

To: Scrutiny Unit, Committee Office, House of Commons

Subject: Opposition to Increased Regulation of Home Educators in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

Dear [Sir/Madam],

I write to express strong opposition to the increased regulation of home educators as outlined in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. While safeguarding every child is an undeniably important goal, the proposed measures risk infringing on parental rights and educational freedom without clear, demonstrable evidence that they will improve child welfare.

Concerns Regarding the Bill

1. Erosion of Parental Rights

British law has long recognized the primacy of parents in determining the best educational path for their children. Mandating a compulsory national register of home educators and granting local authorities the power to deny home education mark a significant departure from this established principle. Such measures undermine the right of parents to choose an educational approach that meets their child's unique needs.

2. Lack of Evidence for Increased Regulation

During the Second Reading of the bill, MP Graham Stuart challenged members to provide evidence of a home-educated child suffering harm that was not already known to social services. No such evidence was presented. Effective safeguards already exist for intervening when a child's welfare is at risk, making further regulation both redundant and overly burdensome.

3. Misplaced Safeguarding Concerns

The tragic case of Sara Sharif has been cited to justify increased oversight of home education. However, her history of abuse was known to the appropriate services long before any educational arrangement was made. This example highlights deficiencies in existing child protection mechanisms rather than any inherent risk in home education practices. Strengthening current safeguarding measures would be far more effective than imposing new, sweeping regulations.

4. Invasion of Privacy and Unwarranted Intrusion

The proposed regulations could permit officials to enter a family's home without the stringent safeguards that govern other state actions. Even police require a warrant to enter a private residence, a practice that respects personal privacy and prevents abuse of power. Allowing local authorities unfettered access into a home would not only be an enormous source of stress and anxiety for families but would also represent an unprecedented intrusion into what should be a safe and private sanctuary. This overreach undermines the fundamental right to privacy and treats the home as a space of assumed guilt rather than one of security.

5. Assumed Guilt of Parents

The new measures implicitly suggest that parents who choose to home educate are

predisposed to neglect or may be concealing potential harm. This assumption of guilt is both unjust and damaging. It unfairly shifts the burden of proof onto parents, implying that any deviation from traditional schooling is inherently suspect. Such a presumption not only stigmatizes families who opt for home education but also detracts from the substantial, positive evidence that many alternative educational communities provide safe, effective, and nurturing environments for children.

6. **Disproportionate Impact on Families and Local Authorities**

The new regulations would impose significant administrative burdens on local authorities, diverting valuable resources away from children who are genuinely at risk. Many families choose home education precisely because their children have not thrived in mainstream settings due to issues such as bullying, anxiety, or unmet special needs. Rather than adding extra layers of oversight for home education, public resources would be better used by enhancing support within existing school systems and child protection services.

Educational Practices in Home Education Communities

Home education communities are built on innovative, community-driven practices that prioritize the well-being and holistic development of children. These include:

- **Self-Directed Learning:** Trusting in children's innate curiosity, they are encouraged to pursue activities and projects that genuinely interest them.
- **Consent-Based Education:** Emphasizing personal autonomy, children are involved in making choices about their learning, which fosters independence and mutual respect.
- **Freedom to Play:** Recognizing that unstructured play is essential for development, ample time is allocated for free play to support creativity, problem-solving, and emotional health.
- **Community and Collaboration:** Regularly scheduled community gatherings, shared responsibilities, and open communication ensure that safety and mutual support remain central to the educational environment.

These practices create safe, nurturing, and effective learning environments that respect both the child's individuality and the rights of their families.

Alternative Recommendations

In light of the concerns outlined above, I respectfully urge you to consider the following recommendations:

- **Uphold Parental Primacy:** Allow parents the freedom to choose the educational path that best suits their child's individual needs, without unnecessary state interference.
- **Enhance Existing Safeguarding Mechanisms:** Focus on strengthening and adequately funding current child protection measures instead of introducing redundant oversight protocols.

- **Recognise the Value of Home Education:** Acknowledge the proven effectiveness of home education communities that foster independence, resilience, and social engagement through self-directed, consent-based learning.
- **Reject Overreaching Provisions:** Remove any clauses that empower local authorities to arbitrarily deny home education, ensuring that state intervention is reserved strictly for cases where a child's welfare is demonstrably at risk.

Statement from our daughter

See attached in email

Conclusion

While the welfare of every child must remain a top priority, the additional regulations proposed in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill are based on misconceptions and lack sufficient evidence of benefit. Home education, when practiced within a well-structured, community-supported framework, has demonstrated its capacity to provide safe, effective, and nurturing educational environments. Moreover, the prospect of mandatory, unwarranted home entry not only imposes severe stress on families but also undermines the fundamental right to privacy by treating parents as if they are presumed guilty. It is essential that future policies preserve the freedoms that allow parents to tailor education to the needs of their children, rather than imposing blanket measures that could hinder these successes.

Thank you for considering these points. I trust that a careful review of the evidence and further dialogue with home education stakeholders will lead to policies that protect children without compromising parental choice and privacy.

Yours sincerely