

Written evidence submitted by [a 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.]

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN OF PARENTS WHO HAVE GONE 'OFF GRID'

Please consider children of families who have gone OFF GRID and never registered their children for education in the first place. I am not talking about Travellers but the growing number of groups like 'anti-vaxxers' and conspiracy theorists.

I am aware of a family that went 'off grid' when they had a child because they are 'anti vaxxers' and believe in conspiracy theories. Their child is around 7-8 years old and has never been to school or nursery. They travel around the country, occasionally living in houses, sometimes in vans or caravans, then back to rented accommodation. They are constantly moving around the country, possibly to avoid being questioned. They do not want their child vaccinated or educated by the 'evil' state. This started long before the pandemic. There are other people like them too. This particular child has received an extremely poor education, barely knows how to read and write or socialise or interact – it is verging on neglect, not home education.

Robert Halfon spoke about the rights of the parents. What about the rights of the child? Children have a right to education and to be free from neglect and we as a society need to be able to monitor these children until they can choose for themselves.

Because these parents are 'off grid' – they cannot be monitored to see if the child is being neglected or not. Let alone educated to a reasonable standard.

The massive increase in 'anti-vaxxers' and conspiracy theorists will only lead to more people not registering their children for education or taking their children out of the system altogether.

FOCUS ON RIGHTS OF A CHILD TO EDUCATION

Please ask the inquiry to focus on rights of children to have a good education, not just the rights of the parents to home educate.

Set up systems to scrutinise those families who have never entered the system in the first place because there is no requirement to do so. You need to be able to monitor the children of families who have 'opted out' of the system by effectively going 'off grid'.

Thank you

Kind regards

[name]

[address]

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