

## Written evidence submitted by Mrs Katherine Norman

I am writing to you because of the hugely stressful situation my daughter and I find ourselves in, due to the current situation with exams and COVID-19.

On the 18 Mar Boris Johnson and Gavin Williamson announced that exams would not take place, but that everything would be done to ensure that young people would be able to move on with their education.

At present there is simply no mechanism for this for home educated private candidates.

Whilst schooled exam candidates are able to move on knowing that their school or college will provide them with a predicted grade, home educated young people across the country have been left in limbo - neither able to move on from revising, nor able to access a grade.

Most exams taken by home educated young people are done through self-study, either entirely independently or supported by their parent in the role of tutor. We do not have coursework, or mocks.

The very unfortunate insistence that exam centres rank private candidates within their students, means that even when willing to explore evidence for a grade, exam centres are unable to support their private candidates. (Ordinarily private candidates do not impact on a school's result).

In addition to the isolation, and stress felt by many teenagers at this time we can't simply stop revising, because maybe something will be put in place. But we can't revise properly given that we might have to use the only one or two past papers as evidence, have no idea about timescale or might have to sit a different specification or exam (for Maths) than the one we have been studying.

My daughter, nearly seventeen, is home educated and as a private exam candidate is currently unable to receive a grade for the GCSEs she is sitting this year.

Like most home educated private candidates she has spread her GCSEs over several years, and done fewer than is common in schools. She already has three (grades 5 and Bs). This is because of the costs involved, and because we focus on a different range of knowledge and skills than GCSEs.

It is also relatively common for home educated young people to take a year longer to obtain their GCSEs, which is what she has done.

So at the age of 17 she now finds herself without the required Maths GCSE/IGCSE to continue onto her chosen Level 3 Health and Social Care course. Her place is conditional on having the Maths GCSE/IGCSE that it appears she simply can't get a grade for.

Even more concerning, in the longer term, is that if she defers for a further year, or can only join college this September on a Level 2 course she will then not qualify for funding for the final year of her extended diploma.

Students sign up to a single year level 3 diploma. And then move on to a second year to complete the full extended diploma.

Unfortunately the first year counts as a full level three qualification, so if she is 19 (which she will be if she can't start in September) by the time she gets to the extended diploma year she will not qualify, and the financial implications are considerable.

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