

Written evidence submitted by [member of the public]

[Note: This evidence has been redacted by the Committee. Text in square brackets has been inserted where text has been redacted.]

I have homeschooled my children for many years now, and they have entered the state system at different points, according to their particular needs and wishes. They have benefitted from a more flexible schedule and we have been able to give them time to develop in their own way.

I know many other homeschooling families and they take many different approaches to life and education. In every case I see the mother wanting the emotional, mental and long term good of the children, and realise that education takes many forms and methods, and that children can flourish in a wide variety of situations.

Often a child that gets 'lost' in a classroom setting, or learns very differently to the crowd, or is vulnerable to bullying is one that parents might withdraw from mainstream education for their good. This option needs to be open to parents, and they need the freedom to address the needs of their child as they see best.

I feel that families who choose to home educate are rarely going to be ones where huge problems arise, detrimental to the well-being of the child. They undertake the responsibility conscious that this involves a large commitment of time and resources.

Elective home education should not be confused with the responsibility that is forced upon a family when a child is expelled/excluded. This is not sought, and the child is unlikely to co-operate in the educational process. The parents may not be engaged in any real sense.

The current system has encouraged variety and freedom, which is a wonderful blessing. There is no evidence to suggest that a change is required, and it would be unwise to give councils another port of call, which could easily distract from far more pressing needs in the community. The cost of further regulation when weighed against the benefit, does not seem appropriate.

Any system of offering support ought to be voluntary; but one helpful area would be to make exams cheaper for external candidates.

December 2020