



## STATEMENT ON CALLS FOR COMPULSORY REGISTRATION OF HOME EDUCATED CHILDREN

Education Otherwise is fundamentally opposed to the idea of compulsory registration for home educated children because:

- Compulsory Registration of home educated children would be expensive, bureaucratic and contribute nothing to children's welfare. The local authorities already have powers and responsibilities in place to identify and investigate those whose welfare needs are not being met. These powers include the power for qualified social workers to conduct home visits where there is a safeguarding concern.
- Furthermore, compulsory registration contributes nothing to children's education. Local Authorities have access to a number of different databases listing children living in their area as well as school admission registers and therefore already have the information they need to identify those not in school. Where a Local Authority has evidenced concerns that a home educated child appears not to be in receipt of a suitable education they are supported by legislation and government guidance obliging them to take action to address those concerns with parents.
- Compulsory Registration would fundamentally erode the rights and freedoms of all families – not just home educators. Currently, UK and international law grants parents the fundamental rights and responsibility to determine what is best for their own child, with government institutions only stepping in to over-ride those rights following a careful process overseen by the courts. Having to apply to be on a register could lead to a transfer of power to determine questions of education from parents to the authorities – not just for home educating families but for everyone.
- It would also remove the safeguards inherent in the current system that are there to protect families against abuses of power by LA officers – many of whom believe that having children taught in a school setting gives them the best education and that the local authority is failing them if it does not ensure this.
- Local authorities are clear that they regard registration as a step towards further erosion of family rights; they view a registration scheme as preliminary to monitoring young people being home educated. This could lead to some of the most vulnerable children, those who have already been failed by the state education system (e.g. through unmet special educational needs, unresolved bullying, etc.) being denied the opportunity to receive a genuinely suitable education, since schools and local authorities do not always agree with parents about what is the best educational provision for a child.

*Trustees of Education Otherwise Association Ltd.*

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