

Petitions Committee

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

Response from West Carmarthen Association of Independent Churches

FOR THE ATTENTION OF: Clerk to the Petitions Committee, the National Assembly for Wales

Consultation response – *Stop the army recruiting in schools* – on behalf of the West Carmarthen Association of Independent Churches.

As an association, we would like to make the following comments:

Britain is the only country in the European Union, and one of only 20 throughout the world, that allows its armed forces to recruit people under the age of 18. As part of that process, they are given access to schools. We believe that this should be stopped, because:

- In the eyes of the law, people under 18 are still children.
- Those who sign an agreement to join when they are 16 or 17 have to serve until they are 22 years old.
- An adult should not be bound by an agreement made when he or she was a child.
- The information given to children is inadequate and misleading; it romanticises war by minimising the risk to the lives of those who join the armed forces; it emphasises “learning a skill” at the expense of the fact that a soldier's main function is to be prepared to kill the enemy.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UK Parliament’s Joint Committee on Human Rights are both critical of the way that Britain recruits children.
- The Ministry of Defence recognises that tens of millions of pounds are wasted on training children who then turn their backs on a career in the armed forces.