

Petitions Committee

Consultation on petition P - 04 - 432 Stop the Army Recruiting in Schools

Response from Tim Hart

Dear Sir/Madam,

Unfortunately I was not aware of this petition until after the closing date but in any event I support the proposal for a ban on a military presence in schools and therefore submit this email as part of the consultation. I have two daughters that went through the state education system in England and would have been dismayed had they been subject to such targeted recruitment, although I understand that England does permit such presence in its state schools at the discretion of the head teacher.

I was interested in the wording of the petition which states that: 'no other country in the European Union permits such a military presence in schools.' Before the Welsh Assembly makes up its mind on this issue I feel that it would be helpful for it to have the facts on this particular aspect. I suspect the statistics and reasons for the ban on the military in schools by Member Countries could be obtained relatively easily from the European Commission and would prove valuable in enabling Assembly Members to make an informed decision.

The petition also states that the Military target deprived areas in its recruitment drives. I wonder whether the department of education has statistics concerning which schools have been visited by the Military in Wales- say over the past five years - and what is the socio-demographic profile of these schools. This would help to prove or disprove this particular claim.

Personally I have no particular knowledge or expertise in this subject and therefore cannot assist with the answers to these questions. From a broad legal and moral standpoint I believe it is questionable whether a school has the right to impose upon the children in its care such a military presence, which I believe would be more suitably deferred to adulthood - perhaps at college or university for instance – by which time the young people would be better placed to make an informed choice.

Thank you for taking the trouble to consider my views.

Tim Hart