

Directors of Children's Services All
local authorities in England

17 September 2009

Select Committee hearing on the Review of Elective Home Education in England

I am writing to make you aware of the forthcoming Select Committee hearing in early October which is likely to examine the evidence from the various sources which led me to make the 28 recommendations in my Review. The Review recognised that most home educators do a good job and that they should be supported by local authorities (LAs) in accessing appropriate services for their children. You may be aware from press reports and activity within your local authority that some sections of the home educating community are questioning some of the LA evidence which assisted me in arriving at my conclusions.

I had a good response from LAs to my call for evidence to inform the Review. This provided a rich source of contextual information which I considered alongside submissions from individuals and a wide range of organisations with relevant expertise. Most of my recommendations have not been challenged, reflecting the sound evidence base. However, a small group of home educators have refused to accept my conclusion that 'the number of children known to children's social care in some local authorities is disproportionately high relative to the size of the home educating population' with others disputing the evidence base that shows that a small but significant proportion of home educated children are receiving no, or an inadequate, education.

I would like to strengthen my statistical evidence in advance of the Select Committee hearing so that it is more extensive and statistically robust. This would allow the Select Committee to consider good quality factual information that supplements the qualitative analyses underpinning my report. For this reason I need a response to this letter by **1 October**.

DCSF's 'Star Chamber' gave approval for this voluntary data collection on 15 September.

For those LAs which did not submit information earlier

In the course of the Review we collected statistical evidence from a sample of local authorities on vulnerable children who were home educated. This provided persuasive evidence for change. However, it was a small sample and we would like to supplement this data in order to provide more statistically rigorous information to the Select Committee about safeguarding and educational issues that affect home educated children. The supplementary information we are seeking is described below and we would be grateful if you could indicate for each dataset whether the figures are accurate or estimates.

Home educated children where there are child protection concerns

Each year local authorities return statistics on the number of referrals, assessments and children who are subject to a child protection plan (the 'CPR3' return). We would be grateful if you could identify the number of home educated children of compulsory school age who are the subject of child protection plans using the attached spreadsheet (information reproduced below for ease of reference). We will compare this information on home educated children with the wider child population using the 2008-09 CPR3 return published on 17 September 2009.

CPR3 Category	Number of EHE children
Electively home educated children who were the subject of a child protection plan at 31 March 2009	Nil
Number of electively home educated children in local authority	56 as of 24/09/2009

Inadequate education

Please can you provide information about the number of electively home educated children of compulsory school age not receiving a suitable education:

Number not receiving any education	2 in process of being found a school place
Number receiving some education but not a full time education	There is currently no legal definition of full time education for children educated at home
Number receiving a full time but not 'suitable' education	Not applicable

Number not cooperating with monitoring so no assessment can be made	6 children for whom we have a statement in lieu but have never seen. Education appears adequate from the statement
Known to home educate but no assessment yet	24/09/09 we had 6 new referrals visits have been arranged during the next month.
Total number of electively home educated children not known to be receiving a 'suitable education'	We do not understand this question.

School attendance orders

Number issued in past 12 months to electively home educated children (please do not include any child more than once).

None

NEETs

The Connexions Service carries out an annual survey of year 11 leavers to check their destination. Please can you forward any figures you have for the 2008 leavers cohort who were home educated, showing the number or percentage that were classified as Not Settled in a Full Time Activity, when this survey was carried out, and comparative information for all young people in this cohort. The attached Annex helps explain the different categories that contribute to this total.

Youth and Connexions are not in a position to publish any destination data until it has been submitted to and verified by Government Office for London via Careervision Management Information providers.

Missing children (runaways)

Local authorities should hold information about missing children. If you have information available that identifies their last known education setting, please could you provide the total number of missing children and indicate how many were electively home educated prior to their disappearance.

None

Background information/case studies

Please add any information or explanations you think would be helpful in returning this information.

Some local authorities have already provided anonymised case studies illustrating the difficult circumstances that LAs face in making decisions in relation to home educating families: we would be grateful for any further case studies you are able to provide. These will be treated in strictest confidence, bearing in mind the significant damage that could be caused if any child could be identified through any form of disclosure of individual or grouped information of this type.

Timescales

We need this information by **1 October** in order to collate it in time for the Select Committee hearing. Therefore we would be very grateful if you could return information on the attached excel spreadsheet to the secure mailbox XXXXXXXXXXXXX.XXXXXX@XXXX.XXX.XXX.XX by 1 October. If you are unable to complete the entire form we would be very grateful for a partial return as we appreciate that your administrative systems may not be set up to provide everything we are requesting.

If you have any questions about this letter please contact Lisa White on 01325 391162 or XXXX.XXXXX@XXXX.XXX.XXX.XX

I am very grateful for your assistance while the Review was under way, and for your continuing support for DCSF as they carry out their consultation on legislation to implement a registration and monitoring system. I believe that my proposals will improve support for home educators, and raise the status and quality of home education, and hope that you will help me make the strongest possible case to the Select Committee in October.

Yours sincerely

Graham Badman CBE

Annex List of activities included in the Not Settled category

NOT SETTLED	Not Settled in a Full time Activity- TOTAL
	Not settled-Active TOTAL
	Available to the labour market
	Part time Learning
	Part Time Employment
	Personal Development Opportunities
	Not settled- Not Active TOTAL
	Supporting family - young carers
	Supporting family - teenage parents
	Illness
	Pregnancy
	Custodial Sentence
	Asylum seekers without citizenship
	Other reason