

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru  
Bil Awtistiaeth (Cymru) drafft  
Llythyr Ymgynghori DAB46  
Ymateb gan | Evidence from: Helen Howells

National Assembly for Wales  
Draft Autism (Wales) Bill  
Consultation Letter DAB46

Please refer to questions in the [consultation Letter](#).

I work as a Specialist Nurse for Primary CAMH and over 70% of my cases are related to a child or young person who either has a diagnosis of ASD or is experiencing many features consistent with ASD; either being assessed further or having problems that result in either a GP or an education professional contacting me for consultation and advice.

The main problem that I come across on a daily basis is the lack of specialist education for these children and young people.

Many of these children and young people are very intelligent - 'high functioning'.

These children and young people are keen to learn and have friends, however, they are unable to cope in large classes and large mainstream schools.

Smaller schools with less pupils in class that are well behaved and also want tolerant is ideal for them and in these instances they can and do cope with the mainstream curriculum, however, as our school buildings are old and newer schools are being built, comprehensive schools are being combined to make 'super schools', eg Ysgol Bae Baglan in Port Talbot.

These schools do not meet the needs of these pupils - not because of lack of endeavour but due to the sheer size of the school and the fact that due to the social communication, difficulties coping with change and sensory issues these pupils have to cope with on a daily basis - large schools and large size classes are not suitable for these pupils.

The number of specialist placements available in each local area is also so limited that many pupils end up having to be educated at home as the parents have no other option available due to the distress the child/young person experiences in mainstream settings.

In my experience teachers have not had training on neuro developmental problems and do not recognise children with these problems - even when it is clear to someone who has had the appropriate training.

Neuro developmental disorders are also associated with a high occurrence of mental health problems and again teachers do not have compulsory training as part of their teacher training degree to equip them to deal with these problems.

I believe the Bill should state that All Authorities in Wales - have to provide a specialist education provision for these pupils and teachers should have compulsory modules as part of their teaching degree in order to ensure that these children are identified as early as possible and receive the appropriate educational support.

I believe Wales can be a world leader if it chooses to address these problems and Wales can deliver a gold standard service for these pupils.

These are my opinions not representative of my service - i.e. Primary CAMH - I am passionate about the work I do and have a special interest in this particular area of my work with children, young people and their families.