

Welsh LA Databases Consultation - Notes from Workshop

The first of three “Table Talk” sessions took place in Llandudno on Friday 6 March

The following notes are from a home educator who attended the first of the Table Talk sessions in connection with the Welsh consultation which is currently running on the proposed “Local authority education databases” of children not on any school roll. The workshops were advertised on [the main consultation web page](#) via a PDF document entitled “[Invitation to the ‘Table Talk’ Regional Workshops.](#)” They have been shared with The HE Byte for the benefit of other HE families who are planning to attend the remaining sessions.

Publicity about the meeting was minimal, and it was only advertised with short notice. None of those who had applied to attend had received notification of their attendance being accepted.

Only eight people were there. Three of these were home education stakeholders, three were local authority education officers. The remaining two appeared to be connected in some way to a business working with looked after children, and were not stakeholders in the issue at hand.

The meeting report sheets very clearly asked for numbers of votes from the group on each point. Unless it is clarified that they came essentially from non home educators, these votes will give an unrepresentative report from North Wales and seriously skew the results,

The Draft Regulations are clearly stated by the Education Minister to be a means of enforcing data collection in respect of home educated children. Despite that, the meeting was dominated by one forceful woman determined to make it be about 'looked after children' and the facilitator repeatedly supported that, whilst turning the conversation away from the actual stakeholder group - home educating families. Again, this will deliver skewed outcomes.

Whilst we tried to put our points across, we were shut down on every occasion, and the atmosphere was loaded with negativity toward the home educating stakeholders.

The questions were leading and clearly designed to elicit results which were pre-determined.

The discussion time was cut short in order to accommodate the local authority staff attending, despite the meeting being advertised as running from 10am until 1pm.

Discussion from the home education stakeholders was cut off rapidly, without allowing them proper opportunity to make their points.

All in all, the meeting appeared designed to provide a pre-determined response to shore up the proposal with the facilitating company's report.