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National Assembly for Wales

Children and Young People Committee

Education (Wales) Bill : Stage 1

Response from : NAHT Cymru

1. NAHT is an independent trade union and professional association representing more than 28,500 members in Wales, England and Northern Ireland. Members hold leadership positions in virtually every special school, 85 per cent of primary schools and more than 40 per cent of secondary schools, as well as many early years providers, independent schools, sixth form and FE colleges, outdoor education centres, pupil referral units, social services establishments and other educational settings.
2. Thank you for inviting us to submit evidence to the Children and Young People Committee on the Education (Wales) Bill. We look forward to discussing these matters further during our oral evidence session.
3. NAHT has always supported the existence of an **independent** professional body to represent and reflect the teaching profession in Wales.
4. The education workforce has changed and expanded markedly in the years since the GTCW was originally formed; we are pleased that the proposed Council recognises this. The proposed expansion in those required to register to the new Council to include FE teachers, and school and FE support staff will mean a far greater and more complex registration process. We think that this development should be carefully managed to make sure that each element is securely in place before moving on to the next.
5. In disciplinary cases, we believe that each sector of membership should be heard by their peers.
6. We are not persuaded that Welsh Ministers have a role in preparing and publishing a Code of Conduct **24(1)**. We do not believe it is the role of Government to draft a Code of Conduct for members of an independent professional body. This should be the responsibility of the Council itself in consultation with the profession it seeks to regulate and represent.
7. Clause **26.3(c)** is welcome.

8. We welcome the provisions in Part 3. The explanatory memorandum reflects members' own experience in navigating the complexities of the current system and agree that these must be resolved.
9. We have long argued that a standardisation of term dates is desirable and regret that legislation has proved necessary to effect this. Committee members may also like to be aware that NAHT has long argued that the current three-term school-year pattern should be revisited.
10. In order to command the respect of the professionals it seeks to regulate, the new body will need to be demonstrably independent. We are not persuaded that the membership of the Council as laid out in **Schedule 1** is at all helpful here.
11. We look forward to a further consultation on the detail of the fee arrangements. Member response to this is again likely to be coloured by their view of the emerging new body. Its independence, its credibility with the profession will in large part determine how members perceive the fee. Some school leaders have indicated that they would be prepared to pay a fee for membership of a professional body for which they could have respect; they would not be happy to pay if they doubted its independence and felt unrepresented by it. Being required to pay a registration fee as a condition of employment to a body perceived to be a quango would not be acceptable.