



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-646
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/02226/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

25 November 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 13 November regarding the petition against the publication of draft non-statutory guidance on Elective Home Education (EHE).

I can assure the Petitions Committee and the EHE community that the Welsh Government's consultation exercise undertaken earlier this year was conducted in accordance with Welsh Government procedures. Despite the apparent premature closing time, my officials have accommodated and considered all of the responses, including those received after the closing date.

We wanted to engage with as many home educators as possible in the production of the guidance, including children and young people, which is why we commissioned an external specialist to produce a children and young people's version. The specialist was careful to ensure that the document was produced within disability and accessibility guidelines and that everything they did was clear, engaging and accessible.

The exercise undertaken by Wavehill was a survey to gather the views of the EHE community, local authorities and others to inform the development of the guidance. Wavehill made every effort to engage with the EHE community and met with all the EHE groups it had arranged meetings with. Wavehill was only unable to make one visit because of bad weather, but I am assured it did manage to visit some members of that group later on and spoke to the others by telephone. Every other group who expressed an interest was visited.

As far as submitting final draft copies of the guidance is concerned, it is neither standard procedure nor is it feasible for the Welsh Government to provide copies of its guidance for sign-off prior to final publication.

As I mentioned in my Written Statement on 8 October, it took longer than expected to thoroughly consider all the responses to the consultation and incorporate the changes to the guidance. For this reason, the guidance will be published later than anticipated, this winter.

You have drawn my attention previously to legal issues raised by the petitioner. My officials are considering advice from our Legal Services on these matters and how they may be reflected in the new guidance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis'.

Huw Lewis AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills