

HR 01

Ymchwiliad i hawliau dynol yng Nghymru

Inquiry into Human Rights in Wales

Ymateb gan: Howard Jones

Response from: Howard Jones

I would like to bring this opinion to the attention of the Committee.

It has long been the case in Wales that public service employers can discriminate in favour of Welsh speakers.

It has long been the case that the Welsh Government has encouraged the increase of Welsh medium schools by making it mandatory on LAs to survey parental preference for Welsh medium schooling and obliging those LAs to provide Welsh medium schools.

The Welsh government has never obliged any LA to survey parental preference for English medium schooling and has never insisted to LAs that they provide English medium schooling for parents who would like their children to be schooled in their home language if that language is English.

The Welsh government has therefore consistently discriminated against the rights of the child and they should in future enshrine in law the right of parents to demand that their child is educated in EITHER of the two legal languages of Wales.

Since 2011 it has been the law that:-

“In Wales, the Welsh language should be treated no less favourably than the English language.

Persons in Wales should be able to live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language if they choose to do so.”

The term "no less favourably..." essentially means that at no time can the English language or the interests of someone speaking English or wishing to use only English be given any kind of preference.

A sign on a public building can be in Welsh only but not in English only.

A Welsh sign on the same line as an English sign must be to the left of the English so that it is read first.

A sign on a public building written in Welsh cannot be below one written in English and the font size of the Welsh sign can be bigger than the English version but not smaller.

All recorded messages on phones in public bodies must be in Welsh first.

An employee can not be disciplined for demanding the right to speak Welsh but an employer can discipline an employee for insisting that he has a right to speak only English.

So far the extent to which the 2011 Welsh language act can be taken has not been fully explored. Already LAs are complaining at the cost of providing Welsh language services where no measurable demand exists...Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Newport, Merthyr and Monmouthshire have so few people who, according to the Welsh language use survey, are "more comfortable speaking Welsh", that when I asked for a percentage of all those LAs taken together the number preferring Welsh was a statistical zero.

Jobs are given to fluent (and usually first language) Welsh speakers in many LAs and denied to monoglot English employees for no discernible reason.

When it comes to "human rights" in Wales there is a massive and state generated discrimination against all those people who are most comfortable using English and want to live their lives through English. Only 4.4% of the Welsh population is most comfortable using Welsh.

The 2011 Welsh language act must be re-drafted to give English language rights to the 95% majority.

The present state of affairs is a monstrous injustice and it is a proven fact that pupils who have no Welsh speaking Parent do not reach their full potential in Welsh medium schools. See attachments.

Regards,  
J.Jones.