

Consultation on Home Education Guidelines

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 31 July
2007

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for

education and skills

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THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Education and Skills e-consultation website (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations>).

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Name Olaf Hindmarsh
Organisation (if applicable) Staffordshire County Council
Address: Kingston Centre, Fairway, Stafford

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact Elaine Haste on:

Telephone: 0870 000 2288

e-mail: elaine.haste@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888

Fax: 01928 794 113

e-mail: consultation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Which of the following best describes you:

<input type="checkbox"/> Home educator	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisation representing home educators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local authority
<input type="checkbox"/> Young person who is/was home educated	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	

Please Specify:

This response represents feedback from the Midland EHE LA forum held in June 2007.

*The evaluative ticks (✓) are my own and other personal observations are also included in **bold**.*

1 Do you agree that it is helpful for the DfES to issue guidelines to local authorities?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Elective Home Education Guidance from the DfES / DCSF is a vital tool for all local authorities. It should set out the essential roles and responsibilities and link these to the Education act 1996. Furthermore it is imperative that the DCSF also stresses the emphasis on ECM and Safeguarding Children protocols.

Yes – provided it is clear, specific, agreeable to all parties (but this can be problematic – leads to unnecessary compromise) should be developed into a statutory framework

- LAs should be issued guidance on EHE but this needs to be clear, concise and reflect Local and National priorities and agendas (ECM, WTSGC).
- DfES should support schools on EHE issues – too many schools are suggesting to parents EHE is the best option without considering other options that may be available.

2 Do you agree that the description of the law (paragraphs 2.1-2.3) relating to elective home education is accurate and clear?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Yes – it is long awaited – dependent on the guidelines actually guiding how the home education is done. The consultation should really consult and take notice of professionals nationwide who are aware of real cases. Please note that the guidelines are also for parents and should itemise real helpful examples of what is required:

- provided it is clear, specific, accurate and linked with ECM & Safeguarding children
- which aspect should be statutory

Need clear descriptors regarding what constitutes an 'efficient and suitable' education – more detail, helpful if it specified literacy and numeracy as compulsory activities.

How can LA fulfil this duty if unable to meet some EHE children?!

2.4 Please provide a clear definition of "full time" education and what would be the constituent parts.

3 Do you agree that the description of local authorities' responsibilities (paragraphs 2.5-2.11) is accurate and helpful?

Yes

No

✓ Not Sure

Comments:

- The guidance is good in the fact it provides an overview but does not help LA deal effectively
- How long, if at all, do we have to wait before we see the child?
- Guidance is parent centred NOT child centred!!
- Guidance is needed on developing and promoting effective relationships.

This document is about:

- Parents' Rights & LA Responsibilities

Should be about:

- Parents' Rights & Parents' Responsibilities
- LA rights and LA responsibilities
- **The Child's Rights are paramount**

- 2.5 – 2.11 Too ‘Woolly’ – contradictory.
- 2.5 Government ‘passes the buck’ to LAs regarding providing written information
- 2.6 & 2.11 Appears to be contradictory
- 2.6 Ambiguous. Need evidence that a child is being educated at home – if unable to provide child missing education?
- 2.7 Education Act 1996 – please provide LA’s with clear guidance definition of how good reason” to Believe that parents are not providing a suitable education. Case S**
- **2.11 Following Case Law (Eunice Spry and Gloucester) clearer Safeguarding and issued from the DCSF – essential / musts!**

4 Do you agree that the section on contact with the local authority (paragraphs 3.4-3.7) is accurate and helpful?

Yes

No

✓ Not Sure

Comments:

Policies and Procedures

DCSF should commission a national conference for LA’s to lead on best practice, offer advocacy (and establish a common database / framework)

Traveller Gypsy/Roma parents and their families ought to become a national priority for the acquisition of “functioning skills” to enable this generation and subsequent generations of children to reach their potential on all of the ECM outcomes (to break the cycle of ignorance and enable Equal opportunities to be exercised) and broaden horizons and enable communities to fully diversify yet retain cultural values based upon knowledge , choice and not bigotry .

Contact with the LA

Please define reasonable concerns

3.7 “with or without the child” – this remains a grave concerns for LA’s : ECM and Safeguarding mantras MUST advocate that DCSF strengthen the Education Act to ensure that the child / youngster is seen.

5 Do you agree that the section on providing a full-time education (paragraphs 3.11-3.14) – and in particular, the characteristics of provision (paragraph 3.13) – is accurate and helpful?

Yes

✓ No

Not Sure

Comments:

3.11 The consultation document lists what is not required but not what is.

3.13 This is too vague and woolly as is 3.12.

The document is contradictory.

The concept of 3.14 is interesting and could be helpful but is far too vague and could not stand up in court. Definitions need to be stated – positive guidance should be given – it should be phrased for parents – perhaps a separate document. This outlines parents' rights and local authority responsibilities – it should show children's rights and parents' responsibilities as well

The document could outline "outstanding" home education looks like this: "good" could look like this "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory" – parents want information as to what they should/could be doing. Not all of them want to join Education Otherwise. Parents can also feel isolated and want actual advice, guidance and examples – the DfES guidance could provide this.

6 Do you agree that the section on developing relationships (section 4) is useful?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

4.1 Mutual understanding? Trust? Respect?
Safeguard educational interests – need to define
→ Ambiguous

4.2 Support – finance for college places – every LA equal £200 per annum.

Investigate assertions from any source – causes distrustful attitude.

Authority's role not clearly defined.

4.3 LA must not specify curriculum?

But We do expect to see maths and English so tension created by lack of detail and support for consultants.

It would be useful if basic curriculum specified by document.

4.4 Surely if parents cannot read and write how can they provide an education – so may be some basic level of skills is needed.

4.5 LA need to provide written information – clear and accurate legal position.

Why can't this be included in the government document and therefore country wide?

4.6 Child should be present at meeting.

Pre EHE: should have a meeting to help parents realise what is involved.

'Agree future contact' annual or other visit should be in legislation. (last sentence)

4.7 Should have access to educational environment and see resources and child.

4.8 Write a parents report – how is it verified?

'Appropriate' note? → Defined. Subjective.

4.9 ✓

4.10 CRB checks all should be free. **I would ask the DCSF to require local authorities to provide the names of tutors within each Community Learning Partnership as a private / voluntary service, meeting the CRB standards.**

4.12 Have OfSTED been consulted and will their recommendation finding be published?

7 a) Are the suggested resources in section 5 and appendix 2 useful?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Resources are always useful and should be encouraged as a basic minimum entitlement – to cover the key functioning skills which families and children can aspire to (to work towards achieving National standards of functioning skills and meeting the ECM outcomes)

7 b) Should any other contacts be included?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

8 Please use this space for any other comments you wish to make about the guidelines

Comments:

The Rights of the child / young person and ECM

By definition all children/youngsters are deemed vulnerable until they have reached the age of 16 and their needs should be supported). Given the proposed raising of the school leaving age, the DCSF should plan for how and what rights school aged youngster can expect to have within a country, region, county, District, Parish and local community ;which should be determined at a local level by LA's in partnership with a range of stakeholders.

Case studies –

The DCSF should commission research on the scope of difficulties faced between LA's and the EHE community, which would inform future reviews of legislation and EHE Best Practice.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply ✓

Here at the Department for Education and Skills we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

✓Yes

 No

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 31 July 2007

Send by post to:

Elaine Haste, Department for Education and Skills, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington DL3 9BG

Send by e-mail to: homeeducation.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk