

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.]

12/11/2020

Education Committee (Home Education – Call for Evidence)
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you in response to your request for information in regards the “Home Education - Call for Evidence”.

My wife and I have home educated our three child from birth. We have two daughters, [age] and [age] and one son, [age]. Home education continues to be a wonderful experience, where as a family we are able to grow and learn together each day, while we interact both in the home and out in the community.

Although we have adopted a Christian principled, whole curriculum for our children, we appreciate, after meeting many home educators, that home education is broad and flexible in its goals, tools and application. This broadness and flexibility allows parents to better fit the education to each child and their family’s needs.

The vast majority of home educators we are in contact with are elective home educators. The children we have meet general exhibit high levels of social maturity, self-determination and confidence.

We have responded to the key sections for the call to evidence below, by answering each section separately, albeit there will be some cross over in our responses.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to this important matter which we are passionate about and hope our response provides useful input to your work.

Kind regards

[name]

The duties of local authorities with regards to home education, including safeguarding and assuring the quality of home education;

The law is very clear that the responsibility for education of the child lies with the parents. It is important that a child's education is fit for the child and in this regards the parents have a first-hand understanding of the child's needs, so are best able to fit the education according to the child needs and aspirations. The parents are also the most suitable protectors and champions for their child's education.

Local authorities need to support and improve schools where parents have delegated their authority to educate their children and may not be aware of the day to day teaching shortage and knowledge gaps of their children.

When understanding education quality it is vital to gain clarity on the goal of education first. By mistakenly limiting the goal to the furtherment of learning, based on measures of % going into tertiary education or individual productivity, based on measures of future salaries, misses the higher educational goal of equipping every child to be able to make a positive contribution to society whatever their character, gifts and talents may be. Educational quality measures need to be based on the individual child outcomes and not educational facility outcomes.

whether a statutory register of home-educated children is required;

How would a statutory register benefit home educators?

the benefits children gain from home education, and the potential disadvantages they may face;

The overwhelming benefit of home education is that the parent is active in the day to day education of their child and is able to respond and direct the child's learning needs as the child grows and discovers information. Because the home education environment includes not only the home but regular community/social/sports/cultural activity (field trips) during all days of the week the child is better able to understand their role in society, interact with society and transition into a positive contributor to society. Because home education involves the communication and interaction across a range of age groups (both in the home and out of the home), as is the norm in society, home educated children mature faster as they are not locked into the social immaturity of their own age groups.

Unfortunately because the government does not support home education families these families pay for resources twice, firstly in their tax and secondly for their education needs as no funding (that we are aware of) is provided by government.

the quality and accessibility of support (including financial support) available for home educators and their children, including those with special educational needs, disabilities, mental health issues, or caring responsibilities, and those making the transition to further and higher education;

Parents who have sacrificed their time to educate and care for their children are clearly showing a desire to see their children succeed whatever the child's situation or desires.

We are not aware of any available financial support provided specifically to home educators albeit our children do not have special needs, disabilities or mental health issues.

We are aware of the success of many home educated children going on and excelling in higher education where the foundation of parent guided, self-directed and self-paced learning have been invaluable.

Observation and feedback from many home educated children who progress into higher education suggests classroom based children are often ill equipped to deal with life outside of the classroom or home. It would appear many of these children lack exposure to real world and more complex social situations outside the classroom and beyond their age restricted peer groups.

whether the current regulatory framework is sufficient to ensure that the wellbeing and academic achievement of home educated children is safeguarded, including where they may attend unregistered schools, have been formally excluded from school, or have been subject to 'off-rolling';

It is important that self-elected home education and failed school education not be confused.

The wellbeing and academic achievement of self-elected home educators is safeguarded by the parents taking an active role in the education of their child. Who would be better to safeguard the child than their parents? Where a parent does not wish to educate their child as is their responsibility within the current act, and the child has been excluded, then it would seem beneficial for society if government was able to provide a means for continued education for individuals not suited to class based learning (academic or vocational depending on the child).

the role that inspection should play in future regulation of home education;

None, as they have no basis for assessing the nature of homebased education where positive outcomes may include but may not always include, character development, contribution to society/environment, academic, sports, arts, life skills, vocational skills.

Due to the child centred adaptive approach of home education the age at which children acquire knowledge depends on the child and is not comparable to classroom based education assessment. Furthermore comparisons to other children is counterproductive and places undue emotional pressure on children which is totally at odds with home education and the nurturing learning environment of the home.

what improvements have been made to support home educators since the 2010-15 Education Committee published their report on 'Support for Home Education' in 2012; and

None that we are aware of.

the impact COVID-19 has had on home educated children, and what additional measures might need to be taken in order to mitigate any negative impacts.'

Whilst the child remains at home they are in the safest environment, not only for their physical but mental safety and development into society.

December 2020