

Press Release Monday 19th January 2009

Response to "Morgan: Action to Ensure Children's Education & Welfare" ¹

Education Otherwise (EO) has today expressed its dismay at the decision by DCSF to launch yet another investigation into home education and at statements contained in the press release announcing the review ¹.

Education Otherwise and home educating families have contributed to three major consultations on the guidance to local authorities since 2005. The latest guidance was issued in autumn 2007 ².

Annette Taberner, member of EO's Government Policy Group said "It has become clear to us that the Department and many local authorities have a very poor understanding of home education and the law which applies to it. No other community would be expected to suffer the prejudice and discrimination which our community has to endure. Our community will be infuriated by these latest statements. Many hours of time and much public money has been expended in consultations. Ministers need to prioritise time to engage in meaningful discussions with our organisation which has thirty years of experience helping families who chose to exercise their right to educate their children at home."

Statements on links between home education forced marriage and child welfare made in select committee hearings and by the London Safeguarding Board have already been challenged by Education Otherwise. The charity requested sight of the alleged evidence upon which the statements were made but no evidence has been forthcoming. ³

Education Otherwise continues to assert that the current legislation is adequate but poorly understood.

Education Otherwise finds the implication from Government and local authorities that home educated children are at risk purely because they are home educated offensive.

Ann Newstead, spokesperson for the charity said "The assumption that a child is safe and adequately educated if in the state system is simply not born out by an increasing number of families in the UK. "

Notes to Editors

¹ DCSF Press Release "Morgan: Action to Ensure Children's Education & Welfare"
http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0013

² DCSF Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities in England
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/localauthorities/documents/content/7373-DCSF-Elective%20Home%20Education.pdf>

³ Alleged link between HE and forced marriage
=<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/hascr.htm>

Education Otherwise is the oldest and largest organisation that provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school:
<http://www.education-otherwise.org>

4th November 2008 EO meet with House of Lords Minister for Children Schools and Families: <http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/printview.php?ID=103>

29th August 2008 EO meet with DCSF to discuss the consultation in England on children not receiving suitable education:
<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/CMereportIDDCSF29thAugust08meeting.pdf>

National Foundation for Educational Research report "Support for Children Who Are Educated At Home":
<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/pims-data/outlines/support-for-children-who-are-educated-at-home.cfm>

Full explanation of the law relating to home education:
<http://www.education-otherwise.org/legal.htm>

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