

Lawyers demolish SNP attempts to revise named person policy

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The SNP has been urged to “do the decent thing” and scrap named person plans altogether, after lawyers demolished the policy in Holyrood today.

The Law Society and Faculty of Advocates both gave evidence to the education committee criticising revised plans for the controversial scheme, after the Supreme Court ruled elements of it unlawful last year.

The Law Society’s Kenny Meechan told MSPs those responsible for delivering the policy would need “lawyers on speed dial” to understand the changes to the bill.

And Janys Scott QC, from the Faculty of Advocates, added there was still widespread misunderstanding of what the Scottish Government meant by the word “wellbeing”.

This would create confusion over what the threshold is for intervention by a named person, and what information should be shared and by whom, she said.

It’s the latest setback for the SNP as it attempts to get its state guardian plans not only through parliament, but past judges too.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

“The lawyers have demolished the Scottish Government’s attempts to respond to the Supreme Court judgement.

“There remains a complete lack of clarity in the new bill and, just as importantly, confusion over what will be in the code of practice.

“Both are a major worry for practitioners who are expected to have all the necessary training and skills to know when to share information and to be able to account for their decisions.

“None of this is clear within the Scottish Government’s revised policy and that has been made clear by practitioners, even some who were originally in favour of the named person policy.

“For families, the policy remains a potential source of intrusion into their family life and that is why the Scottish Government should do the decent

thing and scrap the new bill.”

Both Janys Scott QC, from the Faculty of Advocates, and Kenny Meechan, from the Law Society, appeared at today’s education committee in the Scottish Parliament.

To see the Faculty of Advocates’ written submission, visit:

<http://www.advocates.org.uk/media/2498/final-faculty-response-15-aug-2017-named-person.pdf>