



Comisiwn
Cydraddoldeb a
Hawliau Dynol

Equality and
Human Rights
Commission

Buffy Williams MS
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Wednesday 12 March 2025

Dear Buffy,

Subject: Follow up from meeting with the EHRC Wales

Thank you for meeting with us last month to discuss our priorities, we found the discussion to be very helpful.

As agreed, please find below information on our concerns regarding restraint in schools as well as a further update on our new Human Rights Tracker.

Our restraint in schools' inquiry

In June 2021 we published our [Restraint in schools inquiry: using meaningful data to protect children's rights](#). One of our key findings was that there is no reliable data in Wales or England on the extent to which restraint is used disproportionately on protected groups of children.

A key recommendation within the report was for the Welsh Government, and

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The Commission welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English.

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the UK Government, to have national minimum standards set for recording the use of restraint in schools. These should include, for example, the type of restraint used, the reason(s) for the use of restraint and the protected characteristics of the child (including age, sex, disability – broken down by impairment type – and race).

We welcomed both the Welsh Government's Reducing Restrictive Practice Framework and the formal response we received from the then Minister for Education. Within this he stated the Welsh Government would develop specific guidance on restraint for the education sector. Nevertheless, progress on this has been slow and has not moved forward.

As you know, the Welsh Government has a long-standing commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Our [CRC report](#), published in January 2023, highlighted our continued concern that schools in Wales are not legally required to record the use of restraint. Due to this lack of standardised recording and monitoring it is still not possible to fully assess the prevalence of restraint, including any disproportionate use on children with certain protected characteristics. This makes it very difficult for schools and the Welsh Government to monitor restraint usage or minimise it.

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This was reflected in the [concluding observations](#) of the UNCRC Committee.

Since we met last month, the UK Government has launched a [consultation](#) on its revised 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools' guidance. The guidance has been updated to support schools to meet the new statutory requirement to record every significant incident of use of force and report these incidents to the parents of the pupils involved. This statutory requirement will be effective from September 2025.

We are concerned by this widening gap and that children in Wales will not be protected in the same way.

This may be an area the CYPE Committee wish to scrutinise the Welsh Government in, to ensure the recommendations within our inquiry report are met and that the Welsh Government develop restraint guidance for schools in Wales.

Human Rights Tracker

As discussed, we have launched a new phase in our [Human Rights Tracker](#). The Tracker is a unique online tool which assesses how well the Welsh and UK Governments are putting their international human rights obligations into

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practice.

We have updated our Tracker's methodology to make it easier to understand the UN's recommendations, and the actions the Welsh and UK Governments have taken to meet these recommendations. Where a recommendation relates to matters devolved to the Welsh Government, we have a separate assessment of action they have taken.

We want people to engage with our Tracker and to use it as a tool to inform research, debate and decision-making. We hope this will drive action and meaningful change that enhances human rights and makes life fairer for everyone in Wales.

As mentioned, we would be more than happy to arrange a demonstration session for Committee members and Senedd staff on our new tracker.

We hope the information provided is helpful, if you require any further information, please let us know.

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Yours sincerely,

Rev Ruth Coombs
Head of Wales
Wales | Cymru

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