

safeguarding

children missing education

extended schools

offer of five hours of culture a week

OUTCOMES/PERFORMANCE DATA

The Department should review the prodigal use of the term “outcomes” On page 4 we read about “demonstrable improvements in outcomes.” On page 5 we hear about “the drive for better outcomes for young people” and “improving outcomes for all.”

On page 8 we learn that “The Children’s Plan says that every young person should achieve their potential and enjoy their time in education.” Education Otherwise has received the following assurance from DCSF:

“We note the concerns you have raised about our proposal in the Children’s Plan to publish performance data for pupils not on a school roll. The Department will be consulting with Local Authorities about this aspect of the Children’s Plan and we will make it clear to them that it does not apply to children and young people who are being home educated.”

SAFEGUARDING

The following has no place in statutory guidance and contradicts statutory guidance and advice to practitioners given in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006. In particular the following has no place in statutory guidance on section 10, since the remit of Local Safeguarding Children Boards is set out in section 13 and not section 10.

“Children’s safety is fundamental to their broader well-being. Relentless focus on protecting the most vulnerable gives lessons that can be extended to improving safeguarding for all children” p.7 draft statutory guidance.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 already set out the role and priorities for the Local Safeguarding Boards.

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00060/>

The main remit of Safeguarding Boards outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children p.46 onwards, making it clear that the priority function of a local safeguarding children board is PROTECTION. It says that PREVENTATIVE work should only happen as part of wider remit if this can be done without neglecting core work. Furthermore, it says that preventative work should be focused on children who come from groups identified as likely to be vulnerable.”

4 Do you think there should be any changes made to the current system for supporting home educating families? If you answered yes, what should they be? If you answered no, why do you think that.

Yes,,No, and Not Sure.

Sorry we are unable to answer this question. We don't understand the terms. Could you say a little more about what is meant by “the current system for supporting home educating families?”

As we indicated briefly in our preliminary meeting with Graham Badman on February 11th, home

educators have a number of ideas about what could be done to support home educating families. But we never get to this point in the discussion because we are constantly firefighting and defending attacks on our way of life. As we said at the meeting, we are extremely concerned at the use of the word "support" in the same breath as allegations about home education being a cover for forced marriage and domestic servitude.

5 Do you think there should be any changes made to the current system for monitoring home educating families? If you answered yes, what should they be? If you answered no, why do you think that?

Yes, No and Not Sure

Sorry we are unable to answer this question. We don't understand the terms. Could you say a little more about what is meant by "the current system for monitoring home educating families."

6 Some people have expressed concern that home education could be used as a cover for child abuse, forced marriage, domestic servitude or other forms of child neglect. What do you think Government should do to ensure this does not happen?

Sadly it is probably not possible to ensure that people do not express these concerns. This aim may be too ambitious. However, if the Government wished to dispel concern it could review the correspondence between ██████████ of Education Otherwise and ██████████ of the Forced Marriage Unit. This information was also made available to the DCSF as part of the consultation process for revised statutory guidance on Children At Risk of Not Receiving Suitable Education in October 2008.

**Additional evidence submitted as part of EO consultation response.
Email correspondence (in reverse date order):**

Dear ██████████

Thank you very much for your email and please accept my sincere apologies for the delayed reply. To respond to your key questions:

"I've checked and double checked, and the information you are requesting is not collected. The Forced Marriage Unit, based in the Foreign Office collect some statistics on the reported cases of Forced Marriage, - however this doesn't go into the sort of detail you are requesting - it covers age, gender, geographical region. I wonder ██████████, if you can you confirm that this is the position please?"

I can confirm that the statistical records of the forced marriage unit do not include the level of detail that you are requesting in relation to their education. Our primary statistical focus, as Jamie has outlined, are the ages, genders, UK regions of origin and third countries in cases.

"In our conversation you said that young people are taken out of school prior to forced marriages taking place. I have in the past undertaken voluntary work with the Citizen's Advice Bureau close to my home in inner city Sheffield and through that work and my contact with my neighbours I have been aware of this important issue for a number of years.

I asked if the young people you were referring to were young people whose parents had gone through the official de-registration process and had informed the school of their intention to home educate their child.

Are you able to confirm that there is no evidence that this is the case?"

I can confirm that we have no evidence that parents have gone through the official de-registration process in cases of forced marriage where the victim is removed from school prior to the marriage taking place. It should be noted

though that the lack of evidence in itself is not conclusive as we cannot predict the percentage of victims in these circumstances where the parents in fact have gone through the official de-registration process.

"If children and young people are withdrawn from school without proper de-registration and a stated intention to undertake home education they could not be classified as home educated. With this, more accurate definition of home education in mind could you please answer the following question?

Is it the view of the Forced Marriage Unit that home educated young people are at greater risk of forced marriage than other groups?"

The Forced Marriage Unit certainly does not hold the view that home educated young people are at greater risk of forced marriage than their peers or that there is any causal link between home education and forced marriage. However, in cases of forced marriage, the perpetrators are almost invariably the parents and families of the victims and the primary safeguards (particularly for young people) are the statutory agencies. It is absolutely not inconceivable that perpetrators of forced marriage do/will exploit the home education system to allow them the opportunity to have a greater level of control over their child's freedoms.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] E.O. OFFICIAL
Sent: 20 October 2008 00:40
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED], [REDACTED] DCSF OFFICIAL
Subject: RE: forced marriage and home education
Dear [REDACTED]

The consultation period which prompted this enquiry is nearing a close. I do not appear to have had a response to this mail.

Regards

[REDACTED]
Education Otherwise

From: [REDACTED] E.O. OFFICIAL
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED], [REDACTED] DCSF OFFICIAL
Subject: forced marriage and home education
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 00:05:40 +0100
Dear [REDACTED],

As you may recall I telephoned the Forced Marriage Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth office on Thursday 2nd October to talk to someone about the current Consultation on "Revised Statutory Guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education."

Towards the end of our conversation I asked if I might e-mail you to get written responses to some of the questions I needed to ask.

I am a member of the Government Policy Group for Education Otherwise and one of the people putting together a response for the organisation. Education Otherwise has been established for over thirty years and is the largest organisations working with families who home educate their own children.

We met with the DCSF last month and discussed our concerns with [REDACTED] who is coordinating the consultation; with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] from the ContactPoint team and with [REDACTED] who was, at that time, a member of the DCSF Elective Home Education Team.

At that meeting we were told that the catalyst for the consultation and the

proposed changes to the guidance was the Home Affairs Select Committee Report on Domestic Violence and Forced Marriage. The current guidance was introduced in 2007 and as I am sure you are aware some of the measures contained in it, like ContactPoint, are not yet operational. From my reading of the new measures on forced marriage it seems many of these have yet to be implemented. We were told that the Home Affairs Select committee had asked for revised guidance as a matter of urgency.

There is no evidence in the report of the Select Committee that any consultation was undertaken with organisations representing home educators. Similarly, in the DCSF there had been no consultation with organisation working in the field of home education prior to our meeting, but in the preconsultation period the DCSF had consulted with;

CME co-ordinators

Local Data services

Some of the local ContactPoint teams

School Attendance

Sadly, it is our experience that many people working in these posts have a poor awareness of the law and home education.

At the meeting I asked what the evidence base was for the link which is apparently now being made between home education and forced marriage. No one at the meeting was able to provide this information so I wrote to Jamie following the meeting.

This is part of the text of the e-mail;

At our meeting on Friday I asked what the evidence base was for the linkage which you indicated was being made between forced marriage and home education.

I have spent some time today reading the literature and trying to find the information.

This is the information I would be interested in having:

What are the actual figures for forced marriages where;

the girl/boy is on a school roll

the girl/boy is withdrawn from a school roll

the girl/boy is not on a school roll

the girl/boy is known to be home educated

I wonder if you are able to tell me where I would find this information please?

██████ replied:

I've checked and double checked, and the information you are requesting is not collected. The Forced Marriage Unit, based in the Foreign Office collect some statistics on the reported cases of Forced Marriage, - however this doesn't go into the sort of detail you are requesting - it covers age, gender, geographical region.

I wonder, ████████ if you can you confirm that this is the position please?

In our conversation you said that young people are taken out of school prior to forced marriages taking place. I have in the past undertaken voluntary work with the Citizen's Advice Bureau close to my home in inner city Sheffield and through that work and my contact with my neighbours I have been aware of this important issue for a number of years.

I asked if the young people you were referring to were young people whose parents had gone through the official de-registration process and had informed the school of their intention to home educate their child.

Are you able to confirm that there is no evidence that this is the case?

If children and young people are withdrawn from school without proper deregistration

and a stated intention to undertake home education they could not be classified as home educated. With this, more accurate definition of home education in mind could you please answer the following question?

Is it the view of the Forced Marriage Unit that home educated young people are at greater risk of forced marriage than other groups?

In his response [REDACTED] also said:

If your query is related to why the Home Affairs Select Committee made reference to children missing education, and Home Education, in their conclusions, I'm sure the answer is that concerns were raised in witness evidence heard by the Committee. The two witnesses that I can find that mentioned home education, were representing the Crown Prosecution Service and the Family Justice Council.

This material is taken from the evidence given to the Select Committee; [REDACTED], Director, Crown Prosecution Service (London West)

Q135 [REDACTED], yesterday I spoke to somebody about the Forced Marriage Unit and I was told that the CPS had figures showing that in Bedford alone 300 girls aged between 13 and 16 have disappeared from school rolls. I do not know why the CPS would have that-

[REDACTED]: Exactly. It is not the CPS. We are aware of the figures.

Q136 [REDACTED] Can you tell me what the figures are nationally, or what you are aware of?

[REDACTED]: I cannot give you those figures.

Q137 [REDACTED]: Can you write to us about that. That would be very helpful.

[REDACTED] On the main point that [REDACTED] makes, we are not just working with victims of crime, we are looking at potential victims of crime. **We have identified thousands, probably, of young girls between those ages, 13 and 16, who are no longer in education. Very many of them are, allegedly, being home-schooled and very many of them are not being home-schooled at all because there is no means of being able to check what is happening to them.** Very many of them will end up being-well, they are victims already, I would say-victims of forced marriage or honourbased violence. **I know that a number of institutions are receiving freedom of information requests to get the full information.** At the moment I do not have that in the way that you would like, but I am sure we can give you what we have.

Chairman: If you could do that, that would be very helpful. **I have been unable to locate this information anywhere in the report or the written evidence submitted to the committee. Please can you direct me to this material? Without the evidence these statements are unsubstantiated.**

This statement: " Very many of them are, allegedly, being home-schooled