

Welsh Government introduces Bill amendment to protect rights of public sector workers

The Welsh Government will amend its Trade Union Bill, at Stage 2 of the Bill's passage through the National Assembly, to ensure current arrangements remain in place with regards to devolved public services.

The Trade Union (Wales) Bill will, when enacted, reverse the effect of certain provisions in the UK Government's Trade Union Act 2016, in order to protect and promote the successful Welsh model of social partnership.

The decision to introduce an amendment to the Bill follows a UK Government consultation on revoking the current legal position where employers are unable to use temporary workers to provide cover when staff take industrial action.

This would apply to industrial action taken by workers in all sectors, including workers employed in the public sector in Wales.

The Welsh Government has since consulted on whether the current position should be maintained in devolved public services and has subsequently decided to amend the Trade Union Bill to prevent the UK Government from legislating in this area.

Speaking ahead of today's Stage 1 Debate on the Trade Union Bill, the Cabinet Secretary said:

"We have long said that the UK Government's position is counterproductive - leading to prolonged, protracted disputes, greater confrontation and more disruption to some of the most vulnerable users of our vital public services.

"Although the UK Government has yet to enact legislation on agency workers, we have taken the necessary steps to ensure that, if they choose to do so, devolved public services would remain unaffected and that the current legal position would remain the same. We are acting to retain the status quo.

"Our Bill and the amendment we are introducing both have the very clear backing of the Assembly's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee, with strong support for the proud tradition of constructive social partnership we have here in Wales. We are not prepared for this to be partnership to be jeopardised."