

**Additional evidence submitted as part of EO consultation response.
Email correspondence (in reverse date order):**

Dear Annette,

Thank you very much for your email and please accept my sincere apologies for the delayed reply. To respond to your key questions:

“I’ve checked and double checked, and the information you are requesting is not collected. The Forced Marriage Unit, based in the Foreign Office collect some statistics on the reported cases of Forced Marriage, - however this doesn't go into the sort of detail you are requesting - it covers age, gender, geographical region. I wonder ,Wayne, if you can you confirm that this is the position please?”

I can confirm that the statistical records of the forced marriage unit do not include the level of detail that you are requesting in relation to their education. Our primary statistical focus, as Jamie has outlined, are the ages, genders, UK regions of origin and third countries in cases.

“In our conversation you said that young people are taken out of school prior to forced marriages taking place. I have in the past undertaken voluntary work with the Citizen's Advice Bureau close to my home in inner city Sheffield and through that work and my contact with my neighbours I have been aware of this important issue for a number of years.

I asked if the young people you were referring to were young people whose parents had gone through the official de-registration process and had informed the school of their intention to home educate their child.

Are you able to confirm that there is no evidence that this is the case?”

I can confirm that we have no evidence that parents have gone through the official de-registration process in cases of forced marriage where the victim is removed from school prior to the marriage taking place. It should be noted though that the lack of evidence in itself is not conclusive as we cannot predict the percentage of victims in these circumstances where the parents in fact have gone through the official de-registration process.

“If children and young people are withdrawn from school without proper de-registration and a stated intention to undertake home education they could not be classified as home educated. With this, more accurate definition of home education in mind could you please answer the following question?

Is it the view of the Forced Marriage Unit that home educated young people are at greater risk of forced marriage than other groups?”

The Forced Marriage Unit certainly does not hold the view that home educated young people are at greater risk of forced marriage than their peers or that there is any causal link between home education and forced marriage. However, in cases of forced marriage, the perpetrators are almost invariably the parents and families of the victims and the primary safeguards (particularly for young people) are the statutory agencies. It is absolutely not inconceivable that perpetrators of forced marriage do/will exploit the home education system to allow them the opportunity to have a greater level of control over their child's freedoms.

Best regards,

Wayne

From: Annette Taberner
Sent: 20 October 2008 00:40
To: Wayne Ives
Cc: Jamie Kelly, Iain Campbell
Subject: RE: forced marriage and home education

Dear Wayne

The consultation period which prompted this enquiry is nearing a close. I do not appear to have had a response to this mail.

Regards

Annette Taberner
Education Otherwise

From: Annette Taberner
To: Wayne Ives
Cc: Jamie Kelly, Iain Campbell
Subject: forced marriage and home education
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 00:05:40 +0100

Dear Wayne,

As you may recall I telephoned the Forced Marriage Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth office on Thursday 2nd October to talk to someone about the current Consultation on "Revised Statutory Guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education."

Towards the end of our conversation I asked if I might e-mail you to get written responses to some of the questions I needed to ask.

I am a member of the Government Policy Group for Education Otherwise and one of the people putting together a response for the organisation. Education Otherwise has been established for over thirty years and is the largest organisations working with families who home educate their own children.

We met with the DCSF last month and discussed our concerns with Jamie Kelly who is coordinating the consultation; with Nicola Doyle and Emily Carter from the ContactPoint team and with Denise Hunter who was, at that time, a member of the DCSF Elective Home Education Team.

At that meeting we were told that the catalyst for the consultation and the proposed changes to the guidance was the Home Affairs Select Committee Report on Domestic Violence and Forced Marriage. The current guidance was introduced in 2007 and as I am sure you are aware some of the measures contained in it, like ContactPoint, are not yet operational. From my reading of the new measures on forced marriage it seems many of these have yet to be implemented We were told that the Home Affairs Select committee had asked for revised guidance as a matter of urgency.

There is no evidence in the report of the Select Committee that any consultation was undertaken with organisations representing home educators.

Similarly, in the DCSF there had been no consultation with organisation working in the field of home education prior to our meeting, but in the pre-consultation period the DCSF had consulted with;

CME co-ordinators
Local Data services
Some of the local ContactPoint teams
School Attendance

Sadly, it is our experience that many people working in these posts have a poor awareness of the law and home education.

At the meeting I asked what the evidence base was for the link which is apparently now being made between home education and forced marriage. No one at the meeting was able to provide this information so I wrote to Jamie following the meeting.

This is part of the text of the e-mail;

At our meeting on Friday I asked what the evidence base was for the linkage which you indicated was being made between forced marriage and home education.

I have spent some time today reading the literature and trying to find the information.

This is the information I would be interested in having:

What are the actual figures for forced marriages where;

- the girl/boy is on a school roll
- the girl/boy is withdrawn from a school roll
- the girl/boy is not on a school roll
- the girl/boy is known to be home educated

I wonder if you are able to tell me where I would find this information please?

Jamie replied:

I've checked and double checked, and the information you are requesting is not collected. The Forced Marriage Unit, based in the Foreign Office collect some statistics on the reported cases of Forced Marriage, - however this doesn't go into the sort of detail you are requesting - it covers age, gender, geographical region.

I wonder, Wayne, if you can you confirm that this is the position please?

In our conversation you said that young people are taken out of school prior to forced marriages taking place. I have in the past undertaken voluntary work with the Citizen's Advice Bureau close to my home in inner city Sheffield and through that work and my contact with my neighbours I have been aware of this important issue for a number of years.

I asked if the young people you were referring to were young people whose parents had gone through the official de-registration process and had informed the school of their intention to home educate their child.

Are you able to confirm that there is no evidence that this is the case?

If children and young people are withdrawn from school without proper de-registration and a stated intention to undertake home education they could not be classified as home educated. With this, more accurate definition of home education in mind could you please answer the following question?

Is it the view of the Forced Marriage Unit that home educated young people are at greater risk of forced marriage than other groups?

In his response Jamie also said:

If your query is related to why the Home Affairs Select Committee made reference to children missing education, and Home Education, in their conclusions, I'm sure the answer is that concerns were raised in witness evidence heard by the Committee. The two witnesses that I can find that mentioned home education, were representing the Crown Prosecution Service and the Family Justice Council.

This material is taken from the evidence given to the Select Committee;

Mr Nazir Afzal, Director, Crown Prosecution Service (London West)

Q135 David Davies: Mr Afzal, yesterday I spoke to somebody about the Forced Marriage Unit and I was told that the CPS had figures showing that in Bedford alone 300 girls aged between 13 and 16 have disappeared from school rolls. I do not know why the CPS would have that-
Mr Afzal: Exactly. It is not the CPS. We are aware of the figures.

Q136 David Davies: Can you tell me what the figures are nationally, or what you are aware of?

Mr Afzal: I cannot give you those figures.

Q137 David Davies: Can you write to us about that. That would be very helpful.

Mr Afzal: On the main point that Mr Davies makes, we are not just working with victims of crime, we are looking at potential victims of crime. **We have identified thousands, probably, of young girls between those ages, 13 and 16, who are no longer in education. Very many of them are, allegedly, being home-schooled and very many of them are not being home-schooled at all because there is no means of being able to check what is happening to them.** Very many of them will end up being-well, they are victims already, I would say-victims of forced marriage or honour-based violence. **I know that a number of institutions are receiving freedom of information requests to get the full information.** At the moment I do not have that in the way that you would like, but I am sure we can give you what we have.

Chairman: If you could do that, that would be very helpful.

I have been unable to locate this information anywhere in the report or the written evidence submitted to the committee.

Please can you direct me to this material? Without the evidence these statements are unsubstantiated.

This statement: " Very many of them are, allegedly, being home-schooled and very many of them are not being home-schooled at all because there is no means of being able to check what is happening to them" **betrays a very poor grasp of the legal situation and is something we would wish to challenge.**

The witness continued:

Q143 Martin Salter: A couple of quick questions to Mr Afzal. I note that the CPS has brought in enhanced electronic monitoring since April 2007, flagging up cases, and, also, that we have these four pilots on forced marriage and honour-based violence in, I think, Lancashire, London, West Midlands and West Yorkshire. Mr Afzal, how many cases has this process flagged up, just so that we can get an idea? Secondly, I know you have not finished the pilots yet, but what are the kind of emerging lessons, if any, you would like to share with us?

Mr Afzal: Thank you. In terms of quantity, I think it is impossible to say right now, largely because we have given an undertaking that we will not talk about it until we finish the pilot in March. Nonetheless, I think the point being made about under-reporting and under-investigation and, subsequently, under-prosecuting will be borne out by the pilot in that respect. In terms of the emerging findings, we have recognised that there is a reluctance (we know already) by victims to come forward. What can we do to make it easier for them? **We have identified certain things that we can do; not just the simple, special measures and those kinds of things that you have already heard about, but what else we can do.**

Q144 Martin Salter: Thank you. I note (and this is really a question across to Margaret who is leading on this) that our inquiry is going to run well into March on this subject, and your pilot ends in March as well.

Mr Afzal: We will do our very best, Mr Salter.

Q145 Martin Salter: What I am asking is would you be prepared to share some further conclusions with us as our inquiry comes to fruition at the end of your pilot scheme?

Mr Afzal: Absolutely.

This is the only material I have found which relates to the report

Written evidence in242

5.8 In July 2007, a pilot on forced marriage/so-called honour based violence commenced in four CPS Areas: Lancashire, London, West Midlands, and West Yorkshire. This will run until March 2008, and is overseen by a steering group that includes community groups. The group has developed guidance, electronic flagging of cases and training for selected prosecutors. The aims are to:

- identify the number and patterns of cases;

- identify issues facing prosecutors in identifying, managing and prosecuting these cases; and
- inform the development of any national guidance and training for prosecutors to improve these prosecutions and increase support for victims.

The CPS Research Team is currently evaluating the pilots. A report will be published in summer 2008.

I contacted the CPS to ask about the report, this is their response;

Subject: RE:
Date: Wed, 1 Oct 2008 13:15:09 +0100
From: HQPolicy
To: Annette Taberner

Dear Ms Taberner

The publication date for the report is still to be confirmed but will be during autumn 2008. It will then be available on the CPS Website

Regards

Policy Helpdesk

Crown Prosecution Service

It seems the information may not be in the public domain before the consultation closing date.

I contacted Jamie again to ask about the report.

This is the correspondence;

Dear Jamie

I have been pursuing the issue of the evidence base which it was said prompted the Home Affairs select committee to ask for the consultation.

From my reading of the select committee proceedings I am struggling to find any evidence base to justify the proposed changes. However, I have chased up the report referred to, please see correspondence below.

I have no idea what the CPS definition of "autumn 2008 " is and wonder if this information will be available before or after the closing date of the consultation.

If it is not publicly available before the closing date of the consultation it will be somewhat difficult to address any issues raised or to correct any inaccuracies about home education.

I have asked if there is anyone associated with the report we could speak to

Regards
Annette

I have not yet had a response.

Looking at the evidence given to the committee I see that in one of the cases in the report a GP wrote an sickness note and that a girl's absence from school, for a whole year, was not investigated. **It would not be correct to identify such a pupil as home educated.**

I think insufficient attention has been given to ensuring that the term "home education" is only used in relation to former school pupils , where parents and pupils have gone through the correct de-registration process and where the parents have said that they intend to home educate.

In other cases it would be incorrect to identify pupils as home educated.

As I am sure you will appreciate, children and young people who are being home educated are "missing from school" but they are not deemed to be "missing education", Pupils who are on a school register but who are failing to attend are not home educated.

The report states;

169.

We did not investigate the relationship of children listed as being home-schooled to possible cases of forced marriage. However, the link made by experts between home-schooling and forced marriage is troubling, and we recommend that the Government include this issue in a revision of data collection and procedures for identifying cases of forced marriage and child protection.

178 Q 65

Whilst the people who gave evidence may be considered experts in forced marriage it is clear that they are not experts in the law and home education.

If the current draft proposals which have been published and are being consulted on go ahead unchanged they will have grave implications for families who lawfully home educated their own children and they threaten to undermine attempts by our organisation at improving joint working between home educators and local authorities.

I am copying this correspondence to a number of individuals who I am also in contact with in this regard

Yours sincerely

Annette Taberner

Following an enquiry from Annette Taberner, Richard Caborn MP for Sheffield Central contacted Beverley Hughes about the "Children missing education" consultation. In a letter to Richard Caborn MP, Beverley Hughes MP - Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families said:

"Mrs. Taberner raised concerns about the new statutory duty placed on local authorities by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, for them to make arrangements to identify children not receiving education. Mrs Taberner's concern is that the implementation of this new duty will cause home educators difficulties if local authorities misinterpret the legislation by thinking it includes those being home educated. The new statutory duty is an essential part of the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme. Children who are missing from education are more likely to be vulnerable in one way or another. They may be from disadvantaged families, travelling communities, immigrant families be unaccompanied asylum seeking or trafficked children, or be at risk of neglect and abuse. It is imperative that local authorities, therefore, have robust measures in place both to identify quickly when a child is missing from education and to follow through with effective tracking and enquiry systems.

When developing the statutory guidance to support this new duty, which will be published on 27th February, my official fully consulted the national home education organisations, as they recognised the potential confusion. These organisations and several parents of home educated children also responded to the public consultation for the statutory guidance and the guidance was amended accordingly. As a result the statutory guidance now makes it clear that the new duty does not apply to children who are being educated at home, as these children are not "missing from education". The guidance also makes it clear if the local authority discovers a child identified as "missing from education" is being home educated, no further action should be taken unless there is cause for concern about the child's safety and welfare."