heads of Children's Services (AWHoCS) supported by the Association of Directors of Social Services for Wales (ADSS Cymru) are united in their support of the Children's Commissioner for Wales' continued efforts to ensure that Elective Home Education (EHE) reform in Wales is progressed as a priority for the new Welsh Government over the course of the new Senedd term.

We shared disappointment at the news that the matter would not be progressed during the last term.

The CCfW's Review of the Welsh Government's Exercise of its Functions in February 2021 found that 'no substantive change had been achieved by any means' during the last Senedd term. Indeed, this will now be the third term of the Senedd during which the matter has remained unaddressed since the death of 8-year-old Dylan Seabridge in Pembrokeshire in December 2011.

However, we have some cause for optimism that, with a new government, and new minister, the issue of EHE can again be given renewed focus and much-needed action in order to establish suitably robust arrangements for supporting EHE children and their families, and for ensuring the safeguarding of any children at risk who are educated under such arrangements.

The opportunity to take advantage of the new full term of government in order to press forward with primary legislation regarding EHE must not be missed. The need for reform is now even more pressing, as the number of children who are now electively home educated across Wales has significantly increased during the course of the pandemic.

This means that even more children who may be vulnerable and need services are not seen by safe adults or professionals outside the home, and have less opportunity to make relationships outside the home that form the basis to be heard, noticed or ask for help.



**ADSS Cymru**

Yn arwain Gwasanaethau  
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru

Leading Social Services in Wales

In providing our support to the CCfW's efforts, we also accord with her view that the best way to enhance the profile of EHE in Wales, and to provide a more structured and diligent approach to the issue for the good of the children concerned, is to develop primary legislation supported by meaningful resources that places statutory obligations onto local authorities to have oversight of such arrangements within their area.

It is vitally important that children who are receiving education at home are not only educated appropriately, but are also seen and heard, and have access to any services that they may need.

Acknowledging that, whilst in many situations home educators provide good and safe settings for children to learn, seeking out opportunities for the children to enhance their education and development outside the home, we are all too sadly aware, that this is not always the case. This is why there needs to be a requirement for children to be seen as part of any new legislative arrangements.

Placing statutory obligations on local authorities to visit, have sight of and communicate with these children, is a key safeguarding action as well as a quality assurance one, supporting both educational and well-being outcomes.

ADEW, AWHoCS and ADSS Cymru are committed to collaborating in a co-productive way with home educators to develop a framework within which the interests and rights of parents as educators are maintained, whilst also allowing for the advancement and protection of the rights of the children, along with the safeguarding of their overall welfare.

If we are to fully uphold both Article 19 (Protection from abuse) and Article 28 (Right to an education) under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, then we must work together at pace with home-educators, children and young people, along with other interested parties so that any solution is arrived at in the full spirit of co-production.

----- Ends -----

This is a joint statement between ADSS Cymru and ADEW.

The Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru is the national professional and strategic leadership organisation for social services. We are a membership organisation, representing all 22 local authorities in Wales.



**ADSS Cymru**

Yn arwain Gwasanaethau  
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru

Leading Social Services in Wales

As the national leadership organisation for social services in Wales, the role of ADSS Cymru is to represent the collective, authoritative voice of Directors of Social Services, Heads of Adult Services, and Children's Services, together with professionals who support vulnerable children and adults, their families and communities, on a range of national and regional issues of social care policy, practice and resourcing. It is the only national body that can articulate the view of those professionals who lead our social care services.

The Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) is the professional group of local authority officers accountable for statutory education functions in each of the Local Authorities in Wales.

The Association has a long-established role in advising on the strategic development and delivery of education and other associated initiatives on behalf of local authorities in Wales.

For further information, please contact [contact@adss.cymru](mailto:contact@adss.cymru)