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From: [REDACTED] LEO OFFICIAL
Sent: 08 May 2009 01:43
To: MINISTERS, Dcsf, [REDACTED] DCSF OFFICIALS LEO OFFICIAL
Subject: home education review- the next stage
DCSF OFFICIAL
Cc: [REDACTED] fao Mr Badman

FAO:
Ed Balls
Baroness Morgan
Sarah McCarthy Fry
Jim Knight

For information:
[REDACTED] DCSF DCSF OFFICIAL
[REDACTED] Education Otherwise LEO OFFICIAL

6th May

Re Presentation of the Government response to Lord Laming's report

Dear Mr Balls,

Thank you for responding to my question at the presentation.

I was interested that you said whilst you had no plans to change the rights of parents to home educate it was not an option you would choose for your children. It left me thinking that you are fortunate to believe you will never have to consider this choice. Very many parents now home educating their children would not have anticipated taking this route.

Earlier in the year you were reported to have expressed concerns about home education and socialisation. This is frequently less of an issue than those outside the community appreciate.

Perhaps we should view your remarks as progress. Only a short time ago the Department's immediate response to questions about home education was to state that, ... the best place for a child is in school. Sadly we have ample evidence that this is not always the case.

In response to my question you urged home educators to see the current investigation as an opportunity. Mr Badman has used the same form of words in our meetings.

This has been difficult. The press release launching the Investigation has caused a number of serious problems and helped to polarise the community.

14/09/2009

Education Otherwise are attempting to engage positively with the Badman Investigation despite the opposition of some of our community .

We understand that Mr Badman hopes to present a report later this month. I am writing to ask how the Government will proceed once the report is nearing completion. Which Ministers will be involved in any consideration of the report and are there any plans to engage with stakeholder organisations?

It is not clear to us which Minister will have responsibility for taking the process forward. Nor, as we said in a recent submission is there any structure or framework to deliver any recommendations.

With regard to the response to the Laming report you said it would have been easy to hurry to change legislation and alter structure. In fact the law is adequate but what is needed is better systems and training. This is exactly what Education Otherwise have been saying, through seemingly endless consultations over recent years in relation to home education.

Given the unfortunate start to the Investigation it would be reassuring to think that the remaining stages will be handled more professionally and in a way which does not leave a minority community feeling further stigmatised .

Our community is very concerned that Ministers who will be dealing with the report still appear to have little knowledge of or contact with our community. I should once again like to extend an invitation to you to meet with home educating families in order that you have an appreciation of our experiences and concerns.

Sheffield is not so far from your constituency , alternatively we would be happy to co-operate in organising meetings in London.

Yours sincerely

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ GO OFFICIAL

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