

## Written evidence submitted by Dr Cathy Townshend

Evidence for the Select Committee

Cathy Townshend

Home Educator

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My son Isaac was due to take his first IGCSE Physics via Edexcel this year during the summer 2020 exam period. Since home educators have no entitlement to access exams, we paid privately with a local exam centre, ACE Tuition, of Colchester/Clacton, Essex. The entry for this single subject cost £180.

Since Isaac has mainly self-studied using textbooks and the computer, we do not have tutor-marked evidence or independently-verified mock exams which could be submitted for him to receive a calculated grade. I therefore contacted ACE Tuition multiple times (on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> April) to request information about either withdrawing the entry or deferring to the next available exam period. I never received this information, getting merely the assurance via email that “The exam can be deferred and that is now noted on the file”.

TODAY (18<sup>th</sup> June 2020) I received an urgent voicemail and text message from ACE Tuition stating that this is not the case, Isaac’s entry will be cancelled tomorrow, and we will lose all the exam entry fee.

The government’s assurances that “no child will lose out on grades” ring very hollow. My son has no grade, and no option to take the exam in the autumn sitting, unless we pay again – and who is say that the same thing may not happen? The autumn exams could also be cancelled if there is a resurgence of COVID-19, as is widely predicted. We cannot pay out repeatedly for exam entries on the off-chance, if we lose the fee each time. The uncertainty regarding the exams is also stressful and demotivating for Isaac, who has ASD (one of the factors that led us to home educate).

June 2020