

PRESS RELEASE...

EDUCATION OTHERWISE REMINDS MINISTER THAT HOME EDUCATORS ARE STAKEHOLDERS

Phil Hicks of Education Otherwise, the national charity which has been supporting home educating families for 30 years has just written to Alan Johnson MP, Secretary of State for Education pointing out that his department plans to launch a major consultation on home education without first addressing the issues with major stakeholders.

Phil Hicks commented, " Many home educating families are extremely upset that they have been excluded from the debate on these issues."

MAJOR CHANGES TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES BRING UNFOUNDED CONCERNS

"There have been major changes in Children's Services over the last few years and many new officials now consider themselves responsible while having little knowledge or experience of home education " commented Ms Fiona Nicholson, a member of the Education Otherwise Government Policy team.

" This may be contributing to unfounded concerns which could be resolved through dialogue at a local and national level. In Sheffield we have begun a dialogue with our local authority, this needs repeating at a local level throughout the country and at a regional and national level."

STAKEHOLDERS MUST BE CONSULTED

" As stakeholders, home educating families and the organisations representing them should be consulted on any changes" Annette Taberner of the Sheffield Home Educators' Network commented ". Some parents have said to me recently that no other community is expected to tolerate the prejudice and discrimination which this community often experiences."

HOME EDUCATION RECEIVES NO PUBLIC FUNDING

"Home educating families make great sacrifices and receive no public funding to assist with their children's education " says Annette Taberner. "The Government's flagship initiative " Every Child Matters " rings a little hollow in this community."

HOME EDUCATION CAN BE A LIFELINE

Carole Rutherford who home educates her own autistic children and who is the spokesperson for Autism-in-Mind, a charity which supports families with Special Educational Needs Children says : "Having reached the point of sheer desperation many parents who have children with SEN have turned to home education to meet the complex needs of their children. Children as young as six are leaving the system with mental health problems. Within weeks parents are seeing a huge difference in their children who rediscover a zest for life and learning that parents feared had been lost forever. These parents are now terrified that this consultation may be the beginning of more turmoil and anguish for them and their children, and are worried that once again they are going to have to do battle with the system. "

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