

education otherwise™

No. 186 - February 2009



DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS: 1st March 2009

Please mark material 'for publication' and include your name, address, phone number and e-mail (if you have it) as we may need to contact you to discuss your contribution (your personal details may be withheld from the publication on request).

E-mail contributions will be acknowledged within a few days. If you require a postal acknowledgement, please include an SAE. If no acknowledgement is received, or in the case of queries, please contact the NL Co-ordinator (see inside back cover). *Please also ensure that your EO membership is up-to-date.*

Please send contributions via the most appropriate section editor listed below:

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Editor for the next Children's Pages: Katie Gibbs

Deadline: 20th February 2009

Please send all material to the Children's Pages Co-ordinator who will forward it to the relevant Children's Editor. This is to ensure that if there is a last minute change; submissions from other children will not be lost.

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Editorial Policy

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IMPORTANT - EO's data is registered under the Data Protection Act. The contact details throughout this newsletter are for the sole and personal use of members. They are not to be used to prepare circular letters/emails or compose mailing lists for advertising, research, marketing, resources or any other purpose. Anyone found misusing this data will have their EO membership terminated.

N.B. If you change your address, phone number, e-mail or other details, or if your Newsletter does not arrive, please contact the Database Administrator (see inside back cover under Membership)

Welcome to the February 2009 edition of the Education Otherwise Newsletter.

Not much space this issue for me to write anything this issue! This issue is packed full of information about the upcoming AGM and business relating to how EO is run, plus how you can take part in making major decisions that affect the future of EO. The new Contact List comes out with April's newsletter, please check p/8 for information.

And that's my remaining space gone! Have a lovely Springtime!

Nicola Haxell
Newsletter Co-ordinator

The winners of the Usborne Book of History are: Rhoda & Christian, Ben, Nic & Anika Hornung

Any Safeguarding Children concerns should be reported to the NSPCC Helpline Telephone No: 0800 800 5000.

If you are a child and you need someone to talk to, contact: Childline: 0800 1111

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

Diary of a HE Nobody	p. 2
Learning to Read Research	p. 4
Reaction to Recent Newsletter Articles	p. 5
EO Helpline	p. 7
Contact List Notification	p. 8
Photography Competition	p. 9
Any Ideas Anyone	p.10

AUTONOMOUS HE

The Case of the Mouldy Bread	p.12
------------------------------	------

STRUCTURED HE

GCSEs and Home Education	p.15
--------------------------	------

LETTERS

	p.16
--	------

BOOK REVIEWS

	p.17
--	------

NEWS FROM DG

News Round-up	p.20
Benefits & Work Training Day	p.21
Midlands Regional HE Conference	p.21
Annual Conference of the Child Poverty Action Group	p.21
National DCSF Parents Panel, October 2008	p.23

NEWS FROM GPG

Raising Standards amongst LAs	p.24
EO Meeting and Minister for Children Schools and Families	p.25
What is happening to lone parents on Income Support	p.27
Good news about exam centres in private schools	p.29
Is It Compulsory to Attend a Work-Focused Interview for Income Support?	p.30

What About Home Educating Lone Parents Who Have Children With SEN?	p.30
How Will Section 92 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 Affect Home Educators?	p.31

BUSINESS & ORGANISATION

A Brief Note from the Trustees of EO	p.33
What's Going On with EO	p.33
Ian Dowty to Speak at our AGM	p.33
AGM Information	p.34
The Changes in EO	p.35
Become a Full Voting Member of Education Otherwise	p.37
Directors/Trustees/Council Members	p.43
Unsolicited Email	p.43
Statement From EO Trustees	p.44
Letter Received From	
The Charities Commission	p.44
Message from Annette Taberner	p.45
Would You like to Be a Voting Member of EO?	p.46
Trustees Standing for Election/Re-election at the February 2009 AGM	p.48
EO Designated Safeguarding Children Person	p.54

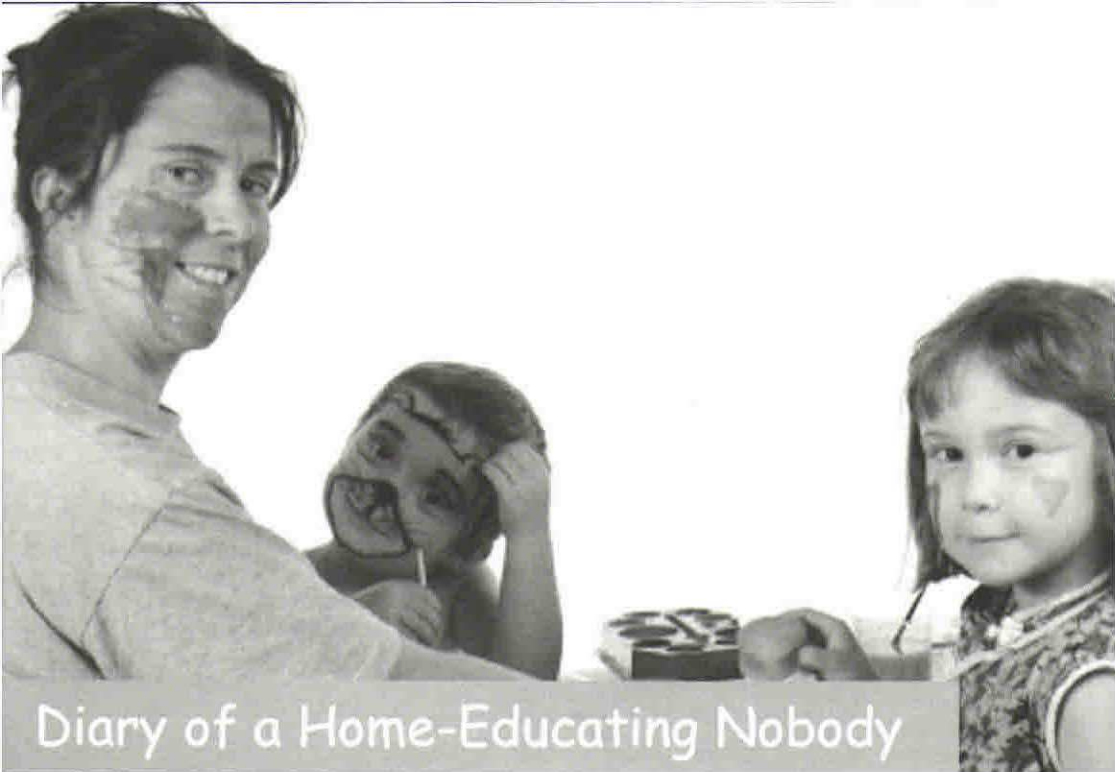
VOLUNTEER ADS	p.55
---------------	------

ADVERTISEMENTS	p.57
----------------	------

REGIONAL DIARY	p.59
----------------	------

SMALL GROUPS	p.68
--------------	------

ADDITIONAL	
SUM forms:	p.47
Proxy Voting forms:	p.49 & 51



Diary of a Home-Educating Nobody

I'm sure learning was never so funny at school!

Anyone peering in over the last moments wouldn't have thought we were doing English. Not with the amount of giggling going on. But with home educating you never know.

It all started with the children's father calling out 'nipple'. We'd been quite serious and focussed up until then on an English exercise looking at word endings, 'le' in particular. And I was wracking my brains trying to think of other examples for my daughter to spell when he joined in.

'Nipple', he offered, with a little waver of humour in his voice that we couldn't miss even though his back was turned.

Our daughter wasn't sure this was an appropriate word for her list but I think it would have been okay if he hadn't at that point caught my eye. The smirk on his face clearly indicated that he wasn't thinking about English, rather our activities the night before when the

girls had gone to bed. And that's when the giggling started!

I perhaps would have been able to hold it together if he hadn't then added 'ogle', 'fondle' and 'grapple' from which point on it went from bad to worse and we were in hysterics. You remember - the type of uncontrollable laughter you could feel creeping up on you in school when the teacher told you to wipe the smile off your face! I'm afraid, English lesson or not, I was helpless!

Children can become incredibly prudish when their parents are having a laugh, can't they? You think of all the times you've had cause to tell them to calm down, tell them to stop larking about and be sensible, then the minute you're having a bit of fun they go all mature and superior on you and accuse you of behaving like kids.

Suspecting what we were up to she gave us the most withering look ever - you'll be familiar with

it - the one you practise giving them when they're doing something disgusting in company but you're trying not to bring everyone's attention to it. It didn't work on us and we couldn't get our serious heads back on so she stood up, scraped back the kitchen chair, called us a couple of immature perverts and flounced out. But she didn't quite make it without me seeing a little twinkle in her eye and a smile wrestling with her trying-to-be-serious expression.

We'd had enough of English anyway. And who says education always has to be serious?

This is such an important thing to remember. For I think we get so engrossed in our home education sometimes, and so worried and intense about all the concerns it brings, that we forget that simple point: that day-to-day *it hasn't always got to be serious.*

I was reminded of this again the other day when another HE'r and I were discussing all our concerns, as you inevitably do when you get together with others. After all, that's what you mostly get together for! But the danger is, before you know it, that's *all* you end up discussing, spiralling down into a great pit of worry and moaning and anxiety, very often so all-consuming by concerns you completely neglect to mention all the positive, uplifting and inspiring aspects of being a home educator. And the silly thing is; the worry-mongering doesn't do any good at all. Not in the bigger picture.

In the bigger picture home educating is such a positive, courageous, inspiring, and incredible thing to be doing, something that gives our children such wonderful opportunities - but how often do we reflect upon that? How much do we simply dwell on the serious issues?

Obviously we all have worries and concerns about our children. And one of the drawbacks of HE is that, similar to any work at home when it's in your face all the time, it can become quite insular and inward focussing. The tiny minutiae of the everyday can become so all-consuming we lose sight of the fun and enjoyment. We forget to lighten up and have a good giggle while we're learning. For it really is true that learning can be fun.

You're probably thinking; but education does have to be taken seriously. And I agree it should, it's a serious matter. But that doesn't mean that every single moment of every HE day should *be* serious at the time. Take education seriously by all means, but your *approach* to daily learning can be as much fun as you



like. It is *still* valuable when it's fun. In fact, if your children are having fun with their education then it is going to have much more of a serious and effective, but *positive*, impact on their lives long term than any other approach. It will make education a happy experience. When education is a happy experience it will be something that the children will want to have in their lives, both now and in the future.

So, just to lighten up, perhaps we could keep in mind some very serious considerations:

- There is no law written anywhere that says home educating has to be one hundred percent serious all of the time!
- There is nothing to prove that just because there is laughter there is no learning taking place. In fact, it is more likely that the opposite is true; children learn when they are happy.

- No evidence to say that a serious/intense approach works better than a light hearted/fun one!

- And children like fun - fun ways to learn have the biggest impact upon them, helping them to retain and remember.

So you might as well get as much fun and laughter into your home educating as you can - remembering to do it on a daily basis. And the beauty of it is; it will have as good an impact on you as it does on the children!

Meanwhile, I perhaps need to go and be a bit more mature and sensible right now and make peace with my teenager!

Ross Mountney
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Learning to Read - Join the Research!

Most people would agree that there is nothing more important in the school curriculum than learning to read. Schools generally make it their number one priority, becoming extremely worried if children are not reading by the age of seven at the latest. Debates rage about the best way to teach children to read and fashions come and go. In previous research into home education (*Educating Children at Home*, Alan Thomas and *How Children Learn at Home*, Alan Thomas and Harriet Pattison) we have already found that children at home learn to read in a wide variety of ways, often challenging very firm professional beliefs. Following on from this previous research we are now embarking on some more focused study in this area.

If your child has learned to read, either wholly or in part at home, we would be very interested in learning of your experiences whether good or bad, structured or informal. If you would like to know more about our previous work and publications and/or are interested in contributing to our research on learning to read, could you please visit our website:

www.howchildrenlearnathome.co.uk

If you have any queries you can contact us directly at:
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alan.thomas@howchildrenlearnathome.co.uk

Dr Alan Thomas and Harriet Pattison
Institute of Education, University of London





Reaction to Recent Newsletter Articles

I am always happy when I hear the thud of the EO magazine hitting the porch mat! I wish it came every month (I can imagine the groans of the various EO magazine editors on reading that!). Our daughter and I rush to be the first to rip open the envelope, tussling with each other in the hall. Our miniature Dachshund, Patrick, barks furiously. He has other things on his mind. His greatest ambition is to make it down the garden path in time to bite the 'postie' before he escapes to the safety of the other side of the gate!

The magazine arriving is often a bi-monthly highlight for us as a rural, 'one child and one dachshund at home', home-adding family in N. Ireland. It is more than a good read and a breath of fresh air. I always got, and still do get, the same feeling when the 'Breastfeeding Matters' magazine from La Leche League comes. In this culture, if you are choosing to raise your children in a way that goes against the accepted 'norm' you can feel (and the children can, too) an obligation to explain, at the very least, the

choices you have made, and even justify them. Sometimes too, you can feel worn down and can lose confidence in what you believe is truly humane and right for your child/ren. You can become anxious and intimidated in the face of the authorities breathing down your neck. It is hard to remain strong when challenged by ignorance and hostility. There are times when you can feel downright exhausted and wobbly, especially when the numbers around you doing the same thing are tiny.

That's where the magazines, lovingly produced by membership organisations such as Education Otherwise and La Leche League International, are invaluable in the support they offer. Isn't it amazing that an article written by say, Ross Mountney (I love you Ross!) or a letter penned by a parent who has been in exactly your position can instantly affirm your beliefs and raise your confidence back up high enough to carry on again with energy and resolve. The teams that are working voluntarily for these and other essential organisations, and the



contributors to the magazines are the true voices of reason and compassion; the real advocates for children... This is vital in a society that is becoming rapidly more uniform, inflexible and stressed-out. The magazines provide a forum for information

and debate and crucially, true respect for children's rights, differences and needs. When times have been tough in our home and we feel we are floundering, the EO magazine has been a lifeline. As was so rightly stated in a recent article in the EO magazine, 'Home education is not a lifestyle choice. For some children it is a lifeline'.

It was only from the EO magazine that I learned the government has plans to move single parents of children of seven and upwards from 'Income Support' to 'Job Seekers Allowance'. I was really shocked. Only recently, I was boasting while on holiday in Germany (where surprisingly home education is not legal) that single parents in the UK have the right to stay at home on Income Support until their children are 16. In Germany, I gather, the law at present is similar to the one the Labour government is keen to implement in the UK!

Both Rowena Williams' article and Vick Markwell's letter spell out clearly that this really is an alarming indication of where we are heading as a society. If single parents are denied the right to stay at home once their children reach seven, it will be an extremely worrying situation. It will mean that a parent is only valued if they can earn money. Earning money in our present climate and culture is all too often seen as the only valid way to contribute to society. Many might put forward the point that staying at home to raise our children in the way we choose is 'voluntary

service', given the tiny amount Income Support payments are.

If parents choose to not seek 'gainful employment' to stay at home to raise their children (it is often women who choose this option) they are so often viewed as being lazy or, as taking the easy option. To illustrate just how much stay-at-home parents are undervalued, the government funds substantial childcare costs to organisations and individuals who are not the child's primary carer/s so these primary carers may enter the 'workforce' It is, in our culture then, seen as preferable that babies, toddlers, young children *and* older children are raised part-time (this may mean up to ten hours per day, five days per week) by teenagers (low paid) in nurseries, crèche workers, schools or childminders and nannies.

If a single parent is to enter the workforce, he/she has no choice but to place their children into care for most of the summer holidays and other festival holidays if 'granny' isn't available, willing or suitable to stand in. Research teaches us that the pressure on babies and children who are away from home for long hours many days a week is in many cases very stressful, and can be damaging. The stress on parents, and in particular single parents, coping with such huge demands is enormous, too. What price do we put on our present and future society's mental health?

If the government doesn't permit an exemption at the very least for single parents of home-educated children, then we have entered a very bleak era indeed. What will happen to these children? Does the government intend to force them all into schools as soon as a job comes up for their parent? For many children (as would be the case for our daughter, at present - were I a single parent) this would lead to extreme distress and perhaps even a mental breakdown. This would be nothing short of barbaric. As Vikki Markwell warns, we cannot afford to roll over on this one

*April McCarthy, 1 Meeting House Road,
Ballinderry Upper, N Ireland BT28 2NN*



EO HELPLINE: Our Most Valuable Service?

EO is a Charity, and the Helpline is an important part of EO's charitable outreach facilities, being freely available to individual members of the public.

One way or another, I've been involved with the EO Helpline for about 10 years. During that time I've done a number of other jobs for EO as well, at different times, but always in the background has been the connection with the Helpline, and the other volunteers who keep it going. At the moment, I organise the rota for answering the phone, as well as covering some slots myself. The team has changed over the years, but always the people staffing those phone lines have been dedicated to offering support and information about home education to people who need it.

There are times when that phone is so red-hot that it's hard to find a moment to take a 'comfort break' - and I can't imagine how those who still have young children at home cope when demand is at the highest. This tends to be in

September/October, between the start of the school year and autumn half term, with a smaller peak in the spring term. So why keep on doing it? Well, there has to be some return for the time and emotional energy it takes up, and for me that's the knowledge that I'm empowering callers to take control of a situation that they've been struggling to find a way out of.

Frequently, parents who ring EO's Helpline are at their wits' end due to problems associated with their children's (school) education that they feel nobody has so far been able to help them with. They have just heard of home education, but do not see how they can undertake this themselves. Just to talk to someone who understands what they're going through, is a new experience for them; and when they have told their story and been given the information they need, the relief in their voices is almost palpable. I can feel that I've made a difference, and that's worth a lot to me. Of course, there are simple queries also, and now and then a call from someone wanting

statistics, etc. - it's also satisfying to be able to deal with these, and know that genuine information about home education is spreading. But at the moment there are very few experienced volunteers on the rota, as there have been more changes than usual over the past year or so. This means that everyone has to be 'on' more frequently than is comfortable, and it's difficult to fill gaps when - as invariably happens from time to time - someone needs to take a break.

So - if you have some time you could make available, have experience of home educating your own children, and feel you could listen to sometimes harrowing stories and give non-judgemental support and information to parents who may have views that differ from your own, please consider volunteering for the EO Helpline.

There's plenty of information (e.g. on legal aspects, resources, etc.) available for you as a volunteer, and training in listening skills etc. is organised by EO.

Oh - and something I find many members don't seem to have found on our website, but that's very useful for anyone starting out and needing basic information, is the series of EO information leaflets. From home page, click tab for 'resources and links', then the bit about publications and books, and you get a list of titles ... happy reading! *Anne Rix (Helpline volunteer) Devon*

If you'd like to find out more about volunteering for the Helpline - Contact Jo Berry - enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org or call her on 08445 883539

Children's Artwork, Comic Strips, Cartoons, Photographs, etc. for display at the Birmingham AGM

We are inviting any submissions from home-educated children and young people for display at the AGM in Birmingham on 21st February. Any artwork/ comics strips/ cartoons/ photographs welcome. **Maximum size: A3** **Deadline: 9th February.** Education Otherwise, PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW
Contact me for more information on 08445 853897

or jjwilson@education-otherwise.org *Judi Wilson, Trustee*

IMPORTANT: 2009 Contact List

Will your entry be correct?

The 2009 contact list will be prepared in February and sent out with the April newsletter mailing. To make sure your details are correct, please send changes to me by 15 February 2009. Members addresses will be restricted as last year to town/village, county and first half of postcode. Phone number and email address will be printed if you haven't advised us to withhold them. If you have changed your name, address, phone number, e-mail address or wish to add or change children's details, then please let me know asap.

If you're unsure what choice you made on your renewal or new member form, please contact me so that any necessary changes can be made. If you don't want your details in the contact list and want to make sure you ticked the exclusion box on your membership form, please check with me and I can confirm this. Thanks.

Lynda Hitchman admin@education-otherwise.org Tel: 08445 867541 (Address inside back cover)



The Prince's Rainforests Project

The Prince's Rainforests Project (PRP), set up in October 2007 by HRH The Princes of Wales to tackle climate change by finding ways to make rainforests worth more alive than dead, has joined forces with Sony to create a new Environmental Awards Category within the Sony World Photography Awards and a new competition for schools. The Schools Competition, which is open to all school-aged children from five to 18 years old, has been designed to raise awareness of the role that trees and forests play in our everyday lives and their importance in combating climate change.

There are four categories: **The beauty of the rainforests**, **Rainforests in your daily life**, **What climate change means to you** and **What trees mean to you**. Photographs should be accompanied by a few lines that explain why the image fits a particular category.

A lesson plan is available online at The Prince's Rainforests Project Schools website (www.princesrainforestsproject.org/schools) to guide teachers and students making entries.

Winners will be chosen for each of the four categories above, for the following five age groups: 5-7; 8-10; 11-13; 14-16; 17-18 years. From these category winners, a winner will be chosen for each age group, as well as an overall competition winner.

The five age-group winners will receive their images professionally framed and their schools will receive a Sony Cyber-shot S-Series camera and Digital Photo Printer (DPP-FP85) to help them develop their pupils' interest in photography. The overall winner will also receive

100 postcards of their photograph. A selection of the best images will also be made into eCards available for download from the Schools site.

Briony Mathieson, Communications Manager at The Prince's Rainforests Project said: "We need to put trees and forests at the heart of the climate change agenda. Schools play a critical role in helping to educate and inform the next generation and I am certain children will use their imagination to create some very powerful images of what trees, forests and climate change mean to them."

Emily Young, General Manager for Communications at Sony Europe, said: "We believe that photography provides the perfect medium for communicating the beauty of our natural environment and the importance of preserving it for future generations. Scott Gray, Managing Director of the Sony World Photography Awards added: "This competition will help raise awareness among some of the up-and-coming generations who are best placed to make a difference."

All school-aged children can enter, and the closing date for entries is 2 June 2009. The images will be judged by The Prince's Rainforest Project and a professional photographer. The winners will be announced online on 22 June 2009. To enter the competition, please visit: www.princesrainforestsproject.org/schools/sony-schools-competition

Note: Home-educated children may enter in teams of at least 5.



Any Ideas Anyone?

We are a small family - Mum, Dad, 10 year old girl and a dog, living in Northern Ireland. Our daughter, Natasha, was home-educated until she was seven. With a June birthday, here in N. Ireland, she would have to have started Primary 1 at four and three months, having reached compulsory school age. We refused to leave her screaming, as the school advised. Having promised us the offer of 'allowing' a parent to stay in the classroom to help Natasha settle, they swiftly went back on their offer (after a total of four hours, spread over a couple of days!).

Feeling very isolated, as there is only a tiny home-schooling community here, spread out over a large area, we decided to try a different school. The school was accommodating and, after a ropey start, Natasha spent a happy enough time in Primary 4 and Primary 5.

However, 3 months into Primary 6, at 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ years old, Natasha became extremely distressed. A change of teacher, together with an increased level of concentration and work expected, had a huge negative impact on her. The large class (29), playground, and noise became unbearable and she refused to leave home. Rapidly, Natasha became highly anxious, then withdrawn and then ill. She showed obvious signs of depression. By Christmas, she could hardly get out of bed. She gave up all her, formerly enjoyed, activities and

couldn't even manage to play away at dear friends' homes.

We have felt, for a long time, that perhaps Natasha falls somewhere on the continuum for autism, but the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Support team (within our Health Trust) and the Educational Psychologist, both of whom we approached for help, were extremely resistant to look into our opinion on our own daughter. It was (and is) in their eyes, clearly, a 'parenting problem'. On top of this, we were passed onto 'Education Welfare'. The boss there turned out to be a threatening and bullying type of man and, therefore, in our opinion, totally unsuitable to be working with families.

The avenues we explored to gain real help, information, insight and support, including the (supposed) independent Child and Adolescent Mental Health Support team, all put an enormous amount of pressure on Natasha and us for a swift return to school by any means possible. 'Whatever it takes' was one suggestion! The cognitive behavioural therapist suggested getting into the car and driving up the road, thus forcing Natasha to run after me, in pyjamas if necessary. I was to ignore her state of panic and, by now, her inclination to harm herself should I even suggest going to a piano lesson, let

alone school. I was assured a few days of me driving away would 'sort her out'.

In other words, all the authorities refused to acknowledge the very definite risk to our daughter's mental health and prompted us to force her into school. Not only that, they clearly stated that we would not be good parents if we didn't force her into school. They chose to ignore the fact that Natasha had become a nervous wreck and had almost stopped eating. These are disturbing and shocking facts, which clearly demonstrate ignorance, inhumanity and callousness from professional childcare workers.

You can see how parents would find it very hard to stay strong against such horrendous judgement and pressure, at a time when they need all their energy just to help their child recover and become well and happy again.

During these awful months we learnt so much. One thing we learnt was the lack of consistency between professionals. For example, our ELB would not accept a private assessment on whether Natasha fell on the autistic spectrum disorder continuum. *Our* ELB happens to be the only one, here in the province, that does not accept a private assessment! The only assessment they would accept was 'yes' - you've guessed it - one from the Mental Health team. A team that had made up its mind that it was a parenting problem.

The point we are making here is that if we chose to keep Natasha registered with the school, with another ELB, we would be offered support and understanding to a degree, in that there would be no pressure or expectation for a child in such distress to return to school before s/he wanted. The private assessment would have been accepted and due consideration given. As parents, if we chose, there would be the chance of home tutoring provided by the Board if we wished to stick to a more formal route of education.

At present, although Natasha has *almost* recovered from her negative experience in school (it has taken a year!) we can see that school would not be right for her. In fact, she still refuses to even try it. We will deregister our daughter once again and 'officially' home educate. We have, in reality, been left completely to our own devices for a year by the Board, without one minute of home-tutoring being offered, despite the fact that Natasha has been unable to attend school.

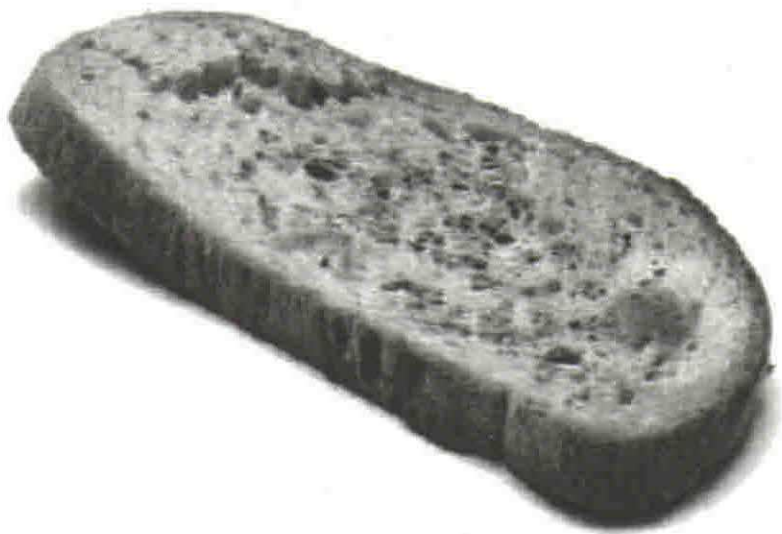
So... we'll have to learn to think creatively again, totally outside the system. We want to make this work, however tired and daunted we feel. We hope to turn this round into something liberating and positive for all of us.

But how? One child at home alone, in a rural community that is very conservative.... School is sacred here, and a rite of passage. There is one home schooling family four miles away but they are very religious and we are not teaching our child that Christianity is the only way. Natasha doesn't want to move as change is extremely difficult for her and all her friends are here. We'd be prepared to move though and she may be persuaded if we could move into a area (all areas of Britain considered) where there is a good-sized, and easily accessible, home schooling community. We need encouragement and company!

We have a lot to offer. We are friendly, flexible, 'arty' and eco aware. We have various skills to offer, such as wholefood cookery, animal care, counselling, gardening, graphic design/web design along with vast knowledge of software packages. Natasha is very musical and she is crazy about horses and drama. She is a loyal friend, humorous and hates writing!! Hopefully, we still have lots of energy after all this stress!

ANYONE, ANYWHERE, ANY IDEAS?

*April, Heiko and Natasha, 1 Meeting House Road,
Ballinderry Upper, N Ireland BT28 2NN*



The Case of the Mouldy Bread

(How Autonomous Education Works for Us)

I am sitting upstairs with a piece of long-dead bread in the cupboard. It's all part of an experiment my son is running; so long as no-one has to eat it afterwards that's fine by me. Catherine has been busy drawing a *Star Wars* inspired *Millennium Falcon* which will, she assures me, fly across a glittery sky to wish people Happy Christmas. Neither of these ideas was mine. I make suggestions, yes; I hopefully place little temptations in likely places: a weaving loom here, an Encyclopaedia of World History there. Sometimes I am successful. We had a very happy week inventing our own *Bird TOP TRUMPS* game, finding out the predator rating of a Peregrine Falcon. Often, however, I am not.

How about a Space scrap book? A theatre show? Finishing off that *Lego* that's been out for a month? All suggestions with the same pulling power as brushing teeth. I also have to accept that two minutes into a lively explanation of atmospheric pressure (related to why the plastic bottle in the freezer has a dent in it) my audience has run away. Should I worry? Absolutely not (though that *Lego* is getting on

my nerves). Are we 'behind' in vital areas of the National Curriculum? You bet we are. We are also light years ahead in many subjects. Do we have lessons and times and things we mark? Absolutely not. But then we also have French over Breakfast and Barack Obama over supper.

If it all sounds terribly anarchic that's because, largely, it is. We have a rule that we 'do' Maths at least once a week, but that's not a good thing. It's a reflection of my own weakness. I ran a budget of thousands of pounds as part of working life but a failed Maths 'O' Level has left me in a panic over the sight of a fraction. So for once I follow a more traditional route of workbooks and note, with depression, how the fun tends to vanish out the window. I shouldn't bother really, because in the end who cares whether four fifths added to six tenths make a mess of a pizza?

What I care about is that the children are full of joy and laughter (most of the time, actually) and that by following their interests we can reach the parts no-one else can. And that is the key. You'd be amazed where an interest in Big

Cats can take you. Drawing, obviously, though you'd be surprised to discover that all Lions smile. Geography because we have to find out where they all come from. Science because we need to know what habitat they prefer (notice how that lovely technical term has slipped in effortlessly). Then there's a Jaguar to be drawn and turned into a jigsaw (design and technology, though maybe that's stretching a point). The dreaded Maths because we need to know the TOP TEN cats, and at the end of it all a five year-old who can keep most adults on their toes by recognising an *Oncilla*.

That, of course, was when the children were younger. But I still remember how seeing Ki-Kay the Cheetah doing a poo through the roof of a land rover on *Big Cat Diary* sparked it all off. If she had been at school, with the best will in the world, would the teacher have had time to follow that interest? To let Catherine spend as long as she wanted, whenever she wanted, flying cuddly toy Ki-Kay through space to land on Mars? With thirty other children in the class, I think not. But look what areas of the curriculum we covered, effortlessly. And what unmarked areas we have covered too: for child's 'play' may seem pointless and futile until you actually listen to it - why was Ki-Kay being naughty and what did Biggy do about it? What was the planet surface like on *Spider World*? What happens when older brother has an idea about what Ki-Kay should do that sister disagrees with? But maybe all that happens after school. After all, play isn't education, it's not about learning...

Which is not to say that we spend all week playing, though I have friends' children who do, and horrifyingly they are remarkably articulate, intelligent and plain all-round nice children. That's where faith comes in - which, not being religious, is the hardest part. You have to believe that children will get there in the end in their own time and in their own way. It also means putting up with the sometimes alarmingly long patches when nothing seems to 'happen.' That's tough. But then you'll wake up and find William reading *DK Eye Wonder: Bugs*. Over Breakfast he'll explain that aphids lay eggs

every 20 minutes without mating; ask and discover which class of animals scorpions belong to; think about how pond skaters use surface tension to float on water and we'll end up discussing how we use soap to break up oil slicks on the surface of the sea. And that's all before you've finished your muesli!

How many seven year-olds would know that Titan's atmosphere contains tholons or that copper can be an alternative to iron in the blood? On the other hand give William a pen and as many inducements as you could possibly imagine to get him to actually use it and you were looking at the work of a primate just descended from the treetops. Three agonising years later and an idea which would not perhaps have been my first choice - *TOP TEN DISASTERS* - exploded into his head and suddenly all those squiggles came together. Which just goes to show that imposing standards, trying to make sure every child is at the same point in everything at the same time, is an impossible task. But then natural learning doesn't obligingly follow the beautiful mathematical upward curve the National Curriculum tries so hard to impose.

I was taught at home for the first 11 years of life and I remember noting with sadness how quickly, how inexorably, how successfully school managed to make all the subjects I had ever enjoyed dull and boring. Rob, my partner, says that his schooling was all about passing exams and afterwards 'I could forget all that I had learnt because it was of no use to me.' Interestingly, he also feels that as a student he had to unlearn much of what he was taught in school before he could even start training as an Architect. I am not saying that all school teachers and all school lessons must inevitably fail (relatives and teacher friends breathe a sigh of relief here). I am also certain, because I have met them, that there are brilliant, inspiring, structured home educators. Finally I have to confess to having used some workbooks with a lot of success.

But if you can help a child discover their own interests and follow them wherever they lead

you'd be amazed what they learn. In fact home education often means the children do the teaching. Scary but true. And learning in that way keeps alive that undimmed enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge which is so precious and so easily destroyed. I'm not saying that the children run our home; but they do have a big say in what, when and how they do something. And hopefully interests that will last long beyond the end of 'school' and into retirement. You could ask how many creative, interested,

enthusiastic, free-thinking people school manages to produce. But a system geared towards exam results was never designed to measure such a positive outcome.

Sonya Chappell

We hope to make Autonomous HE a regular slot in the Newsletter and as such we welcome articles from members about their experiences with autonomous home-education.

Please send articles into Sue White, Articles Editor (details on inner front cover of the Newsletter).

HES FES 2009

The World's Biggest Gathering of Home Educators

11th to 18th July

For more information visit:

hesfes.co.uk

Email: info@hesfes.co.uk

Tel: 0783 379 4062

Please note that HES FES is NOT organised by Education Otherwise

Structured HE

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas period and a great start to the New Year.

When I came to write something about structured HE this month I thought it would be useful to share with you some of the problems we have had recently with GCSE exam centres.

Last year we were extremely lucky to have no exam date clashes despite using three different exam centres and two different exam boards. Our luck ran out this year.

Due to the complications with coursework for GCSE Physics, Biology and Chemistry we have decided to sit IGCSE's instead. This gives us the option of sitting an additional paper instead of undertaking coursework.

Finding Exam centres can be extremely hard at times, especially if there is a coursework element involved, but never give up. It is worth it when you find a school that is sympathetic to HE.

So one of my sons had planned to sit GCSE maths with Edexcel at a school in our local area that's been very willing to take HE students as

private candidates. He also planned on sitting IGCSE Chemistry in May and waiting until November to sit the IGCSE Physics and Biology. So, what could possibly go wrong with only two subjects for him to sit?

Well, how about a Chemistry exam at 8am and a Maths exam at 9.30am, both on the same day at two centres, some 45 miles apart. After checking with the centres it seems there is nothing we can do?

Fortunately as home educators we have some flexibility despite being a structured family. We have chosen therefore to swap the Physics and the Chemistry around and so he can still sit the four exams in 2009.

I am sharing this with you to illustrate that no matter how structured you are in your approach to HE you still have control and flexibility. As a family we have a very structured week with set goals and subjects we wish to cover. However, as we set the structure we have the control. So, when a curve ball is thrown we can manoeuvre around it. Flexibility within your structured approach is the key here.

Jennifer Simmoms

NB: on page 29 there is news from GPG on exam centres in private schools.

We hope to make Structured HE a regular slot in the Newsletter and as such we welcome articles from members about their experiences HE-ing in a structured way, curriculum reviews and ideas for topic studies, etc. Please send articles into Sue White, Articles Editor (details on inner front cover of the Newsletter).

Thank you

Just to say the new-style newsletter (Dec 08, No 185) is brilliant. The new, improved version is bang up-to-date with so many interesting articles for all types of education styles.

We've been members for twelve years or so and look forward to reading many more issues in the future.

Thank you

Leanne Wallace and Antony Osgerby, 2 Westgarth Gardens, Cayton, Scarborough, North Yorks YO11 3SF

And another thank you...

We are now at a stage in our lives where we are no longer part of EO. My eldest went back to school to do her 'A' Levels and is now auditioning for dance colleges; my middle daughter is on a year's sabbatical studying beauty therapy at Adult Education college before starting her deferred place at Art college and my youngest has always been in the "school system". We have felt supported and guided over the years by EO and especially other home educating friends in Maidstone & Medway. This was most precious when we took the older two out of school in 1999 (thanks Jean especially!). Has it been easy? Not all the time, but some fabulous field trips!! Have we enjoyed it? Yes and No (No when it comes to GCSEs!) Would we recommend it? Cautiously.... It was right for us at the time but probably isn't right for everybody - same as school really!

When people said "You are brave!" I used to laugh and say, "No! Just stupid!" I don't actually think we were either. I think we were normal, loving parents doing what we thought was best for our children at that particular stage in their lives. We made mistakes but I guess all we should expect of ourselves as parents is to be

good enough, not perfect! We have three fabulous kids - not good as gold (sadly!) but full of spirit and full of dreams and with a not too bad education behind two of them with one to go!

For this we thank our friends and family and the wider world of EO. With very best wishes to you all.

Name and address supplied

Publicity at events, fairs and festivals

Hi, my name is Habiba Willow and in the February 08 newsletter I had an article telling how, for many years, I have enjoyed publicising EO, particularly at fairs and festivals through the spring and summer.

In that article I appealed to any of you out there who may be interested in doing the same. I mainly operate in the Devon, Dorset, Somerset area and, obviously, events clash. With this in mind, would any of you like to take on any of this exciting and rewarding work? (See end of page for contact details and I will give you the relevant information and encourage you!)

And an appeal for a signwriter.....

When I am doing outdoor events, I have a couple of eye-catching signboards with the triangle logo and 'Education Otherwise'.

Last year, one of these was stolen, and the other is rather worse for wear from being out in all weathers.

Would anyone kindly offer to point a new board or two for me? I can give you guidelines on size and design?

Please do contact me about any of the above.

During February, March through until mid-April, please use habiba@uk2.net. After that, please call 01297 443964 or write to: Habiba Willow, 34 Whalley Lane, Uplyme, Lyme Regis, Dorset DT7 3UR

Happy 2009! Welcome to the first book review section of the new year. Thank you to all our reviewers last month, your reviews were fantastic! Starting this month the review section is expanding to include websites, audio books and software as they all have a role to play in most home educating households. If you would like to submit a review of books, audio books, websites or software that you and your family have enjoyed please send it to bookreviews@education-otherwise.org by March 1st.

Audio books are a great way to enjoy stories as a family, especially while riding in the car. Most popular books are available on tape and cd from libraries and major booksellers and now also on line for downloading. All you need to access downloadable audio books is at the very least a computer with internet access and ideally an mp3 player of some type. Once you have downloaded them to your computer you can listen from there or download them to your mp3 player for listening to on the go. There are a large number of sites where you can download books for free:

www.librivox.org
www.booksshouldbefree.com
www.freeclassicaudiobooks.com
www.storynory.com

You can also subscribe to sites like www.audible.co.uk where for a basic monthly fee of £7.99 you can download one book per month. You can also purchase titles individually but it they can often be more expensive than buying a hardback version of the book so it may make more sense to subscribe.

The BBC also have a great children's story hour, called Big Toe on BBC Radio 7. Check out the site www.bbc.co.uk/bigtoe for details of the latest stories and of how to listen on line.

If you know of any more good sites for downloading books please let us know.

The Magician's Nephew

Author: C.S. Lewis
 ISBN: 978-0006716839

Reviewed by Huddersfield Home Educators Book Group (ages 6 - 12)

This book is the first in the Narnia series and is an introduction to the world of Narnia and how it was made. It is about a boy and a wicked witch and a horrid and cowardly uncle who makes magic rings. The rings take you to the Wood between the Worlds, where there are lots of pools that can transport you to different worlds.

We gave this book an average of 9 out of 10. It was a lovely read, especially the bit with the creating of the world, and the toffee tree, and we ALL liked the flying, talking horse called Strawberry!

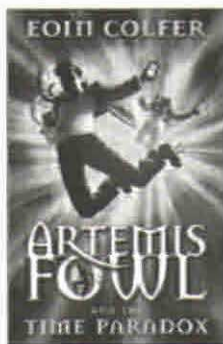
Editor' Note: The books in the Narnia series are: The Magician's Nephew; The Lion ,the Witch and the Wardrobe; The Horse and His Boy; Prince Caspian; The Voyage of the Dawn Treader; The Silver Chair; The Last Battle

Artemis Fowl and the Time Paradox

by Eoin Colfer
 ISBN: 978-0141383330

Reviewed by Daniel Wells

This book is about Artemis Fowl. He is a 14 (and 10) year old boy. He travels in time to rescue a lemur to save his mother who is ill. He is helped by a good demon called No 1 and a fairy called captain Holly Short. It was fast, exciting and funny.

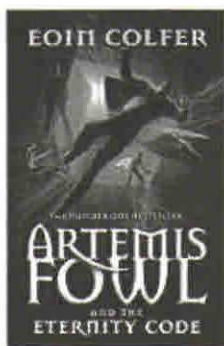


Artemis Fowl and the Eternity Code

by Eoin Colfer

ISBN: 978-0141321318

Reviewed by Christine Wells



The Artemis Fowl series of books are all about a teenage prodigy who is trying to use his devious and clever mind to restore his family's wealth and find and free his father who has been kidnapped by a powerful Russian adversary. Relationships are explained at the beginning of each book so its not necessary to read them in order but it is easier to see how the overall plot is developing if you do.

In the first book Artemis attempts to trap a fairy in the hope of stealing fairy gold which takes him into the realm of fairies, demons and leprechauns who aren't quite as dumb or backward as he was expecting. In fact, they have many surprises in store for him, both in terms of technology and cunning. By book three the love hate relationship between Artemis and the fairy folk is well established with the fairy folk finding they need Artemis' help as much as he needs theirs. In the Eternity Code Artemis designs and builds a prototype supercomputer using stolen fairy technology which he intends to sell in order to restore his family's fortune but the buyer is a rather shady character with other ideas. There is some violence in the book, although it is not too graphic and with the help of Artemis' fairy friend Captain Holly Short, none is fatal - though it is touch and go for a while and there are consequences. Cleverly written with a plot that twists and turns it is an enjoyable read with characters that you grow to love even if Artemis isn't always very likeable. Exciting and funny - aimed at 12 yr olds I think but a good read for able 7/8 year olds or to be read aloud by an adult.

Editor's Note: Eoin Colfer is a fantastic author whose books appeal to both children and parents alike. The books in the Artemis Fowl series are as follows: Book 1: Artemis Fowl; Book 2: Artemis Fowl and the Arctic Incident; Book 3: Artemis Fowl and the Eternity Code; Book 4: Artemis Fowl and the Opal Deception; Book 5: Artemis Fowl and the Lost Colony

They are also available on CD and from www.audible.co.uk, listening to them as a family is a real treat, especially as the narrator has such a lovely Irish accent! Both Eoin Colfer and Artemis Fowl have their own websites, www.eoincolfer.com and www.artemisfowl.co.uk. Eoin Colfer is a prolific writer and if you and your children enjoyed the Artemis Fowl series you may also enjoy some of his other works such as, Half Moon Investigations, Airman or The Legend of Spud Murphy

Learn to Sign with Olli

By Garry Slack

ISBN 978-0-9554932-01

This colourful new book provides a good introduction to British Sign Language (BSL) for both adults and children. It has a unique way of teaching signs, rather than being a dictionary like compendium of signs for you to emulate, it presents them in the context of a set of stories about a young monkey named Olli and his family.



The book begins with Garry Slack, the author, explaining the benefits of teaching children to sign and continues with helpful hints and tips for parents to make the process fun and easy. Garry maintains that this book can be used for children of all ages and that by starting to teach BSL at a very young age parents are giving children the chance to communicate before they are able to speak. There is a very convincing case study about a little girl named Daisy who was able to sign at 10 months.

Each story is prefaced by a vocabulary section showing all of the new signs that are being taught in that tale. All of the signs are demonstrated by children, making them more accessible for the children who are using the book. The stories are designed to be read in succession as each subsequent story uses signs from the previous tale. All of the words that have corresponding signs are shown in red and previously learned signs are shown in blue. The stories are engaging and really hold a child's attention. The words that are to be signed are all words that are relevant to children and likely to be used on a daily basis.

All in all this is book is a great introduction to BSL and will be invaluable to parents who want to teach their children the language and for older children who want to learn on their own.

Editor's Note: We have two copies of this book to give away, if you would like to win one please email your contact details to: bookreviews@education-otherwise.org and mark your email Olli.

Joy Baker: Trailblazer for Home-Based Education and Personalised Learning

by Chris Shute

ISBN: 978 1-900219-35-8

£10.00

Chris Shute's latest book tells the story of Joy Baker, one of the heroic pioneers of home-based education in the UK. The book summarises events from the Joy's first encounter with an Education Welfare Officer in 1952, when her eldest child was six, to her final court appearance over ten years later, when an appeal by the Local Education Authority was dismissed, and her method of education was at last deemed 'efficient', 'full-time', 'suitable' and therefore satisfactory.

Chris Shute's book is far more than just a precis of the earlier Children in Chancery. To begin with, he sets Joy Baker's story in its historical context in the post-war decade, with the 'otherwise' provision of the 1944 Education

Act still assumed to apply only to those rich enough to employ a tutor. Throughout the book, he reflects on the reasons why a mother's insistence on her right to educate her own children provoked the authorities to such extreme reactions, drawing in part on his extensive knowledge of the psychological writings of Dr. Alice Miller; and also pointing out Joy's explicit challenge to the growing sense among the educational establishment that teaching was a profession with its own mystique and specialist skills which no untrained person could claim to practise. In her presentations to various Local Education Authorities, Joy Baker went on the offensive, making much of the crucial word 'suitable' as it occurs in the 1944 Education Act (which required parents to ensure their children received 'efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude').

In the final chapter of his book, Chris Shute considers the relevance for today of a series of events that happened more than 50 years ago. As he says 'Joy's campaign is still going on. The case she made out against the institution of school is still not recognised by anyone whose voice is listened to and acted on in the world of education'. Why? At the heart of the matter, he claims lie two contrasting attitudes to children: are they 'a different kind of human being from adults, dangerous, skittish and unable to make good decisions for themselves'; or are they able 'to decide for themselves when, and whether, they [learn] the things which parents and teachers have decided are 'important'.

Extracted from a review by Hazel Clawley, which first appeared in the Journal of Personalised Education Now Autumn/Spring 2008-9 Issue No.8

Editor's Note: We have one copy of this book to give away, if you would like to win it please email your contact details to: bookreviews@education-otherwise.org.

2008 News Round-up

EO Disability Group Members: Julie Bunker, Fiona Nicholson and Christine Waterman

The Disability Group has made a substantial contribution to the new EO Safeguarding Children Policy. The DG also has a significant influence on Trustee decisions with regard to accessible venues and reasonable adjustments:
http://www.education-otherwise.org/About/Safeguarding_Children_Policy.pdf

The Disability Group has provided information on disability and SEN to go on the new EO website which was launched on October 1st. We felt that the most immediate priority was not to put disability and SEN into a ghetto area but to have questions about SEN and disability integrated into the basic FAQ about home education. We hope to find time soon to revise the SEN/disability leaflet and to bring this area to the forefront of the new website.

<http://www.education-otherwise.org/faq.htm>

The Disability Group has contributed to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Ofqual regulators' review of Access Arrangements for examination candidates with disabilities, special needs and additional requirements. Fiona also went to a follow-up meeting in September with the Independent Schools Council who are now actively looking to support home educated private candidates for GCSE and IGCSE in terms of access to exam centres in private schools. This will include private candidates with disabilities and special needs. There is a separate article about this elsewhere in the newsletter.

Via EO Disability Group, Education Otherwise has professional membership status with The Benefits and Work Publishing Company. You can find out more about B&W here

<http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/content/category/7/26/49/> EO is permitted to distribute to members of EO the B&W guides on Disability Living Allowance, Invalidity Benefit and the new Employment Support Allowance.
<http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/>

If you would like a copy of one of these comprehensive guides, which are only available to professional members, please get in touch with EO Disability Group:
disabilityawareness@education-otherwise.org or
 c/o EO Disability Group PO Box 325, St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Towards the end of 2008 The Disability Group had the opportunity to review and make contribution to JobCentre guidance material helping staff to deal "sensitively" with home education and with SEN and disability as part of the upheavals to the benefits system which will see lone parents transferred from Income Support to Jobseeker's Allowance. The Disability Group sees this as the beginning of our work in this area and we have made it clear that we expect to be consulted as stakeholder much earlier in the proceedings in future.

In November Fiona and her son Theo spent the day at a national Lone Parent Stakeholder Group meeting in London with Minister Kitty Ussher at the Department of Work and Pensions. The Lone Parent Stakeholder Meeting addressed the issue of home educating lone parents with additional caring responsibilities, which may include caring for children with disabilities and special needs who have been badly let down by the system in schools.

In addition Fiona and Julie had a joint Disability Group/Government Policy Group meeting with Baroness Morgan, the new Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DCSF in early November. They raised the issue of school not being suitable for children with SEN. Julie spoke passionately from her own personal experience of unmet needs and her children being unsafe and lacking education in school.

Specialist training day organised by Benefits and Work on the new Employment and Support Allowance

On behalf of EO Disability Group Trustee Vicki Skinner took part in this specialist training day: <http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/content/category/9/32/47/> Christine has recently undertaken EO-sponsored training provided by the Telephone Helpline Association. At a recent Open Trustee Meeting Christine gave the following feedback about her work as SEN/disability contact for EO:

"Helping people find advice about adult benefits once their child turns 16 and is unlikely to be fit for work, discussing with people their thoughts about diagnosis and how/when to go about getting one: a parent might want to discuss a child's unusual difficulties and behaviours in order to get a clearer picture of what the problems were: I've also read through a number of letters and reports to help people formulate responses, and of course, been alert to people on other lists asking special needs/disability questions; this is alongside the usual advice to new home educating parents about de-registration, dealing with the LA, and the "can I really do this" type of questions." The Disability Group feels that this is a hugely important part of what we do behind the scenes. We are also able to take specialised call referrals from the EO Helpline. Christine's contact details can be found at the back of the newsletter.

EO Disability Group was also very pleased to be approached recently by the National Autistic Society Advice Line Coordinator. NAS is getting an increasing number of enquiries about home education and Christine has volunteered to meet with the NAS Advice Line Forum in the Spring to explain more about the work of Education Otherwise and the law on home education.

<http://tinyurl.com/8pjll2>

Julie and Fiona also attend the Midlands regional home education conferences for local authorities where they answer questions and promote understanding about home education and SEN and disabilities.

The Disability Group responds regularly to Government consultations and also has input to consultation submissions from EO Government Policy Group. We monitor this area very closely. Our most recent standalone consultation response was the DWP call for comments on new proposals to scrap Income Support, including possible plans to move carers off Income

Support which would obviously have an impact on our members with disability and special needs.

<http://www.education-otherwise.org/Legal/Consultations/2008.htm>

<http://tinyurl.com/8cu4aw>

Member of EO Disability Group attended the Annual Conference of the Child Poverty Action Group

At the beginning of December Julie attended the Annual Conference of the Child Poverty Action Group on behalf of Education Otherwise Disability Group. There were approximately 50 delegates at the conference that was held in the Palace of Westminster.

<http://www.parliament.uk/parliament/guide/pala ce.htm>

Speakers: Rt Hon James Purnell MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions; Kate Green, CEO Child Poverty Action Group
Chair: Tim Horton, Fabian Society

This is the first time Education Otherwise has been to a Child Poverty Action Group conference and Julie felt it was very useful. Education

Otherwise is making further links with CPAG at the Lone Parent Stakeholder Group with the Department of Work and Pensions where Fiona also meets with Beth Lakhani, Welfare Rights Advisor from CPAG. This is a link to the transcript of James Purnell's speech
http://www.cpag.org.uk/cro/CPAG_AGM08_jpurnell.pdf

Alison Griffin, Jennifer Barnard and Kate Green from Child Poverty Action Group all attended the conference.

CPAG reiterated that it wants child benefit raised for the second and subsequent children to the level paid for the first child. CPAG argued that this measure would benefit all families with two or more children, and would reduce the number of children living in poverty by 250,000.
http://www.cpag.org.uk/info/briefings_policy/CPAG_poverty_the_stats_1008.pdf

There is great disappointment at CPAG over the Government's welfare reforms. The charity is receiving many more enquiries because of the credit crunch. James Purnell said that the abolition of child poverty needed a prosperous country. He claimed that the mistake that was made in the 70's was redistribution of wealth without protecting money markets. Purnell stated that 56% of lone parents work and he also said that there was an anomaly with couples where if one partner claims Jobseeker's Allowance, the other partner is not currently pressed to find work. This will be changed. The Government has doubled investment in childcare and Purnell claimed there were twice as many places available now.

The conference was held the day before the publication of the Gregg Review.
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/realisingpotential.asp>

Purnell made reference to Scandinavia benefits system where he said the Government just expects lone parents to be back at work. More information here from Guardian article December 2nd 2008.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/dec/02/benefit-cuts-single-parents>

"The Gregg review stemmed from concerns in the DWP that the current path to benefit entitlement was not clear. Ministers favoured the example of Scandinavia, especially Denmark, where almost everyone is expected to do something in return for receiving unemployment benefit."

Trustees of CPAG had also been on a field trip to Scandinavia and had many questions for the Minister. CPAG said that the Scandinavian system was much better financed. The charity pointed out that there were no jobs for the jobseekers and also stated that much better childcare was needed. Problem for parent employment because right to flexible working has been curtailed. CPAG quoted Sir Richard Tilt of the Social Security Advisory Committee and said that out of work benefits were lower than in 1979 when the Government came to power. There was much talk at the conference about the fiscal deficit and whether it was necessary/desirable to increase Government spending. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deficit>

CPAG told Minister that Government needed to look at how benefits interacted. The charity said there were insufficient flexibilities in the JSA regime, especially when claimants had a range of difficulties around divorce, bereavement, mental health and learning difficulties. James Purnell said claimants wouldn't be punished if they couldn't find work, but sanctions would be imposed if claimants did not take up support. Purnell said the system needed to be made much clearer.

Kate Green CEO of CPAG summed up and answered the Minister. EO will be requesting a transcript or full minutes of the conference. Kate Green said the Government had to accept that sometimes work is not good for people because of their individual circumstances. Kate Green said that the role of carer was not acknowledged. The Government needs to dignify and respect advisor and claimant, because the claimant is disempowered under the present system.

CPAG publishes regular campaign newsletters online. This is the link for the November 2008

newsletter

<http://www.cpag.org.uk/campaigns/CPAGCampaignNewsNov2008.pdf> and this is the link for back issues <http://www.cpag.org.uk/>

Here are links to CPAG response to lone parents off Income Support and to Government Green Paper on Welfare Reform

http://www.cpag.org.uk/info/briefings_policy/lone_parents.htm

http://www.cpag.org.uk/info/briefings_policy/CPAG_welref_1008.pdf

National DCSF Parents Panel, October 2008

Julie attended the national DCSF Parents Panel in October which was a great opportunity to network with civil servant policy makers and ministers including the newly appointed Baroness Delyth Morgan. There are only 30 parents nationwide on this Panel so it is quite a coup to have home educators represented and to bring the perspective of a parent of children with special needs. The Parents Panel will be reconvened in the New Year. The DCSF 10 Year Children's Plan says the Panel will provide "direct advice to Ministers on a range of issues that affect parents in England. Panel members will be representative of parents from all parts of England, including fathers and mothers with children of all ages, parents from ethnic minority communities and parents of children with disabilities." <http://tinyurl.com/8gklm9>

Julie talked to Baroness Morgan whose theme was "talking to parents, listening to parents." Julie raised the topic of the "missing suitable education" consultation and reported that the home education community was distressed because we had not been regarded as stakeholders and we had not been consulted prior to the draft guidance being issued. Julie told the Minister that the DCSF had all our addresses from previous consultations and we asked to be notified but never heard anything.

The Parents Panel discussed family breakdown and clashes between parents that might adversely affect children. The DCSF wanted to identify key stress points where parents needed support. Parents said money problems were big issue, also problems around maternity leave and paternity leave plus disabled children and chronic illness. It was felt that all these were potentially very stressful to families and could cause relationship breakup, but parents said

that Government should listen to what parents said they wanted. Julie felt that the Parents Panel was meant to endorse Child Contact Centres that would offer a neutral space for warring parents with a play space for children plus conciliation, counselling and mediation services. You can read more about Child Contact Centres here:

<http://www.naccc.org.uk/cms2/index.php>

The Parents Panel also discussed youth crime and knife crime. DCSF then explained about Operation Staysafe that has been trialled in certain areas. Young people are removed from the streets in the evening and taken to what is deemed a place of safety such as a church hall. Parents are contacted and asked to pick the children up. No definition was given of "child" or "young person". Here is a link to an Operation Staysafe venture in Preston.

<http://tinyurl.com/7v6axa>

Julie gave feedback from EO Disability Group asking Government to please listen to parents and look at where there were funding restrictions eg there could be money for respite but not for what families need. The Panel also discussed parent know-how and peer support for families. Julie told the Panel she felt her family had good relationship with teens because of home education, there are no school stresses or negative peer pressure.

Education Otherwise Disability Group will continue to work very hard on behalf of home educating families with special needs and disabilities. We welcome new volunteers who might be able to make a contribution in a particular area. For instance, we would like to offer more representation to parents of

children with physical disabilities, long-term illness or mobility problems.

disabilityawareness@education-otherwise.org
Disability Group C/o PO Box 325, St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW

For all correspondence with EO Government Policy group, please email: governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org or write to Government Policy Group, C/o Education Otherwise, PO Box 325, St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Introduction

Education Otherwise has finally met with a Government Minister at the Department of Children Schools and Families which is the Department regulating home education in England. We are also talking regularly with the Independent Schools Council to promote the interests of home educated young people and to secure improved access to exam centres in private schools. This month in the Newsletter we have final news of the Government's welfare reforms which were introduced on November 24th 2008 which unfortunately missed the deadline for the December Newsletter.

Raising Standards amongst local authorities

Home educators throughout the UK are only too aware that there is a postcode lottery in terms of different local authorities' attitude, policy and practice with respect to home education and home educating families. Some local authorities try and insist on home visits and also demand access to the children. Other authorities try and make families fill in long forms or submit samples of the children's "work" on a regular basis. Some authorities even ask schools to delay taking the children's names off the school roll while the authority requests "plans" or "proposals" from the family.

As a support organisation, EO works on a number of levels to improve this postcode lottery. EO members can help and support each other at a local level and also nation-wide via internet support groups. Volunteers will help individual families. EO members and volunteers can meet with individual local authority and try and get them to improve their procedures. EO volunteers can attend regional local authority conferences, put across the home educators' point of view, discuss points of law and share examples of where the authority is trying to work constructively with home educators to

improve the service. EO volunteers can meet with civil servants and point out where local authorities are acting outside the law. All of these things will have some effect but it is very limited and for those of us who are trying to get things changed it is like pushing a rock uphill.

However we are very pleased to report that we now have the green light from DCSF Ministers for EO to work with local home educators and the Department to identify models of good practice among local authorities. We know that most local government officials are scared to make changes. They carry on doing what they think they are supposed to be doing. We give them examples of innovative authorities such as Milton Keynes but they don't feel they have the freedom to move in a similar direction themselves. We feel that local authorities are not able to look clearly at the law on home education because they are preoccupied with "safeguarding". In addition, individual local authority officers often seem to believe that they are personally responsible for "outcomes" for home educated children.

One way round this is to have models of good practice that the authorities will feel safe to emulate. The first step on this road will be the

field trip to North Yorkshire at the beginning of February that has been jointly organised by the DCSF, EO and the local authority. Iain Campbell from the DCSF Elective Home Education team will have a chance to hear first hand views from the EO Local Contact and the local home education community. We aren't setting up any one authority as a perfect template. What we are saying to the DCSF is that some authorities are prepared to meet home educators and to listen to their dissatisfaction with the system and to try and change things for the better.

We need your help

We need your help to improve services for home educating families. In accordance with our privacy policy we will redact all the information we receive, ie we will remove all names or identifying details. This month we are focusing on two main issues: exam centre access and what happens to lone parents on Income Support when they go to the JobCentre.

Contact details for EO Government Policy Group can be found at the beginning of this article.

You can also share your story with EO members by writing to the letters page of the Newsletter nlco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org
Education Otherwise, Newsletter Co-ordinator,
C/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW

1. Exams: EO is working with the Independent Schools Council and the Home Education Advisory Service

- i. How easy has it been for your family to find an exam centre to sit GCSEs or IGCSEs?
- ii. Do you anticipate any difficulty in finding an exam centre?
- iii. Does your local FE college require applicants to have GCSEs before they can go into the 6th form?

2. JobCentres: EO now has a direct line to the Department of Work and Pensions

- i. Have you ever been for a Work Focused Interview?
- ii. What has your Lone Parent Advisor told you about the Government's new regulations?

- iii. Do you have to take your child/children to the JobCentre. If so, how do the children feel?
- iv. Do you think it is feasible for you to get a job or be self-employed for 16 or more hours a week?

3. Local Authorities: EO meets regularly with the DCSF and can highlight areas of good or bad practice

- i. Is there anything your local authority does well?
- ii. Are you aware of any local initiatives for home educators to meet with your local authority to improve policy and procedures?
- iii. Is there room for improvement in your local authority?
- iv. Are you aware of another local authority where the policy and procedure is very different from your own (particularly a neighbouring authority)?

Meeting Education Otherwise and Baroness Morgan, Minister for Children Schools and Families in the House of Lords

For the first time in its history Education Otherwise has had an official meeting at Ministerial level. This took place on November 4th 2008 when representatives from EO Government Policy Group and EO Disability Group met with Baroness Morgan, the new Minister for Children Schools and Families in the House of Lords.

The initial feedback from the home education community about this meeting has been extremely positive but because of publication deadlines this is the first time we have been able to give details in the newsletter. We began pressing for a Ministerial meeting in early 2007 at the time of the threatened "light touch changes to monitoring" of home education with specified age-related academic standards and mandatory access to the child, because we knew that the policy decision could only be halted/reversed by Ministers whom we hoped would be more aware of the legal ramifications of the state assuming responsibility for home

education. (We later had good evidence of this in emails sent by the DfES around February 2007. After polishing up their draft consultation questions for light touch changes to monitoring, civil servants finally met with Lord Adonis. Immediately after the meeting the plans had to be dropped.)

As we said at the EO Government Policy Group workshop in Warrington in March 2007:

"We have now been told by several different people, the latest being Lord Adonis, that there is no point meeting representatives from home education support groups until the DfES has found "the way forward". I said that of course we were continuing to state the obvious that the home education community had to be included in pre-consultation dialogue in order to be part of that "way forward".

<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/warrington.htm>

In the Autumn of 2007 the Department conceded that we could meet the new civil servants in charge of Elective Home Education, which took place in November 2007. The November 2007 meeting was satisfactory as far as it went, but the Department's civil servants stressed that they did not set policy and could not act as advocates or intervene at local authority level. We felt that this meeting had mainly been agreed in order that Ministers could continue to refuse talks at a higher level by pointing out that EO was now able to talk to civil servants. However, we were not fobbed off and we persisted in attending conferences and events where we suspected a Minister might be visiting, so that we could talk face to face with Ministers and continue to raise the issue of home education and ask for a proper meeting with EO. Finally in September Annette Taberner of EO Government Policy Group went to a focus group in Leeds and secured Secretary of State Ed Balls' commitment to a meeting with EO.

At the November 2008 meeting with Baroness Morgan, we also met with civil servants in charge of Elective Home Education and the recent "missing suitable education" consultation as well

as a representative from the Children's Workforce Development Council.

We didn't have nearly as much time as we would have liked, but we touched on the recent "children missing suitable education" consultation; the postcode lottery with respect to Elective Home Education representatives at local authority level, comparing very different authorities.

We also explained some of the difficulties caused by the lack of awareness of home education throughout the children's workforce, particularly among social services and health professionals. Several EO representatives at the meeting had withdrawn children from school after problems with unmet special educational needs and bullying and gave a brief account of some of the difficulties and prejudices they had encountered.

Education Otherwise made the point very strongly that children are often not safe in schools and not receiving adequate education in schools, which is why they are removed to be home educated.

Baroness Morgan asked how she could find out more about home education in practice and EO recommended the latest book by Alan Thomas entitled "How Children Learn at Home".

After the meeting EO got in touch with Professor Thomas who arranged for his publisher to send a copy to the Minister. We should add that Alan also asked us to point out that while his latest book was mainly about autonomous learning, he had also written in more general terms about different styles and methods of home education in his earlier books. <http://www.education-otherwise.org/shop.htm>

There are several significant follow-up moves to the London meeting. EO was asked to send a Position Paper to the Minister. A Position Paper contains a brief historical background, a succinct summary of the organisation's views plus recommendations for action. Obviously the Government receives countless such papers

every year but this is nevertheless something we are taking seriously at EO and we are continuing to press for more meetings to ensure that our recommendations do not just get shelved.

In addition we have organised a joint EO/DSCF/LA field trip in early February to North Yorkshire to study an innovative model of good practice. We will send a full report to the Minister and will also publish an account in the earliest available EO newsletter. After speaking to a number of EO local contacts and home educators in different areas, there were a number of reasons for nominating North Yorkshire, not least that it is very close to the DCSF Home Education civil servants team in Darlington. EO Government Policy Group has also spoken to the LA rep for North Yorkshire and we are aware that there has recently been an investigative visit to Milton Keynes. We explained to the Minister and civil servants at the meeting that the Department frequently asked for models of good practice but that one of the problems was that most local authorities did not believe they were allowed to be innovative or to depart from custom and practice in their area.

What is happening to lone parents on Income Support

Social Security (Lone Parents and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations were made on November 23rd 2008 and came into force on Monday November 24th 2008.

You can read the EO Briefing on our Campaign site here

<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/welfare-reform.htm>

EO members who do not have internet access can write to EO Government Policy Group at the PO Box Address given at the beginning of this article and we will send you a printout of the relevant web pages.

This is the link -
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20083051_en_1 - for the new regulations, which were

brought in under Statutory Instrument 3051 of 2008.

The changes will be phased in over 2 years. The only parents permitted to remain on Income Support whose children are over the age limit of 12, then 10 then 7 will be those who receive Carer's Allowance. Entitlement to CA is only triggered by being the official carer for someone entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) at medium or high rate.

New and repeat claimants for Income Support with a child over age 12 were immediately affected from this date and were no longer eligible for Income Support solely on the grounds of being a lone parent. Instead they had to claim another benefit such as Jobseeker's Allowance. The main requirement of JSA for lone parents is to "seek work for no less than 16 hours a week." This is currently affecting around 300 claimants a week throughout the country. The major change will occur in the Spring of 2009.

New Claimants no longer entitled to Income Support:

Date	Age of youngest child	How many lone parents?
24.11.08	12	100,000
26.10.09	10	68,000
25.10.10	7	121,000

There are slightly different timescales for existing lone parent claimants with a child aged between 12 and 16. Special commencement provisions for certain existing claimants

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20083051_en_1

2.3.09	14 - 16
6.7.09	12
October 2010	end Income Support for existing claimants with child over 9

January 2011

end Income Support for
existing claimants with child
over 7

By the time you read this, existing Income Support claimants will have received a letter in the early New Year 2009 notifying them that their entitlement to Income Support will end in 8 weeks or so and inviting them to a voluntary interview to discuss options and implications and to process the necessary paperwork for a claim to an alternative benefit such as Jobseeker's Allowance.

Just over a week before the new regulations became law Education Otherwise met with the Minister and with civil servants from the Department of Work and Pensions at a Lone Parent Stakeholder meeting with other lobbying and support organisations such as One Parent Families, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Child Poverty Action Group. You can read an account of the meeting online here :

<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/ReportLPstakeholderDWP13thnov08.pdf>

EO members who do not have internet access can write to the address given at the head of this article and we will post a printout of the web page to you.

Education Otherwise is strongly recommending that home educating lone parents attend these voluntary interviews wherever possible because it is meant to be an opportunity to ask questions and to arrange to make a claim for Child Tax Credit in advance of any move off Income Support.

Please send feedback about JobCentres to EO Government Policy Group because EO now has a direct email/phone link to the Department of Work and Pensions civil servants in charge of overseeing and implementing this scheme. EO also takes part in a weekly teleconference with the Department. In line with EO's Privacy Policy and with Data Protection legislation, we undertake not pass on your personal details but we can flag up any concerns or worrying trends. In theory we would also be able to give positive

feedback if members had a particularly useful or supportive interview.

The address for correspondence is given at the head of this article.

Home educating lone parents are not exempted from the new regulations but JSA claimants have "good cause" to turn down a job offer if appropriate affordable childcare is not available. DWP agreed that it would be "just cause" to refuse if the childcare on offer conflicts with deeply held principles or if the claimant said the only childcare available was culturally appropriate. This is in addition to childcare that might legitimately be refused on religious grounds. The DWP said that the Government was not looking to lean on parents to take unsuitable childcare, especially in current economic situation there was "not the political will to have martyrs".

A further follow-up meeting with the Department will be scheduled between the Minister and stakeholders in 6 months ie some time around May 2009. The May meeting will be absolutely critical because the vast majority of lone parents will start to be affected from March. The DWP is anticipating 8,000 new claims a month from March 2009.

Stakeholders asked would there be sanctions (ie benefit cuts) if there is no appropriate affordable childcare. Minister Kitty Ussher said if there is no appropriate or affordable childcare this would be Good Cause for not taking a job and therefore benefits would not be cut.

It was confirmed that the initial interviews for Jobseeker's Allowance would be carried out by trained and experienced Lone Parent Advisors, not just by someone working in the JobCentre. The Initial Interview and Jobseeker's Agreement is very important because the Fortnightly Job Review aka "signing-on" refers back to the Agreement.

Stakeholders concluded it was tactically better to present as unemployable than to have to turn

down a job offer. The DWP said employers would get fed up if the JobCentre sent a stream of people who didn't actually want the job and wouldn't be able to take a job if offered one.

It is important to note that lone parents are de facto "vulnerable" according to JobCentre regulations and therefore automatically entitled to claim Hardship Payments when benefits are cut. Personal allowance element of JSA would be cut 100%. Lone parent then entitled to make immediate claim for Hardship Payment of 60% of the personal allowance. Current personal allowance is around £60 a week. Child Tax Credit is NOT subject to sanction/benefit cut.

Application for sanction/benefit cut will go to the Lone Parent Advisor/ service manager BEFORE going to the Decision Maker. We have been assured that the JobCentre will make attempts to contact the claimant and resolve the situation before cutting benefits. The Decision Maker will also gather evidence. Benefit will not be cut off automatically. If benefits are cut, the claimant has to APPLY for a hardship payment, it is not auto-activated. The worst case scenario is £60 a week benefit cut and then a hardship payment of £36 a week ie the lone parent loses 40% of personal allowance but the Child Tax Credit element is not affected.

Good news about exam centres in private schools

On December 19th EO had a third meeting with the Independent Schools Council to discuss exam centre access. EO has also been invited to speak at the ISC Annual Conference in the summer. There is a 10 minute video on YouTube of last year's Annual Conference.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjBjYrdR3lQ>

At the meeting we were given a copy of the latest ISC Bulletin which goes out to over a thousand ISC schools. It included a section on how the ISC is working with EO and with the Home Education Advisory Service. The ISC

didn't run the numbers past us or we would have said closer to 50,000 than 150,000 but the rest of the article is very useful for us.

http://www.isc.co.uk/Publications_ISCBulletins.htm

Parents who choose to educate their children at home tend not to be aware of the particular difficulty they will face in finding an examination centre. The numbers of home-educated children are unknown - informal estimates vary from 45,000 to 150,000. Reasons for choosing home education at senior level are varied, but concentrate on poor experience in state education.

ISC is working with two charities active in this field, Education Otherwise and the Home Education Advisory Service, to see how independent schools might help.

Our initial research has disclosed a core of ISC schools that are already registered with exam boards to accept external candidates. We are carrying out a survey of those schools to see what challenges private candidates bring with them and how these can be met. This project is a way in which the sector can prevent children becoming needlessly disadvantaged through lack of access to examination centres. It very much accords with the charitable purpose of the sector: advancing education."

More information from the Charities Commission about public benefit and fee paying schools may be found here:

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publicbenefit/default.asp>

Thanks to feedback from home educators, we have now been able to identify a few ISC schools who are consistently helpful to private candidates, including Mayville in Southsea, Hampshire and Sidcot School near Bristol. The ISC are going to approach these schools and ask for their help to demystify the whole process so as to spread models of good practice more widely. We are going to talk to the main awarding bodies used by private candidates for GCSE and IGCSE. Again this will help to demystify the process for independent schools.

EO raised the issue of affordability and reminded ISC that home educators were mostly on reduced income and got no funding. ISC thought it was reasonable for schools to cover their costs but not to make a profit. We touched on the problem of passing on costs to individual families who needed Access Arrangements for SEN and disability and we'll be coming back to this at the next meeting. We are aiming to get some information round the schools by the end of February and again in April via the ISC Bulletin and at the ISC Annual Conference where EO has been invited to speak in the summer. The initial impact will be Summer 2009 exams, then the Autumn/Winter retake sessions.

We will continue to report on this in subsequent EO newsletters as we are very aware that access to exam centres is a pressing issue for many home educating families. The Charities Commission guidance applies to England and Wales. EO has also made contact with the Welsh Regional Advisor for the ISC and is hoping to arrange a meeting shortly.

Please send feedback about your experience with asking independent schools for assistance over exam centres. The address for correspondence is given at the head of this article

Is It Compulsory to Attend a Work-Focused Interview for Income Support?

What About Home Educating Lone Parents Who Have Children With Special Educational Needs?

Fiona Nicholson of Education Otherwise Government Policy Group and Education Otherwise Disability Group raised the following question with the Department of Work and Pensions. Fiona is one of a small group of National Lone Parent Stakeholders who have

direct contact with Ministers and civil servants at the Department of Work and Pensions. The official reply may be quoted for example in discussions with the JobCentre or with a Member of Parliament.

Q: Is there any provision for the WFI to be conducted over the telephone or by some means other than attending the Jobcentre given the undue stress it causes to the child to be brought by public transport to the office and then to see his mother being put under pressure. As soon as one interview is over, the autistic child begins to dread the next and obsesses about it, this is of course, a typical symptom of ASD.

A: Home visits can be carried out but a decision as to whether this is appropriate is taken on a case by case basis. A WFI cannot be undertaken by telephone.

There is also the option to defer or waive a WFI (i.e. when a customer's personal circumstances mean that there is little prospect of them benefiting from a WFI at a specific time). Again, these cases must always be considered on an individual basis looking at the particular circumstances of the customer.

If the customer requires specific answers concerning their treatment then the local Business Manager of the Jobcentre would need to be approached. If a customer wishes us to pursue this then please let me know (we would need their details and which Jobcentre they visited).

Jobseeker's Allowance: Reply From The Department for Work and Pensions

Annette Taberner of Education Otherwise Government Policy Group wrote to the Department of Work and Pensions querying what was meant by the term "good cause for not complying with their [lone parent home educators'] obligations to seek or take up work."

A standard reply from DWP was received by a number of home educators. It may be quoted in any discussion with the JobCentre or with your MP.

"To safeguard the welfare of children, the Government have amended the Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations which will accommodate all parents who face special circumstances that need special consideration on a case-by-case basis. We have increased Jobcentre Plus adviser discretion so that a lone parent who is claiming Jobseeker's Allowance may not be penalised if they have genuine reasons, or "good cause" for not complying with their obligations to seek or take up work. Illness of the lone parent, their children, childcare support difficulties, transport difficulties, unforeseen family circumstances, domestic violence or relationship breakdown could all be considered as "good cause".

The Government have also amended Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations so that Jobcentre Plus staff will consider an additional matter for "just cause" and "good cause", so that a parent who is claiming or receiving Jobseeker's Allowance may not be penalised if they leave paid employment or fail to take up paid employment because appropriate or affordable childcare is not available. While people will need to demonstrate that they have made genuine efforts to locate such childcare, this will provide home educators with protection if no local services that meet their needs are available.

Part of the intention of the welfare reform package has been to improve childcare options for working families. A key part of the Government's ten-year childcare strategy includes the Childcare Act 2006 which introduced a legal requirement that, from April 2008, local authorities in England and Wales must secure sufficient childcare in their areas to meet the needs of working parents.

A key part of the delivery of that duty for parents with children aged from five to 11 will be the offer of affordable, school-based childcare on weekdays between the hours of

8am to 6pm, all year round, including access for children who do not attend the school."

How Will Section 92 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 Affect Home Educations?

The Education and Skills Act 2008 received royal assent at the end of November. Most of the Act concerned raising the participation age. However, the second part of the Act concerned registration and monitoring of independent schools and several speeches by Ministers in parliament appeared to suggest that this could affect groups of home educators who might be required to register as independent schools. It could also potentially affect tutors who might be discouraged from offering tuition if they were drawn into a registration system. Education Otherwise Government Policy Group has been investigating this issue with the DCSF.

Here is a link to the full Education and Skills Act http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/ukpga_20080025_en_1

Annette Taberner of EO Government Policy Group wrote to the DCSF as follows:

"I am currently running an art club for teenagers in our local group. I am a parent and I am assisted by two other parents. I happen to be a qualified teacher but I appreciate that others in the local group also have interests, skills and enthusiasms which they successfully share with our home educated youngsters without having any formal qualification. We are renting a local studio for the sessions. The parents of the other children participating give their written consent for the young people to attend. Parents can be contacted by mobile phone if they are required. Parents have my mobile phone number should they need it. Would this need a license?

A parent of one of the young people attending the art sessions has offered to assist my son with part of his Duke of Edinburgh award. As a parent I have made my own assessment of the

risks involved and have made a decision that they are acceptable. Are these "tuition sessions" or private childcare arrangements where no money is exchanged or just friends helping each other out? Would registration apply?

If the same arrangements were made one weekend by families whose children attended school, would they be required to apply for registration?

Our local group pay a qualified drama teacher to run a drama session for one hour each week in a local community hall. The children are currently rehearsing a pantomime. Would this require a license? Are parents incapable of assessing the possible risks involved when they are permitted in Law to take responsibility for their child's education? Who would decide if a licence was needed and what criteria would be used? What would getting a license entail? Would someone have to visit the venue and speak to all of the parents involved?

Would an after school drama group require a license? What about a Scout group?

If some of the parents agree at short notice to organise an additional session to measure the children for costumes will we have to register for that one session?

My son might go with a friend to use the local bouldering centre off-peak with another home-educated teenager where they may or may not pay for tuition. Often these activities are planned at short notice. Will the age of the children be a factor? Or the number of children?

My children are dyslexic and I pay a local tutor to assist them for one hour each week. I usually sit in an adjacent room. I assume we won't need a licence?

If several children from the same family learn together in their home I assume from what Mr Knight said that no license is required. What if a friend's child joins them? What if two friends

join them?

My son is a keen drummer and a tutor assists my son in our home for one hour each fortnight. I am present in another room with my second child. If I went to the shop two doors away during the lesson would I be required to register for the ten minutes this would take? What if my son and a friend had a joint lesson at my home?

For one hour for the next four weeks a number of our children will have a tennis taster session at a local tennis club. The Club's tennis coaches will run the session but some parents will also be in attendance. Would a license be required for these four sessions?

What will the cost of registration be and will any funding be available from the Department to cover these costs? Would each separate activity require a separate license?

EO Government Policy Group Received This Reply from the DCSF:

"I have considered all the examples you quote below. These would appear to be either supplementary to a child's main educational provision, ad hoc or temporary arrangements and would be unlikely to meet the threshold (12.5 hours a week for primary age and 15 hours a week for secondary age, for at least 28 weeks a year), so would not be required to register as independent schools. However, where home education takes on the characteristics of a school - that is, more formal arrangements which operate in pooled settings for periods above the thresholds set out above, outside of a family home and use tutors instead of parents - then there may be a requirement to register as an independent school.

We anticipate Section 92 [of the Education and Skills Act 2008] will come into force from September 2010, once we have drafted and introduced the regulations referred to in sub-section 3. We will be consulting fully on the detail of the draft regulations in Spring 2009, and will ensure that Education Otherwise and other home education organisations are alerted when the consultation goes live.

A Brief Note from the Trustees of Education Otherwise

If you care about EO and want EO to be able to continue its work but you only have ten minutes, then please sign a SUM form and a proxy form. You can appoint the chair of the Annual General Meeting as proxy to vote on your behalf. Post them back to EO today.

If you have half an hour, read the information about the changes in EO and then sign a SUM form and a proxy form and post back to EO today. You will find these forms elsewhere in the newsletter. Please note that at present two adult members of each household can each fill in a form to be a Voting Member in EO.

If you have a spare Saturday in a few weeks time please come to the EO AGM/Annual Conference in Birmingham on February 21st. If you can't come, remember there'll be another one around the same time next year. Send a proxy form so your vote isn't wasted and look out for announcements of regional EO workshops in your area during the coming year.

If you can commit more time to EO please consider volunteering for one of the EO Small Groups or becoming a Local Contact.

What's Going On With EO

The Annual General Meeting is almost upon us and much of this month's newsletter is taken up with EO business. We apologise in advance for the "dryness" of much of the newsletter and would like to reassure members that the usual mix of articles will resume in the next Newsletter in April.

We'd like to ask you to give half an hour to reading through the business part of the Newsletter because although on one level we don't need to know how EO works, on another level we all benefit from members being informed about their rights within EO.

Ian Dowty to Speak at our Annual Conference in Birmingham, February 21st

We are delighted that Barrister Ian Dowty has agreed to come to Birmingham for the afternoon workshop sessions at the Annual General Meeting.

Those who have camped at HESFES have had the opportunity to hear Ian speak about home education and the law, drawing on his experience of legal cases and with the perspective of belonging to a home educating household himself.

Many will know of the Dowty family through Terri's books, "Free Range Education - how home education works" and "Home Educating our Autistic Spectrum Children".

Ian Dowty is also a Director for Action on Rights for Children - ARCH

In the last two years Ian has worked with the Education Otherwise Government Policy Group in responding to Government consultations.

Education Otherwise Government Policy Group are awaiting the outcome of the "Children Missing Education" consultation and talking to Government about the implementation of Contact Point - the computer database of all children and young people.

This is an ideal opportunity for the home education community to consider the impact that these measures are likely to have on home educators. The afternoon sessions will be open to all home educators.

Education Otherwise Annual General Meeting

Saturday February 21st 2009 11.00 - 16.00

Shard End Community Centre, 170 Packington Avenue,
Shard End, Birmingham, B34 7RD

Travel Information: Exit J5 off the M6 Castle Bromwich. Close to Castle Bromwich/Coleshill area of Birmingham. Car parking available. (Map here - <http://tinyurl.com/AGM-Location>)

For information on local bus routes and fares, call the Centro hotline Tel: 0121 200 2700
Website: <http://www.centro.org.uk> 10 miles from Birmingham New Street Station

Basic Times:

EO Business from 11am - 12.30 including election of EO Trustees.

Lunch from 12.30 - 13.30.

Speakers and workshops from 13.30 - 16.00

Agenda

1. Approve minutes of the previous AGM
2. Re-appoint auditors
3. Auditors remuneration
4. Consideration of financial report and draft accounts
5. Election of New Trustees

The Annual General Meeting is a great opportunity for EO members to meet each other informally in the cafe area throughout the day. There will also be workshops where you can find out the latest news from EO Working Groups such as the Disability Group and the Government Policy Group. Barrister Ian Dowty will be speaking about the latest legal developments.

Representatives from local home education support groups in the Midlands area will be at the conference. We also hope to have a stall with EO merchandise.

The AGM is also the time when "EO business" is transacted, including the election of new Trustees. (There is information elsewhere in the newsletter on how to become a Full Voting Member in EO and how to cast your vote by appointing a proxy if you are unable to attend a General Meeting in person.)

Where possible, please confirm attendance. This greatly helps the team who are organising the event. It also means we are able to contact you if there is any last minute change to the information printed in the newsletter.

Email: agmnotification@education-otherwise.org Tel. 08445 868813
c/o Education Otherwise, AGM, PO Box 325, St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Local co-ordinator: Julie Bunker e-mail: julie.bunker@zen.co.uk Tel: 07976 710 629

The Changes in EO

Here is some historical background to the current changes being proposed for EO.

Reducing the Number of Trustees:

At the end of 2006 the Charities Commission wrote to EO as follows: "We recommend a maximum of 5-7 persons is usually sufficient for the efficient administration of a charity. We have found with other charities that a larger body of trustees usually militates against efficient administration because it is seldom if ever possible to arrange a meeting of them all and in practice it is only a few comprising the required quorum who regularly attend meetings."

Updating EO's Rules:

Following the 2007 AGM EO trustees set up a series of discussions with an experienced charity lawyer to discuss how EO could best reduce the number of Trustees as recommended by the Charities Commission. Once the lawyer had seen the existing rules of EO which had been largely drawn up in 1985 he advised that it made far more sense to revise and update the entire document to bring it in line with current legislation. The old rules are only able to refer to laws that were in existence many years ago, which are now very hard to locate and check from a historical point of view.

In addition, very many legal references to company law in the old rules have been superseded by later company law. This makes it very difficult to interpret the legal standing of different elements of the old rules since in some cases the charity's rules take precedence and in other cases the newer company law could be enforced in court, despite what the charity's rules might say to the contrary.

Giving Voting Rights to More Members:

These two elements make it very confusing for EO to have an outdated set of rules. A majority of Trustees also increasingly began to ask why only a fraction of EO's members were ever allowed to vote on the running of the organisation and we learned that this was yet

another thing that would have to be changed by an amendment to our written rules and a vote at a General Meeting.

Accordingly Trustees decided to work with the lawyer throughout 2007 to revise the rules for EO so that they would contain elements we wanted such as giving the vote to far more members and also so that the rules would benefit from reference to the most up to date laws concerning charities and companies. This was quite a long and complicated process since the 2006 Companies Act was such a huge new law and is still being implemented in stages, which meant that a layperson could read "the law" but still not be aware that some sections have not yet come into force. From the opposite point of view, a layperson might read "the law" and conclude that EO is "allowed" to do any number of new things because the law says so, but we wouldn't in fact be allowed to do them until we had updated the rules (our M&A) to give ourselves permission.

Two Drafts, Two Votes, February 2008 and January 2009:

After a great deal of work a revised and updated set of rules for EO was presented to the membership for a vote in February 2008 but failed to gain the necessary 75% majority. An EO Working Group spent some time debating some of the issues raised by the proposed changes. The Chair of the Working Group asked in the June newsletter for suggestions and stated that the consultation period would elapse at the end of the month. Trustees continued to work on revisions to the February draft and had further detailed consultations with EO's legal advisor. The result of all these deliberations was a second complete draft that was presented to the membership for a new vote last month. This vote again failed to gain the necessary 75% majority.

Disclaimer:

This article has been written after the meeting on January 6th and very close to the print deadline for the newsletter in order to give advance information to members before the April newsletter. It is not possible at this stage

to be absolutely precise about the wording of the amendments because trustees will need to take legal advice before framing any resolutions. **We have written elsewhere about the newsletter deadlines.**

Separating the Changes Into Separate Sections:

The Trustees of EO now feel that while it may be much more logical in the long run to revise the entire document at one fell swoop, it is not possible to do it within EO at this time because it requires relatively few members to take on board an enormous number of complex issues and this is an unfair burden on just a small percentage of members. We have therefore decided to separate the changes into smaller sections so that members are not having to vote against everything if they feel overwhelmed or if they just disagree with a single element of the proposed changes.

Changing the Voting System First and Introducing Electronic Communication:

We believe that the most important immediate change for EO is to change the rules of the voting system so that more people are entitled to a vote. In conjunction with this, we also need to change the rules about how EO is allowed to communicate with members, mainly in order to allow us to use email for business news, because we don't want every newsletter to be dominated by EO business and we don't want to use EO's money posting letters to 4,000+ members every time there is a business announcement or a new vote.

There are legal safeguards to "electronic communication." By law, any company wanting to use email for business has to ask all members for their consent to receive emails. EO Members who don't want to use email will always be entitled to paper copies of any information which will be posted to their home address at no extra charge. In addition EO will continue to publish significant information in the newsletter.

Finding Out More About Trustees:

There is another important change which EO trustees would like to make to the present

rules. EO has grown enormously in the past 25 years and most members could now spend their entire time as an EO member without ever meeting anyone who volunteers for EO and without knowing the first thing about any of the Trustees.

The rules which grew up in the 1980s and 1990s fitted the old EO because they asked for members not personally known to existing Trustees to put themselves forward as Trustees (or "council members") up to 4 days before the election at an Annual General Meeting. The old rules have a two tier system whereby existing Trustees or candidates known to the Trustees have always been permitted to operate under a different rule ie being "recommended by Council". In the past this only became evident to members after the fact during the AGM itself.

Part of EO's work changing the rules since early 2007 has been to work with our legal advisor to try and devise a more transparent and accountable system. What we originally came up with for the February 2008 vote was that members wishing to stand had to tell EO several months ahead of the AGM to give us time to publish the information in the newsletter. We had some feedback after the February vote which suggested that some members familiar with the old system felt that the change to a long notice period with different timescales could be seen as inconvenient, confusing or undemocratic. Trustees adjusted the notice period in time for the January 2009 draft M&A, still allowing time for publication of Trustees' details in the newsletter before the AGM, but the new rules didn't gain the required 75% majority in favour.

We will therefore be obliged to follow the old 1985 rules for the forthcoming AGM in Birmingham on February 21st (see ad elsewhere in the newsletter) which means we are not able to tell you in this newsletter who might decide at the last minute to stand for election. We very much regret that we can't make it possible for you to vote in a more open and transparent way. The law forces us to use the old system to elect trustees due to the rules contained in the

old M&As, but this doesn't work well with proxy voting as it doesn't give us enough time to notify the members who is standing as a trustee and for you to have enough time to place your vote. Under the proposed new M&As members would have been advised of who the prospective trustees were 3-4 weeks before the agm which would have allowed ample time for you to use your proxy vote to make a choice. However these didn't obtain the necessary 75% majority and so can't be used at present so we have to follow the old system of electing trustees at the AGM who have been appointed by a tiny minority of members - as we appreciate most members aren't able to attend the AGM and make a choice in person. The short notice period for members to decide to stand as a trustee - ie 4 days before the AGM makes it impossible for proxy votes to be used fairly.

Information to Help You Vote:

The current Trustees who would in the past have just been "recommended by council" have chosen instead to impose an extra requirement on themselves by publishing introductions in the December 2008 newsletter and also in this current newsletter so that members can find out a little about the people who wish to serve as trustees. We also asked in the October newsletter for members wishing to stand as Trustee to send introductions to the newsletter co-ordinator. Sadly we only received one article, but this may be because it is such a new system. If you don't think it's likely that you will be able to get to the AGM, please fill in the proxy form with your name and address and post it back to the EO Po Box address. The Chair of the Meeting will automatically be able to cast a vote on your behalf. **In order to be valid the form must be signed and you also need to return the signed SUM form to be eligible to vote. Both forms are in this NL.**

The Aims and Objects of EO Working to Protect Home Education Freedoms:

There is another important change which Trustees have been recommended to make and this concerns the aims and objects of the charitable company. A charitable company's actions and funded activities are limited by its

aims and objects. Legally its officers can only act in pursuit of the charity's stated aims. We want to add to the aims and objects for EO. New charity laws and regulations now permit EO to scrutinise and challenge laws which may threaten home education freedoms. Until the old rules are changed we are legally restricted to the aims set out in the 1985 constitution.

We believe members have come to expect EO to be a more proactive organisation which will tackle local and national government where home educators are being oppressed or where we believe new laws and regulations will have unforeseen harsh impact on home educating families.

We hope you will bear with us and we are sorry if we have swung from too little information to far too much.

Become a Full Voting Member of Education Otherwise

Two Classes of Members in EO:

Did you know that there are two classes of membership in EO? There are ordinary members and there are full Voting Members or Signed-Up Members. Only Full Voting Members have a definitive influence in the running of the organisation because only Full Voting Members can cast a vote at General Meetings. Read more about General Meetings elsewhere in the newsletter. If you can't get to a meeting in person you can still vote.

You may have been members for two months or twenty years but unless you have filled in the form to become a Full Voting Member you will have had no say in the decision-making or running of EO. Only a few of our members are currently benefiting from the right to vote. Two adults from each membership can currently be Full Voting Members.

There is more background information on the implications of becoming a Full Voting Member elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter.

Full Voting Members have to be over 18. EO would like many more people to take advantage of the system. Please fill in a Voting Member Form (also known as a Signed Up Member Form) today and return it to Education Otherwise AGM, PO Box 325, St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW.

We have included two Signed up Member Forms in this newsletter and we look forward to receiving them as soon as possible.

Voting Members Don't Have to Attend Meetings in Person in Order to Cast a Vote:

You can vote by attending a voting meeting in person or by filling in a proxy form for someone to vote on your behalf. Read more about the proxy voting system elsewhere in the newsletter. We hope many members will come to our Annual General Meeting in Birmingham on February 21st in Birmingham (details elsewhere in the newsletter) Proxy voting forms will be sent to all Full Voting Members every time EO has a General Meeting.

Read more elsewhere in the newsletter about the proposed General Meeting in April.

How the Election Will Work At the Annual General Meeting:

We wanted to explain the system in advance because it is quite complicated and doesn't immediately sound very fair or sensible. It is probably fair to say that we are making the best of a bad job.

The procedure for the AGM will be a combination of EO's internal rules, the printer's deadline for the EO newsletter plus new legislation on companies regarding proxy voting.

If the vote at the earlier General Meeting in January had been carried we would have a more logical streamlined system where EO's rules would be integrated with new legislation. We were also hoping to introduce a vote for each membership, but sadly this did not receive sufficient support from the members.

Nominations for Trustees may be received by

EO up to 4 days before the AGM. Proxy vote forms may be received by EO up to 48 hours before the meeting, excluding weekends and bank holidays. The first deadline is set by EO's own rules which currently remain unchanged. The second deadline is set by the Companies Act 2006. By law EO has to abide by both deadlines in accepting valid nominations and proxy forms. In addition EO stipulates that Signed Up Member Forms must be received no later than 4 days before the meeting.

In practical terms this means that EO Trustees will only know on Monday February 16th who is finally standing for election as Trustee. On the same Monday EO will also have a final list of Signed Up Members. A complete set of candidates will be prepared and sent through the post to all Signed Up Members by Tuesday. It should reach all Signed Up Members by Wednesday 18th or Thursday 19th February.

Meanwhile the Signed Up Members will have had to post their proxy forms to arrive at EO's PO Box by Wednesday 18th February ie Signed Up Members will be nominating proxies on Monday 16th February or Tuesday 17th at the very latest. Signed Up Members will receive a final list of candidates AFTER they have sent a form naming their proxy.

We wanted to make it clear that EO will NOT be able to send numbered ballot papers through the post to Signed Up Members since these papers might not be received until Thursday or Friday ie the day before the meeting. There would be no time for Signed Up Members to post a numbered ballot form on to the proxy.

Due to the time constraints imposed by the combination of the old EO rules and the new government legislation, EO will default to an "open proxy" system where the proxy votes as he or she thinks fit. You will see from the proxy forms that you can nominate a first and second proxy or you can assign your proxy vote to the chair of the meeting. The named proxy must be someone who is eligible to vote. For example all Trustees are Signed Up Members and are eligible to vote. You can nominate any of the

Trustees whose introductions are reproduced elsewhere in the newsletter. You don't need to put their home address on the proxy form, simply put their name and c/o PO Box 325 Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW. If neither of your proxies turns up at the meeting your proxy vote will revert to the chair of the meeting unless you specify otherwise. The chair of the meeting will be appointed by the trustees.

At the AGM itself the Signed Up Members who come to the business part of the Meeting will be checked against the register of SUMs and their proxies will be assigned. Members wishing to vote should aim to arrive promptly at 11am since we have a busy programme of events for the day. We have asked members to confirm attendance in advance where possible but this is entirely voluntary, so the registration may take a little time. It is also possible that some SUMs may have nominated a proxy but then find they are able to come to the meeting in person. This will also have to be checked. All voting papers will be retained in secure storage facilities for a limited period after the meeting.

If you want to vote at the upcoming AGM on February 21st you need to sign and return the Signed Up Members Form which must be received by EO no later than Monday February 16th. If you aren't able to come to the meeting in person and want to vote, you need to sign and return the Signed Up Members Form (see above) and also sign and return a proxy form which must be received by EO no later than Wednesday February 18th.

The Future:

Trustees expect to put a Resolution to the vote later in the year to amend the deadline for nominations of Trustees in order to give members more notice. This would also allow time for the preparation of numbered ballot papers that could be posted in advance. We believe this will lead to a more democratic voting system which will be far simpler for everyone to understand and much quicker and easier for the majority of EO members to take part.

The Outcome of the General Meeting on January 6th:

On January 6th there was a General Meeting to vote on proposals for a new Governing Document for EO. Only 120 people voted on an issue of great importance to the future of the charity. The vote was evenly divided with 60 members voting in favour of the change and 60 members voting against.

The governing document of any charitable company is a long and complicated. The rules follow a standard form and are not written in plain English. The current rules were largely drafted in 1985. During the past year trustees have twice attempted to introduce a revised version of the entire M&A.

We know that some members were opposed to proposals in the new governing document and felt that this left them with no choice but to vote against the whole proposal. Other members have told us that they were puzzled about the reasons behind the changes. However there seems to be a general feeling in favour of extending voting rights to all members and to end the two tier system of membership. We know from talking to members that many do not realise they cannot have a vote when they pay to join EO.

General Meeting at the End of April:

Trustees have therefore decided to give first priority to changing the voting system. We hope to have a General Meeting to vote on this at the end of April in London. We are flagging this up in advance of the notification that will go out with the April newsletter. In conjunction with a change to the voting system trustees would like to have a separate vote at the same General Meeting on allowing the charity to use email as a means of communication between EO and members. This would make communication much quicker and more efficient and would also save EO a considerable sum of money. Strange as it may seem, we need to amend our governing document at a General Meeting to permit "electronic communication" before we are allowed to make these changes.

Electronic Communication:

We are aware that many members do not have internet access or prefer not to communicate with us via email but others would like us to take advantage of the new opportunities afforded by the internet. We would like all members to have the choice about how we communicate and once any change is voted, EO will be legally obliged to ask all members for their consent to start using email. Members who do not have internet access or prefer not to use email can opt to continue to receive information by post.

Ironically, neither the change to allow email and electronic communication nor the change to allow one membership one vote can happen unless members vote them in using the existing system.

Two SUM forms are included with this newsletter. We are asking up to two adult members from each family to sign these forms and return them to EO. We cannot assign voting rights automatically, the forms must be signed and returned to us. You can read more elsewhere in the newsletter about Signed up Members, General Meetings and proxy voting.

How EO Communicates With Its Members:

EO communicates with members via the newsletter, via the internet and via face to face meetings. EO Local Contacts also have their own communication networks via local lists and support groups. There is an EO telephone helpline and email enquiries system. In addition there are volunteers who can give information and signpost to further sources of help and support in particular areas such as special needs, exams, bullying and so on. Contact details are listed in the back of each newsletter.

EO is trying to work out the best way to communicate with all its members and for all the members to have a way to communicate with EO. On the one hand, the newsletter is sent to all members but we don't know how widely it is read. The internet resources are used by a minority of members. Although the main EO website and the EO campaign website have thousands of visitors a month we obviously don't

know how many of these visitors are members of EO. We can say with complete confidence that only a very small proportion of members has ever been to an EO meeting.

It can be quite easy for members who have the opportunity to be active on the internet or who are not daunted by the prospect of turning up to a meeting to believe that these options are open to everyone, but the EO trustees are aware that EO has a very diverse membership with many differing needs and there is simply no way to know at present whether most members find the present system either satisfactory or democratic.

We don't know whether most of our members receive information from us which is relevant to their own situation. We are actively working to change this so that all members can receive as much or as little information as they choose from EO. We feel that the answer has to be the internet, specifically email and more generally what is called "electronic communication." We are currently taking legal advice on this and hope to have a further announcement in the April newsletter about how we will be able to make greater use of email and electronic communication.

The newsletter

EO posts out a newsletter to members every two months. At present, the newsletter is the only means of communication that we can be relatively certain is received by all members. Members can also send letters for publication in the newsletter. One drawback to the newsletter in terms of communication is the built-in delay. The deadline for submitting articles is the 1st of the month preceding publication in order to give the volunteer editor time to put the newsletter together. The printers' deadline is the middle of the month preceding publication. If something comes up after the deadline it has to wait until the next newsletter. For example, something significant might take place in early November but members would not hear about it until February 1st. Something could happen in mid/late January but members will not be able to read about it in the newsletter until April 1st.

at the earliest.

Websites

As far as the internet goes, EO runs two websites. The EO main website was completely revised and relaunched in October 2008 and now includes a contact form for getting in touch with volunteers in EO. The EO campaign website Freedom for Children to Grow opened in February 2007. There is a facility to sign up for email notification of updates to the campaign website. Website addresses are given in the references at the end of this article.

Internet Support lists

EO has a member's only internet forum for discussion and support with many different areas on the forum. EO also runs a general yahoo support list which is open to members and non-members. In addition EO has a special support list for single parents which again is open to members and non-members. Details of these lists can be found at the end of this article.

Face to Face Meetings

In terms of face to face meetings, every year in February EO holds an Annual General Meeting to which all members are invited. Trustee Meetings (previously known as "council meetings") are also regularly advertised in the newsletter. There is an article elsewhere in the newsletter about the difference between General Meetings and Trustee meetings. There is also a further reminder of the 2009 AGM to be held in Birmingham on Saturday February 21st.

Regional Workshops

Other ways that EO can communicate face to face with members is by running regional workshops. These workshops could be open to all home educators or run exclusively for EO members or free to EO members but with a charge made for non-members. For example EO Government Policy Group ran a programme of workshops in 2007 centred on the government's proposed changes to the monitoring of home education. A further workshop was held in Durham last Autumn. If time and finances

permit, EO Government Policy Group might want to run another series of regional workshops throughout 2009.

However, there is an issue of funding because every EO home education workshop has been open to members and non members and EO has absorbed all the costs for venue hire, refreshments, travel expenses for volunteer speakers and so on.

We would like to hear more members views about this type of issue. Members can write to the letters page of the newsletter, post in our members' forum or use the contact form on the new EO website.

Links:

1. Newsletter:
E-mail: nlco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org
Post: Newsletter Co-ordinator C/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW
2. Trustees:
Education Otherwise Trustees C/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW
3. Education Otherwise website:
<http://www.education-otherwise.org/>
Contact Form: <http://www.education-otherwise.org/contact.php>
4. Education Otherwise Online Member's Area:
<http://www.education-otherwise.org/members.htm>
5. Freedom for Children to Grow (EO Campaign site):
<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org>
<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/update.php>
<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/subscribe.php>
6. EO Yahoo Group:
Subscribe: eo-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Post message: eo@yahoogroups.com
7. Single Parent List:
Subscribe: EO-SingleParent-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Post message: EO-SingleParent@yahoogroups.com

Proxy Voting System:

Until the mid 1990s EO allowed proxy voting but for the past 10 years members of EO have had to go to meetings to cast a vote. Since February 2008 EO has re-introduced a system of proxy voting for General Meetings. In essence this means that members who are unable or unwilling to travel to meetings can still cast a vote by nominating someone at the meeting to act as a proxy and cast a vote on their behalf. The nominated person can be someone known personally to you or it can be the Chair of the meeting.

The appointment of a proxy must be done using the form provided by EO which will be relevant to a specific General Meeting. A separate proxy form is required for each General Meeting. On the form you should give your name and address plus the name and address of the person you are nominating as your proxy. If you don't give a proxy's name, the proxy will default to the Chair of the meeting. The proxy form is only valid if it is signed by the member who wants to appoint the proxy. (It need not be signed by the person you have appointed). If your proxy does not go on to attend the meeting, the proxy passes to the Chair of the meeting.

There are two types of proxy, open proxy and closed proxy. An open proxy means that the designated person votes as he or she thinks fit. A closed proxy means that if there is a vote for or against a particular resolution, then you can put an X in the box to indicate your preference. In order for a proxy vote to be valid at EO meetings, both the member appointing a proxy and the designated person must be Full Voting Members or Signed Up Members (SUMs). The system of Full Voting Members is explained elsewhere in the newsletter.

EO Meetings: The Difference Between Trustee/Council Meetings and General Meetings:

There are two basic types of meeting in EO and this has been the case since EO became a Limited Company in 1985. The first type of meeting is Trustee Meetings (which used to be called "Council Meetings") When people talk

about "having a say at meetings" or "having a vote in EO" this will mean different things at different types of meeting. At a Trustee Meeting "the will of the meeting" has no meaning in law and no legal force whereas a legally constituted vote at a General Meeting is binding on the directors/trustees of EO. There is more information elsewhere in the newsletter about "directors", "council members" and "trustees."

The second type of meeting is a General Meeting that could either be an Annual General Meeting or what has historically been called an Extraordinary General Meeting. The rules for General Meetings in EO are quite different and are governed by UK legislation regarding companies. There are rules for Annual General Meetings and rules for other types of General Meeting. "Having a say" at a General Meeting is much more significant in terms of what is legally binding on the company directors of EO.

In law, notification of the purpose of a General Meeting has to be sent in advance to all members who are entitled to vote at the meeting. There is more information about Full Voting Members elsewhere in the newsletter and we have also included two SUM forms which can be posted back to the EO Po Box address. Anyone who is a Voting Member can cast a vote on a resolution at a General Meeting either by attending the meeting in person or by appointing a proxy. There is more information about proxy voting elsewhere in the newsletter and we have also included proxy forms with the newsletter.

Depending on the type of resolution, company law will specify whether a vote is carried by a straight majority (ie more votes FOR than AGAINST) or whether a 75% majority is required (ie 3 votes FOR to 1 vote AGAINST)

Most EO members have never been to an EO meeting, but if they have been to a meeting it will probably have been a Council Meeting or Trustee Meeting, not a General Meeting since the "council meetings" have been every few months or every quarter while the AGM only takes place once a year.

Historically, General Meetings and "council meetings" have tended to be part of a "Gathering" at a Youth Hostel but this is something that has been changing in EO. In February 2008 EO held an AGM in a large church hall in central London. Later this month the 2009 AGM will be held in a Community Centre just off the motorway outside Birmingham. There is more information about the 2009 AGM elsewhere in the newsletter. Venues for EO meetings are now chosen with a view to accessibility by public and private transport and meet the legal requirements under disability discrimination legislation.

Directors/Trustees/Council Members:

Q What is a director and is this the same as a Trustee or a Council Member?

A: Education Otherwise has been a charitable company since 1985. Because we are both a charity and a company the terms "Trustee" and "Director" are to an extent used interchangeably depending on context. Historically Education Otherwise called its board of Directors "the Council" and the Directors or Trustees were called "Council Members." The Governing Document of a charitable company refers to "the Directors" since this terminology is found in company law to which charitable companies are subject. In the day to day business of the charity, Education Otherwise opts to refer to the Directors as "Trustees" to highlight the additional responsibilities and liabilities of the Trustee of a Charity over and above the responsibilities of a Company Director. The responsibilities of Charity Trustees are regulated by law.

Q How does someone become a Trustee/Director/Council Member of Education Otherwise?

A: There are two ways in which members of Education Otherwise become Trustees. The first way is by election at an Annual General Meeting. The next AGM for Education Otherwise is on February 21st. There are more details about the AGM elsewhere in the

newsletter. The second way is by co-option, ie they are co-opted or appointed by the other Trustees to fill a vacancy.

If the required number of Trustees is set too high there will be frequent vacancies between elections either because insufficient Trustees have been elected at a General Meeting or because Trustees will stand down during the year. This is one of the reasons why the Charities Commission recommends setting the number of Trustees at a level which can reasonably be sustained via the accountability of annual elections. The Charities Commission has specifically recommended to EO that we reduce our trustees to between 5 and 7 (the number of trustees required by EO's current rules is 14-19).

Members wishing to be Trustees need to be Full Voting Members and must comply with the additional rules set out in EO's 1985 Memorandum and Articles of Association which can be found on the Members Area of the Education Otherwise Forum.
viewtopic.php?f=59&t=737

Details about the Full Voting Member system and the necessary paperwork have been included with this newsletter. A copy of the 1985 M&A can also be obtained by writing to Education Otherwise c/o PO Box 325 Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Unsolicited Email: a message from Education Otherwise

Education Otherwise would like to apologise to all members for any unsolicited emails they may have received recently. We have had a number of complaints and it is something we take very seriously. Members' addresses are their own personal property and making use of members' personal property can never be condoned or authorised in any way by Education Otherwise. As an EO member you should only ever expect to get emails within EO about socialising or social meetings. We know that members value the

Contact List system which means that the system needs to be safeguarded. EO Members who abuse the contact list by harvesting addresses to send bulk mail have their membership of EO terminated.

Sadly this is not the first time this has occurred. EO has spoken again with the police and the Information Commissioner. The police tell us that if two or more emails are received, then this could be construed in law as harassment. In addition, if our list of members has been misused on repeat occasions by the same individual then the Information Commissioner is able to play a more active role. We are advised by the police that members who receive unsolicited mail to their private address can keep copies of the emails and pass them on to the police. It is relatively easy to trace where the emails came from. Please get in touch with Education Otherwise if you would like any help in pursuing a complaint.

Statement From EO Trustees 8/1/09 Posted in Member's Forum

At the EGM on 6th January the vote was taken to approve the revised M&As as presented to SUMs of Education Otherwise (as those eligible to vote under the existing M&As).

The vote and subsequent count was carried out according to the expressed wishes of the meeting. The result of the vote was 60 for and 60 against. Education Otherwise will continue therefore to operate under the existing M&As.

The trustees remain committed to updating the governing rules of the organisation and bringing them in line with current legislation as well as best practice in both business and charity operations.

The trustees are aware that there are members who have specific concerns and questions over individual amendments proposed to the rules and as such the trustees are now considering the best way forward for bringing each required

change to the attention and vote of members.

The trustees also acknowledge that issues have been raised in connection with the timing and release of information during the process of bringing the revised M&As to the vote at the EGM and this feedback will help to formulate the timescale and method of any future proposal that the trustees place before the membership.

At the EGM the Chair of the meeting read out an email communication received from the Charities Commission that had been received the previous afternoon. The email response followed a number of complaints that had been received by EO and, apparently, by the Commission, with regards to the process leading up to the EGM. It was also in direct response to questions raised by the trustees with regards to the conduct of certain members and non-members in connection with the process. We have received permission from the Commission to share the full text of the reply with EO members, and have printed this below.

The trustees are committed to the positive future of EO, and to making the necessary changes to the rules and running of the organisation. We welcome the response from the Charity Commission that confirms that we are operating within our M&A's and Charity Law. Their response also contained useful advice which the trustees will be acting upon.

Letter Received From The Charities Commission

"I must advise that, whilst we understand the situation, there is no role for the Charity Commission here.

We simply have no jurisdiction with regard to material on websites, the use of register of members addresses and action that the trustees feel to be damaging to the charity, and could only suggest that the trustees seek legal advice with regard to any action they may wish to take, and perhaps also contact the Office of the

Information Commissioner for general advice with regard to the use of information.

I can generally advise that we have recently received complaints from members of the public on numerous subjects in relation to the charity, but have advised that there is no role for the Commission on the basis of evidence thus far due to the fact that the issues appear to be in relation to internal administration - which entirely falls under the discretion of the trustees. We have also noted that the trustees do not have appear to have breached provisions within the Memorandum and Articles of Association, or within Charity Law, in any way. Therefore there is no role for us.

Understanding that there is soon to be a meeting with members (and the Charity Commission can have no involvement with this, since it relates to internal administration and we have no jurisdiction here), as good practice we would suggest that the trustees read our 'Charities and Meetings' booklet (available on the publications page on our website). We would also note that (a) members have the right to accept, or decline, proposals, in accordance with provisions in the governing document, and, (b) the trustees are the persons responsible for the overall management and administration of the charity."

Message from Annette Taberner reproduced from the Members Forum

I guess I must spend about 5 hours on EO work on a light day and 12 or more hours in a day regularly each month. Not complaining, just wondering if when trustees don't burden members with this information this means they are unaware of the position.

Trustees have begun discussions. We can always do things better and despite urban myth none of us has ever claimed to be perfect as far as I am aware. In my experience, and contrary to much on the internet lists, current trustees are a committed and reflective lot with amazingly varied viewpoints and a wide range of experience

to draw on. I think you could put any two of us in a room and find that we strongly agree on lots and also that we strongly differ in our views, beliefs and opinions. I find words used on some of the home education support lists to describe us, like "fascist", very distasteful and ill founded.

I think more continuity in the trustees would have helped the process but we can't force people to stay and frankly I can understand that people are not thrilled by just how much fun it would be to become a trustee.

It would be great to have 24 hours a day to volunteer for EO and plenty of time to answer all the individual enquiries of all our members individually no matter what hour of the day or night they think of a question.

I have watched over the years as people devoted more and more hours to EO, often at considerable cost to their personal life and then finally burnt out.

Like other people trustees have other responsibilities in addition to their volunteer role. I think this is good actually - we are members of the home education community as well as trustees, many of us are also currently home educating children which I think is great.

Competing demands for time mean that we have to prioritise our workload and inevitably demand for time always exceeds hours available - that is the voluntary sector - 24/7 and around the whole of the year.

Answering every individual person one to one is not an efficient use of time, though we have often engaged on this basis. Common concerns and questions crop up and we tried to address these with Q and As. www.education-otherwise.org/Legal/FAQMAs.htm and www.education-otherwise.org/Legal/171208.htm

Some people continue to ask questions. We inform them that trustees are acting on advice from a lawyer who works in this field and that it is this advice which leads to a particular course of action, or that advice and guidance from the

Charities Commission is guiding our work, or that laws about data protection or changes to Charities and Companies law are directing our actions but we are sometimes disbelieved. Some people also seem to think we are doing all this but don't need to. Not sure what they think our motivation is as it is clearly not for fun.

I appreciate that the M and A's are a mind numbing document and that you really have to read about companies law and charity law to fully understand them. It takes hours of time to think them through fully.

I know from mailing and talking with people that different people voted no and yes for different reasons. I have friends who voted yes and friends who voted no. Some who voted no had a principled opposition to a particular proposal (not always the same one), I respect their view and I am pleased that they used the democratic system to tell trustees that they could not support the change. That is the whole point of the exercise. It could never be the case that trustees should only ever consult members in this way when they are assured of a vote in favour.

The trustees had a duty to put the M and As to the members - or rather that tiny proportion of our membership who are "Signed Up Members" as membership does not entitle members to a vote - and "Signed Up Members" had an opportunity to vote for or against to inform the work of the charity.

Incidentally for anyone who made it this far and was affected I should like to apologise to those members who have had their private e-mail addresses used by some of those opposing the changes. As a trustee I shall be making enquiries about what can be done following complaints for a second time.

As the vote was split exactly 50:50 it could be said that half of the people who voted were happy to vote on the basis of the information available. It would also be true to say that the overwhelming majority of our members are not

SUMs and did not take part in the vote. It would be wrong to claim any insight into the motivation of the "silent majority" of our members.

Would You like to Be a Voting Member of EO?

Currently people who join EO do not get an automatic vote. They have to complete a special form called a "Signed Up Members form" or SUM. EO has about 4 000 members but only a few hundred who can vote. We have been sending SUM forms with each newsletter but lots of people tell us they have failed to notice or understand what they need to do.

Trustees want to remove this extra barrier to participation in EO decision making. Sadly we can't do this without more members becoming Signed Up Members and voting in sufficient numbers to allow us to change the present rules.

Would you like to be able vote? See elsewhere in the newsletter for upcoming votes in EO.

Until recently you had to attend meetings to vote, but trustees are pleased that changes to the law mean it is now possible for Signed Up Members to cast a vote even if they can't get to a meeting. Now you can appoint a "proxy" to vote for you at a meeting. This could be someone you know who is attending or you can fill in a form to appoint an EO officer to act as your proxy. See elsewhere in the newsletter for an explanation of the proxy voting system.

Would you like to help make EO more democratic? Could you spare a few minutes to complete the form and post it to EO? Simply fill in your name and address and membership number if known. (We can add your membership number if you don't know it) I In order to be valid, the form must have your signature. Two adult members from each family can each sign a separate voting form.

Post the forms to: Education Otherwise AGM, PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

SIGNED-UP MEMBERS (EO Membership Declaration)

Unless this form is received by EO at the address below by 12 noon on Monday 16th, February 2009, any vote you place at the 2009 AGM will be invalid.

I (Print Name)
wish to become a Signed up Member of Education Otherwise Association Limited. In the event of the Association being wound up I agree to contribute up to £10 in payment of any debts and liabilities it may have incurred.

Signature of Member:

Date: EO Membership Number if known:

Address (print in full)

.....
This form may be completed by current members of Education Otherwise who have paid their annual subscription, and should be returned to: Education Otherwise c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn Norfolk PE34 3XW

Please note that Education Otherwise will post any correspondence related to Signed Up Members to the member's address as given on this SUM form unless specifically instructed otherwise by the EO member concerned. In any correspondence accompanying the SUM form please state if you require confirmation of receipt. By becoming a Signed Up Member you are entitled to a vote at Education Otherwise General Meetings either in person or by proxy.

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Trustees Standing for Election/Re-election at the February 2009 AGM

Please note that this may not be the final list of members standing for election in February as EO may receive last minute nominations up to Monday February 16th. Statements are spread over pages between SUM and Proxy Voting forms to enable the forms to be cut out individually and posted back to EO by the 16th or 18th February respectively as printed on the forms.

Statement by Leslie Barson



My name is Leslie Safran Barson. I am putting myself forward for election as a trustee. I have been a co-opted trustee since August 2007 helping the present trustees begin the transformation and modernisation of EO. My home education background is that I am a mother of two children who never went to school now aged 25 and 19, both wonderful and capable young people. I have been a member of EO for at least 20 years. I also founded and have run since 1993, The Otherwise Club, a community centre for home educating families. In August 2008 I graduated with a PhD about home education and how it affects parents.

I would like to be elected as a trustee in order to continue with the progress the trustees have made in the past 15 months with, for example, writing policies and procedures for all areas of EO's activities, complying with data protection and changes in company law and beginning to train our volunteers to name a few of the areas where change has begun. I feel strongly that EO is an important historical name for home education in England and Wales. The organisation needs to be clear about what it what it wants to do in what seems to be more and more difficult times ahead. EO is defining a clear focus for its future and now has a determined and visionary team of people at the helm as the present trustees have shown themselves to be. I am very excited about the changes that are happening and would like to continue with the work.

Statement by Nicola Haxell

Aka dottyspots and ninnynoodlenoo. I have been home-educating for nearly 6 years, having originally de-registered my eldest boys (now 14 and 12) in early 2003 due to severe bullying and concerns over SEN provision. I went on to have a further 2 children (aged 5 and 3). I currently home-ed the younger 3 as unfortunately my eldest's needs are such that he finds it very difficult to cope for long periods of time at home (as such he now attends a specialist residential school, which on the whole he is happier about than being at home, which he finds rather stressful). We use a Steiner/Waldorf-inspired approach with a bit of autonomous ed thrown in (I'm not going to look a gift horse in the mouth if we start going off on a tangent).

I used to work for the Youth Service, doing detached work (on the streets), in Youth Clubs and with some voluntary projects supporting young people classed as 'in danger of social exclusion' (a term I've never liked!) I now run two businesses from home, one selling wooden and handcrafted toys and the other as a Registered Childminder (although I'm currently taking a bit of a sabbatical to consider the EYFS).

In my near 6 years with EO, I have been a Local Contact; helped set up local groups in two different areas - one fairly infamous for being 'difficult' for home-educators, I'm still Local Contact there; have done a stint on the Enquiries Line and am now the Newsletter Co-ordinator and a co-opted Trustee.

I am standing for election because I passionately believe in supporting EO to move forward, continuing the excellent work done by groups such as the GPG and Disabilities group and everyone else actively working to protect the rights of home-educators, no matter what their educational philosophy.

Education Otherwise Association Limited

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

To be held on Saturday February 21st 2009 at 11am
At Shard End Community Centre and Sports Hall, 170 Packington
Avenue, Shard End, Birmingham, B34 7RD

Form of Proxy (For use by members not attending the AGM) Please complete in block capitals.

Name of Member: Memb No (if known):

Address:

I, being a Signed Up member of Education Otherwise Association Limited, hereby appoint the chair of the meeting or

(Name) of address:

or failing that:

(Name) of address: (see note 1) as

my proxy to vote for me and on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of Education Otherwise Association Limited to be held on 21 February 2009 and at every adjournment thereof. My proxy may exercise their discretion as to how they vote and whether or not they abstain from voting.

Signature: Date:

See the notes and instructions below before completing this form.

To be valid, this form of proxy must be received by the Company at Education Otherwise AGM, PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW by 5pm on Wednesday 17th February 2009. Note that Proxy Forms CANNOT be sent electronically.

Notes and Instructions

1. If you wish the chair of the meeting to act as your proxy, leave these lines blank, otherwise write the name of your proxy in block capitals. If your proxy is unable to attend the meeting, your proxy defaults to the chair unless you delete the words "the chair of the meeting or".
2. If you wish to proxy a named trustee, please put c/o the PO Box address shown above.
3. By completing and returning this form you are not prevented from attending the meeting in person if you later decide to do so. However, your attendance revokes the appointment of proxy.
4. Both you and the appointed proxy must have returned a completed SUM (Signed Up Member) Form to the Company by noon on Monday 16th February 2009.

Education Otherwise Association Limited

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 01917107 Charity Reg. No. 1055120

Registered Office Address ONLY (not for correspondence):

41 St Mary's Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 4HF



Statement by Fiona Nicholson

Why I will be standing for election as Trustee in February

I will be standing for election as Trustee in February because I think that I can make a valid contribution and I have some useful experience. I am 47 years old. I have a 15 year old son Theo who has never been to school. I live in Sheffield and have been EO local contact in Sheffield since 2005 (now a jobshare)

I have been a member of EO on and off since 1998 but had no idea how the organisation was run until I volunteered for the Government Policy Group in 2006 and then went to my first Council Meeting in Okehampton in February 2007. For most of the past year I have been a co-opted Trustee. I didn't stand for election last year because I promised my son Theo that I would not take on any extra work, though I later agreed to be co-opted. I hope Theo will forgive me for standing in February.

As someone who used to have to scabble for loose change to pay her subs, I believe that EO membership should offer value for money with discounts and additional resources for members. I also believe that all home educators have benefited from EO having a "fighting fund" to stave off threats to our freedoms and protect our rights. Volunteers have been able to travel to meetings and attend important conferences. In the coming year I want EO to organise more regional workshops where we can all meet up and find out what is happening with home education and with EO.



Statement by Ann Newstead

I'm Ann Newstead, and I have four boys aged between 19 months and 13 years. My eldest two boys were taken out of school three and a half years ago after one of them experienced severe bullying. My middle two lads are both on the autistic spectrum. Between the four of them therefore they give me an understanding of quite a lot of issues that face home educators.

I have enjoyed being a local contact for EO for almost three years, and as well as being a regional media contact I am also privileged to be the spokesperson for the charity. This gives me regular opportunities to talk about home education and to get the message out through a range of local and national media. I also serve on the Government Policy Group and have been fortunate enough to join the team that has met with DCSF and (most recently) central Government to campaign on the issues of policy that affect home educators. I maintain both the national EO website and the campaign site Freedom for Children to Grow.

I believe that both our family experiences, my previous work experience (including serving on national business committees as well as other charities) and the opportunities I have had in these various volunteer roles mean that I have something to offer the organisation as a trustee and it is for that reason that I am seeking election.



Statement by Alexander Roarke:

Alexander Roarke, known by everyone simply as Roarke (long story!). I have been a home-educating Dad for a just over 3 years. Living on the Kent/London borders with Ann, my wife of 15 years and my 4 sons, the whole family live a fairly autonomous life.

We chose to educate our children at home after DS2 and DS3 were diagnosed with Aspergers. It seemed to us that the school system found this diagnosis a problem and we didn't. Not surprising really as I scored higher on the test than they did! *(continued on page 52).*

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(Alexander Roarke Followed on from page 50) I am a Life Coach, Motivational Speaker working with both companies and corporate organisations and a course facilitator at 2 local colleges helping SEN children to read and use computers. Ann is the National Media Spokesperson for EO, a member of GPG and in her spare time, local contact for N. Kent.

I was co-opted onto the council after last year's AGM and have thoroughly enjoyed my last 6 months as a trustee. I believe that I have been able to bring a necessary skillset to the council and am pleased that I have been able to develop new skills in return.

I am standing for election this year as I would like to be able to continue serving the organisation that I think is vital to the longterm wellbeing of Elective Home Education; an organisation that is an invaluable resource centre for the home ed community at large; and an organisation that is fun to be a part of.

I am currently the Executive Chair of the trustees. The tenure of this role lasts until the AGM. After this, if I am re-elected and the other trustees wish me to continue, I will gladly retain this post. It is my belief that 2008/2009 are going to be pivotal development years for EO, I have been proud to serve thus far and hope that you will allow me to continue.



Statement by Annette Taberner

I am forwarding my name for consideration for the post of Education Otherwise trustee.

Biographical outline

I began my working life as a teacher and taught in primary and secondary settings. In addition I have worked in the civil service. Since my twenties I have always worked in the voluntary or third sector, throughout this time in a voluntary capacity and later additionally as a paid worker.

I have experience of campaign and lobbying work, of working alongside welfare rights workers, examining and explaining legislation and using case studies to inform proactive intervention to challenge and improve the situation for people. I have worked at a national and international level around the issue of unemployment. I was a long term trustee and chair of our local citizen's advice bureau and an activist in many campaigns.

Our two children have never been to school, they are now 12 and 15 years of age. What began as a short term decision has become a way of life. As our home education journey has unfolded we have encountered the problems and advantages and accumulated more and more reasons for continuing along the path we began.

We have used a variety of approaches through our journey. In early months I tried to replicate school at home. It didn't work for us. People think a teaching qualification will help with home education - I had to unlearn much that I had been taught in teacher training.

We do not have a personal relationship with our local authority. I do, however, meet with our local authority on a regular basis as chair and co-founder of Sheffield Home Educators' Network.

Sheffield Home Educators' Network began as a small group of families and has grown to a thriving community with a variety of weekly activity sessions. I have experience of fundraising, organising activities, running stalls to publicise home education, liaising with parents and working with children and young people.

Within Education Otherwise

I have been an active member of the Education Otherwise Government Policy Group since

December 2006 .I helped organise and run workshops around England in 2007 and have contributed to many consultation exercises.

I have attended a number of meetings at which I have represented Education Otherwise and I have raised issues of concern with Government Departments and Ministers.

Since becoming a member of GPG I have been a regular attender at Open Council meetings and in October was co-opted as a trustee.

Why be a trustee?

Education Otherwise is in a process of transition. I am aware and supportive of the work being undertaken to make the charity compliant with our legal responsibilities. I believe I have experience and knowledge from working in the voluntary sector which EO can benefit from.



Statement by Vicki Skinner

My name is Vicki, I am a single parent with two sons aged 11 and 15. I began home educating in September 2005 because my youngest son was not coping at school and my eldest was being bullied. Because I have ME social services put my children on the at risk register and with the LEA they tried to force me to send my children back to school. It was a very difficult time and no one seemed to want to help me but then I phoned the EO helpline. They were amazing, they really supported me and gave me all the advice I needed to get social services and the LEA to leave us in peace. Without that support and advice I don't know what would have happened. I agreed to be co-opted onto the council of trustees at the 2008 AGM and would like to stand for election at the 2009 AGM.

Statement by Judi Wilson

My name is Judi Wilson and I live in NW London. My working life has been primarily in the voluntary sector, with charities supporting the homeless and those affected by drug/ alcohol use. I produced and edited a national newsletter for people affected by drugs and HIV/AIDS. From 1993 I worked in an holistic centre for people dealing with addictions, and in 1998 I qualified as an acupuncturist.

I have one child and have been home educating since 2004, shortly after finding out purely by accident that home education was a legal option, and after completing a year's training as a classroom assistant which gave me an invaluable insight into primary school education and the National Curriculum in action.

Over the years I have attended various HE groups across central and north-west London, and have also helped to organise regular groups, museum visits and activities for home educating families. I found EO a valuable source of information and support when I became a member, but it was attending an EO workshop on the government consultation on elective home education guidelines and the implications of the numerous children's databases which made me realise how crucial it was that we have an umbrella organisation to fight for our rights. There are so many small freedoms in our lives which we take for granted, but which would not exist without the dedication and energy of individuals who were prepared to set aside their differences, support each other and work together to establish those rights.

Gradually I became more involved in home education on a wider level. I was part of a small group which met with our local authority (although officially "unknown" to them) and liaised with them to improve their website and the information on elective home education presented to people in the borough. The material is now factually correct and much less intimidating.

I was co-opted as a volunteer trustee in September 2007. I am now standing for election because I believe that members should have the opportunity to select those they would like to represent their

views and take legal responsibility for the running of the organisation. I think one of the strengths of EO is that it has somehow managed to include people with many different educational approaches. Strong personalities, divergent political views and educational philosophies mean that there will always be argument, debate and dissent, but somehow despite this EO has continued to grow and develop. There are many people (some of them not even members) who are extremely grateful to EO for information, support and back-up provided in a time of need.

I believe that EO is now in a critical transition. EO has had a huge impact on government policy over the past couple of years as well as supporting home educators at local level and I am determined to do what I can to enable this work to continue. If I am elected as trustee I will do my best to ensure that we can drive this organisation forward and protect the rights of our members and home educators across the country.

Education Otherwise Designated Safeguarding Children Person

This article by Jim Clossick, Education Otherwise Designated Safeguarding Children Person first appeared in June 2008 Newsletter. Jim's Education Otherwise telephone number is 08445 86909

Introduction of DSCP to EO members
Greetings to everyone involved with Education Otherwise. I am your new, and your first, Designated Safeguarding Children Person. That is quite a job title and one I intend to take very seriously.

I am a social worker of nearly thirty years experience. I'd like to say that I started when I was 9, but alas I didn't train until I was in my late twenties, having foolishly decided to become an accountant when I was a mere youth. I turned out to be hopeless at that and I eventually realised that I was better at helping people than helping people make money.

Apart from a short initial period working with the elderly, I have spent my entire career working with children and families and the past twenty years working in child protection, nowadays known as 'safeguarding children'. I have worked both for local authorities and as a Children's Guardian. For the past ten years I have been a self-employed independent social worker, mainly undertaking risk and parenting assessments as an expert witness in care proceedings (legal proceedings in which local authorities are applying for care orders in respect of children). I also have experience of working with adult sex offenders, with children

and young people who have sexual behaviour problems and with families where domestic violence is or has been an issue.

I am not a home educator and until doing some reading when applying for this post knew very little about the subject. As a local authority social worker I can remember being involved in only one case where a child I was involved with was being educated at home.

According to the job description provided to me by EO my role is to "offer an external and entirely confidential service to Education Otherwise members who have safeguarding children worries and to act as a source of support, advice and expertise and refer any safeguarding children concerns to the relevant investigating authorities". Confidential in this context means that if information provided is to be shared with anyone it will only be with the responsible authorities and to the extent that is needed.

I would like to be absolutely clear that it is not my responsibility nor is it the responsibility of anyone at Education Otherwise to investigate allegations or suspicions of child abuse. That responsibility lies with local authorities and the police. Having said that, helping to safeguard children is every adult's responsibility. If you have genuine concerns that a child may be being neglected or abused in any way you should take some form of action. This can include speaking to the child's parents or carers about your concerns, if you feel able to do that. If you do not feel able to do that, you can refer your

concerns to the appropriate agency directly and, if you prefer, anonymously, or through the NSPCC (0808 800 5000). You can also call Childline (0800 1111) for advice. These numbers can also be found in the EO newsletter.

If you are not sure whether your concerns are serious enough to warrant referral to one of the statutory agencies you can call me to discuss and for advice and support. I will not necessarily be able to speak to you immediately, as I am not on 24 hour call, but serve as a retained part-time contractor. I will call you back as soon as possible. If you fear that delaying to speak to someone could be dangerous for the child concerned then you should immediately contact the local authority, the police or the NSPCC for advice and/or action.

When you call me I will ask you for your name and postcode, simply so that I can check with EO at a later stage that you are a member and therefore entitled to use the service I provide. This information will obviously identify you. You may share information with me that in my

opinion indicates that a child may have been neglected or abused or may be at risk. In those circumstances I will urge you to refer the matter to the authorities. If, for any reason, you do not wish to do that, even anonymously, and I cannot persuade you to do so, I reserve the right to make the referral myself. I will remind all callers of my right and responsibility to do that. It is therefore possible that you could then be contacted by one of the statutory agencies for further information and to help identify the child or family concerned.

The DSCP role is obviously a new one and as such we will all for some time be learning about its value, its scope and its limitations. I know that the vast majority of us have the happiness, welfare and safety of children as our paramount considerations. I am looking forward to contributing with you in the further development of Education Otherwise's commitment to children.

Jim Clossick

Volunteers Needed

Single Parent Family Contacts

Do you have experience of home educating as a single parent? Could you be available to provide information and/or support? Education Otherwise Government Policy Group provides additional legal backup information about welfare rights legislation and the EO Helpline also takes general calls and email enquiries and could refer individual queries to the Single Parent Contact. In addition the volunteer for this post could get queries from members who see the contact details in the Newsletter.

Volunteers are allocated an EO Flextel phone number and EO email address and personal details are not in the public domain. From the point of view of the volunteer if you have Caller

Display you also know when you are getting a "work call". This job can be shared.

Please contact Jo Berry by emailing enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org or tel. 08445 883539 for more information.

Teen Team Editors for Newsletter

Would you like to be one of a team of teenage editors to help create Teen Pages for the EO Newsletter?

There's been a lot of interest expressed by EO teens to have their own pages in the EO Newsletter, so we would really like to get this off the ground. If you think you might like to be part of this new idea for EO Newsletter, please

contact me with your name, address, telephone number, email address and age.

Contact Gail Borrows at: gborrows@education-otherwise.org, or PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, PE34 3XW

Looking for Volunteers for the Helpline

We are looking to recruit new volunteers for the Helpline. If you have ever thought about giving a few hours of your time to help others who are thinking about home educating then please do get in touch. As the option of home education becomes more widely known, more and more parents are turning to EO for information and support. Many get information from the website; but personal support is still in great demand.

We are currently making some changes to the helpline in line with best practice. EO is now an associate member of the Telephone Helpline Association. The THA will be providing Level 1

helpline training during a day in September or October in the Midlands which will be paid for by EO.

We ask that all our volunteers take this training unless they can show that they have training in something equivalent. Every Volunteer will have supervision and support and a place to offload after challenging phone calls. This is to ensure that all volunteers receive professional support in order to carry out this role and also to look after themselves.

We are intending to be more flexible about the hours per helpline shift, so if you only have one or two half-days a week, don't let this prevent you from volunteering. If you're interested and would like to find out more or have any questions then please contact:

Jo Berry, Tel: 08445 868821,
jberry@education-otherwise.org
Or Pauline Butterworth, Tel: 08445 868826
pbutterworth@education-otherwise.org

New LCs

East Surrey. Katie Bell tel 08445 008459 surrey-lc1@education-otherwise.org

East Staffordshire Astrid Brand 08445 008459 staffsouth-lc@education-otherwise.org

Latest vacancies

Brighton
South Buckinghamshire
East Yorkshire
Europe.
Carmarthenshire & Swansea

England

Channel Islands
Cheshire: Crewe & Nantwich
Cleveland
Essex: Barking & Dagenham
Essex: South East
South Gloucestershire
Gloucestershire
Hampshire

Herefordshire
Kent: South East
Lancs: Bolton
Lancs: Blackpool
London: Enfield.
London: North West
London West: Richmond and Kingston
Manchester South
Merseyside
Shropshire
Staffordshire
Sussex West.
West Midlands: Dudley
Yorkshire West: Leeds
Yorkshire West: Calderdale and Kirklees

Yorkshire East: Hull

Scotland

Perth and Kinross
Argyll and Bute
Edinburgh and Lothians
Inverclyde and the Ayrshires
Glasgow
Fife

Wales

Ceredigion
Glamorgan

Wales Environmental Home Education Camp

2nd - 10th May 2009

This event is now in it's 4th year in a spectacular 78 acre setting in beautiful West Wales.

We promise a fun filled, packed 8 days for all the family at a cost of only £100 per family unit.

Workshops centred around environmental education, crafts, co-operative games and loads more. Come and join in the fun!

For more details go to,

www.walesenvironmentalhomeeducationcamp.com

Or ring Nick on 01407 811049

Learnpremium

This is an online educational service owned by the Guardian newspaper. EO pays Learnpremium a lump sum and is making a small charge to each user to cover this cost. Reduced Subscription: £26 until 19th October 2009.

There are around 130,000 pages of online lessons and resources on a wide range of subjects including English to Design & Technology or Physical Education.

It offers interactive lessons, Guardian lesson packs, whiteboard activities, randomly generated tests, a daily news service for 9 - 14 year old and covers the Primary and Secondary curriculum.

For more info or a free trial to see if it will suit you and your family, contact Lynda.

Email: learnpremium@education-otherwise.org or Tel: 08445 867541

HOME EDUCATOR LEARNING

HOW HOME EDUCATORS CAN PROMOTE BEST PRACTICE

The National Extension College offers flexible home study courses for 20,000 people each year.

TWO FREE ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS SUPPORTED BY THE ESMÉE FAIRBAIRN TRUST IN:

Shallowford House, Stone, Staffordshire, Tuesday 23rd September 2008
Westbourne Grove Church, London, Tuesday 30th September 2008

Each event will comprise:

- An introduction from the National Extension College
- Current State of the Home Educator Legislation
- Parents' Guides to GCSEs
- The role of Parents as mentors of home-educated children working towards NEC GCSE courses
- Professional Development for the Parent Providing Advice and Guidance



Sign up now!

To secure a place for any of these FREE events please

- ✉ Email: alison.cornell@nec.ac.uk
- ☎ Call: 01223 400358 (Monday - Thursday morning)

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EXTENSION
COLLEGE

Education Otherwise does not endorse or recommend services or products advertised in this newsletter. Use of tutors remains the responsibility of the parent.

Advertisements must be pre-paid by the 1st of the preceeding month that the Newsletter is published. The deadline for April 2009 issue is March 1st. Please send your advertisements in either text or jpg format to: advertising@education-otherwise.org

Flyers must be with the printers for the 1st of the preceeding month. The deadline for April 2009 issue is March 1st.



Beanbag is a free service that enables parents and tutors to connect

find a tutor in your area by visiting

www.beanbaglearning.com/eo

Distance Learning Courses for Cambridge Board International GCSEs

Maths, English, Biology, Physics, Accounting, Business Studies, Environmental Management, History, Geography.

No coursework required. ODLQC accredited. Text book(s), study planner, tutor-marked assignments, mock exams all provided. Still **only £145**.

Key Stage 3 (11-14) courses in Maths, English and Science. ODLQC accredited. £105 per subject.

A complete service for the home educator at affordable prices

www.littlearthur.org.uk

or Tel: 01720422457 or via ODLQC website

Do You have a child who said "No" to school?

Is this why you began to home-educate this child?

I would love to hear from YOU!

I am a mother of 3 children (23, 18 and 13 years) who have all been home-educated at some time – the youngest still is!

I am also an MA student at the University of London, researching into home-education.

I am looking for several families to interview who chose to home-educate because their child either did not want to go to school or felt unable to.

If you are interested in being part of this study or would like more information, please contact me on awray@ioe.ac.uk

Thank you, Allison Wray

To Group Organisers: please remember when giving details of events that the EO newsletter can be read by people who are not EO members. If you would like your group to have a listing or if you have any changes to make to your existing entry you will need to complete and return a permission form (included after the Regional Diary). You can also obtain a permission form by sending an sae to Education Otherwise Regional Diary, PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW or by downloading one from the Official EO Forms board of the members forum on the new EO website.

Each adult whose contact details are listed for your group needs to complete a permission form before we can add their details to your entry, so if someone new wants to be added to your groups listing as contact, they will need to ask us for one of these forms before we can add their name and number or email address to the Regional Diary? Can group organisers please let the RD organiser know of any changes to venues, days and times or contact details for the group.

Please call the group before attending to make sure it is happening, and if not please let me know. Not all groups listed are EO groups.

England

AVON

Bath Home Education Group, a new group still in it's early stages consisting of children ages 3-7 years and a couple of 2 year olds. Maria, 01761 420771: yoga.maria@yahoo.co.uk

BEDFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Pauline, 08445 868894: beds-lc@education-otherwise.org

Bedfordshire Christian Home Ed: scottandrachel@ntlworld.com

BERKSHIRE

EOLC: Lynn, 08445 868842: berkshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

Berkshire Home Educators, email list for home educators in Berkshire and surrounding areas: <http://groups.yahoo.com/BerkshireHomeEducators>

Heroes Education Centre, support group for young people who are home-educated, 4 days/wk, workshops, lessons, activities. Dawn, 01628 783107: www.homeeducators.co.uk

BRISTOL

EOLC: Ian, Tel: 08445 003756: bristol-lc@education-otherwise.org

Bristol Home Education Learn Place (HELP), meeting Monday & Friday, Carla: 0117 9354389: carla-maria@blueyonder.co.uk

Festivals and Photos SW. A contacts and events list for HEs to promote existing HE options, help make new meet up options and the choice to share your HE moments with our

photography section. Contact andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

EOLC: Georgeanna, 08445 003763

: bucks-lc@education-otherwise.org

MKHEN, Milton Keynes Home Educators

Network extends a warm welcome to all.

Activities, social events and support. Also has an excellent relationship with LA.

www.mkhen.org.uk: Georgeanne: sienna-swift7@powernet.co.uk: www.mkhen.org.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE - SOUTH

EOLC: Sandi, 08445 003859: southbucks-lc@education-otherwise.org

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

EOLC: Sarah, 08445 003769: cambs-lc@education-otherwise.org

Peterborough Home Educators, friendly group meeting twice weekly for activities including art, crafts, science, ice skating, bowling, cooking and lots more, Sarah: sarah.lambert7@ntlworld.com: 07784 169260

CHESHIRE

Cheshire-South EOLC: Carrie, 08445 003781:

cheshire-lc1@education-otherwise.org

Cheshire-East EOLC: Gillian, 08445 853874:

cheshire-lc2@education-otherwise.org

Cheshire-Macclesfield EOLC: Debbie, 08445 003832: macclesfield-lc@education-otherwise.org

Mid Cheshire Home Educators, bi-monthly meetings and regular outings, Ange :
che@talktalk.net :
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mche>
SCANS-HEAG. Regular activities, meetings and trips for all ages. Separate teen activities.
Carrie, 01782 786720 : scans.heag@yahoo.co.uk

CLEVELAND EOLC: Pauline, 08445 868897 :
cleveland-lc@education-otherwise.org

CORNWALL

EOLC: Natasha, 08445 868849 : cornwall-lc@education-otherwise.org

Festivals and Photos SW. A contacts and events list for HEs to promote existing HE options, help make new meet up options and the choice to share your HE moments with our photography section. Contact
andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

Cornwall Home Educators meet every Thursday. For a copy of local newsletter contact Michelle. Newsletter also covers other home ed events in Cornwall: dickson.michelle@sky.com: 01326 250298

Menheniot nr Liskeard, Small School, Mondays term-times. Activities aimed at 5-11 years, 10.30am-1.30pm followed by time for playing, Tania, 01822 835902

Penzance, PZ Home Ed, Monday pm for workshop during term-time, Ruth, 01736 350887

Pentiddy Woods, family group get-together in the woods with games and woodland skills activities. Ele, 01579 363775 :
ele@pentiddy.co.uk or Ruth, 0845 4560247

CUMBRIA EOLC: Jayne, 08445 003793 :
cumbria-lc@education-otherwise.org

South Cumbria Home Educators Yahoo Group, we have a yahoo group to keep in touch and meet up in various places in the area, to find out more please email Jayne : jaynewoodbank@yahoo.co.uk

DERBYSHIRE - DERBY CITY EOLC: Karen, 08445 003796 : derby-lc@education-otherwise.org

Derby Group, AHEAD :
ahead.derbygroup@yahoo.com

DEVON

All Devon details available from :
southdevongroup@googlegmail.com

East Devon & Exeter EOLC : Kate 08445 003798 : eastdevon-lc@education-otherwise.org
Festivals and Photos SW. See Cornwall entry for details. Contact:
andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

Exeter, Free Range Learning, Pottery sessions weekly in well equipped studio. Neil, 01363 82314

Exeter Free Range Learning, meets Wednesdays, social group for all ages, Annie, 01392 434167

Exeter Free Range Learning Youth, Youth and Social group every Tuesday, Erinn, 01392 434167

DEVON-NORTH EOLC: Jo, 08445 868843 :
northdevon-lc@education-otherwise.org

North Devon, Home Grown Kids, Twice weekly meetings and events. **Swimbridge**, Weds 1.30-4.30pm **Barnstaple**, Fridays, Funderzone Term time only. Jo, EO Local Contact North Devon : 08445 868843

DEVON-SOUTH EOLC: Bridget, 08445 003804 :
devons-lc@education-otherwise.org

Buckfastleigh, Wildspace. Nature study and gardening group based at Buckfastleigh Town Hall. Also Devon Home Education Newsletter. A free monthly email newsletter listing events throughout Devon. Also available by post for a small subscription. Tel: Lucinda 01364 644556 or email: l.guy@dartington.ac.uk

South Devon Home Education Group meets: Monday + Friday for swimming; Wednesday, Social and Educational meeting; Thursday for workshops. For all these meetings, Bridget, 08445 003804 : devons-lc@education-otherwise.org or Lucinda Tel: 01364 644556 Email: l.guy@dartington.ac.uk

South Devon Home Education Group, meet at Harberton Parish Hall, near Totnes. Lucinda : southdevongroup@googlegmail.com Tel: 01364 644556

Dartmoor Home Education Group, New Group to support growing home-ed network on Dartmoor!! We welcome home-ed families, flexi-schoolers, and part-timers. Social and educational meetings on Thursdays in North Bovey/Chagford area. Emma Tel: 1647 440443 Email: emmabradypicone@gmail.com

Dart Valley Home Ed Network, Out and about visits: Natural History, History and Photography and more. Members only internet group. Hannah & Gordon, 01803 762788 : lindnich@tesco.net

DEVON/DORSET/SOMERSET BORDERS

Home Education Centre, 2 days/week. Workshops, sports, activities and support. www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk : Karen, 01460 30461 : karen@homeeducationcentre.org.uk : or Louise, 01460 61325

DORSET

Dorset-North EOLC: Sharon, 08445 003807 : ndorset-1c@education-otherwise.org

Dorset-East (Bournemouth) EOLC: Vicki, 08445 003726 : Bournemouth-1c@education-otherwise.org

Dorset-East (Poole) EOLC: Carol, 08445 003848 :

poole-1c@education-otherwise.org

Festivals and Photos SW. See Cornwall entry for more details. Contact andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

North Dorset, HEOND (Home Educators of North Dorset), Friendly group, meeting weekly in Sturminster Newton, June, 01258 471949 : bugchick@mac.com

Bournemouth, HEED, weekly Monday meetings, Carol, 01202 677066 : carolstonehe@yahoo.co.uk : www.he-ed.org.uk

DURHAM

EOLC: Karen, 08445 868841 : durham-1c@education-otherwise.org

Roots Day 2nd Thursday of the month. Co-operative games, crafts, nature studies. All held outside on smallholding near Durham City Tel: 0771 9530 472

French, Mondays 1230. Durham City. Tel: 0771 9530 472

ESSEX

EOLC: Corinne, 08445 003808 : essex-1c@education-otherwise.org

Chelmsford, monthly meetings, 3rd Thursday, 2 - 4pm. Sarah, tower@tesco.net: Lena, choccyfudge-go@yahoo.co.uk

Leigh on Sea, Thames Kids Club, meetings held Fridays from 11am to 3pm in Leigh on Sea. £3 per family. thameskidsclub@googlemail.com :

Roxy, 01702 334521: Raquel, 07958 045885 : Thea, 01702 309869

Essex Home Educators, meetings monthly in Chelmsford, Colchester and Tiptree, and weekly in Southend. There are also regular meetings for swimming, bowling and ice skating, etc., and at least two trips out around the county each month. Details of all these in Essex Epicycle Newsletter available by email, Corinne : epicycle@wavy.org

Tendring Home Education, an advice and support list for parents home educating or considering home educating in the Tendring area of N. Essex. Email Shirley - shrl.smth@gmail.com or <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/TendringHomeEducation>

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Cirencester and Cotswold Meetings. Will answer queries about home education in general and offer information about local groups and activities. Pam: pjp@ragingbull.com : 01285 721008

Stroud, email group keeps families in touch, anyone can arrange an activity or get together. Nick, 01453 840036 : nick.weir@localfood.org.uk

Forest of Dean, meet monthly on a Thursday, 12.15 - 16.00, for bridge and damn building, river clearance, fire building, woodland walks, indoor and outdoor games, raft building. Roxy : cdsnhf@googlemail.com

Gloucestershire, Beverley, 01242 524091

HAMPSHIRE

Southampton and area, SEEDS, for children age 3+, home educators in Southampton and area, Lyn: www.groups.yahoo.com/group/seeds1

Havant area, ActiveEO, meetings most weekdays : www.activeo.org.uk : Julie, 01243 552472

North Hampshire, NHEO. Open to all home educators in North Hants & surrounding areas. Regular meetings in Basingstoke, ice skating & other activities. <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/NHEO/>: Jaki, 07731 805323 : jakiparsons@yahoo.co.uk

Hampshire, FRHEBEEs, Friendly informative group covering the New Forest, West Hampshire, South Wiltshire area, Karen, 01425 656856 : karence@btinternet.com

Hampshire West, Fordingbridge and Ringwood Home Educators, FRHEBees-
owner@yahoo.com

Hampshire & Surrey Farnham Home Ed Group, friendly social group, meeting fortnightly on Thursdays. Serving Farnham, Aldershot and surrounding areas. Paul, 01252 316497 : paula.oakley@talk21.com

HEREFORDSHIRE (+ Monmouthshire)

Monmouth Home Educators, meetings on Tuesdays at Rockfield Community Centre for fun and friendship, arts, crafts, games and sports - football, hockey, rounders, cricket. All ages welcome. Check for dates and times. Roxy, 01989 768128 : cdsnhf@googlemail.com

HERTFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Maya, 08445 003816 : herts-
lc@education-otherwise.org
Herts Home Educators Yahoo Group for events and friendship. To join please email Karen: karenbartlett@btinternet.com

ISLE OF MAN

EOLC: Anthony & Leandra, 08445 003949 :
isleofman-lc@education-otherwise.org

ISLE OF WIGHT

EOLC: Shara, 08445 003819 : iow-
lc@education-otherwise.org

KENT

North West, EOLC: Ann, 08445 868839 : kent-
lc@education-otherwise.org

UK Home Educators, fortnightly meetings in Chatham, regular park days and monthly activities. Ann: kent-lc@education-
otherwise.org: 08445 868839

Dragonfly Group, fortnightly meetings for all ages. We are a fun social group who also meet up midweek for outings and events. Tel: Andrea 01304 619112 or 07737 806478

Hayes Group, meet alternate Fridays, 11am to 2pm, Debbie, 07730 955395

Kent, Sussex & Surrey (on the border of all 3 counties) F.L.A.G.S, active group meeting weekly during termtime for hall activities, sports and outings. Karen, 01732 864524 :

karenlow@uwclub.net : www.flags-education.org

Kent, Sussex, Surrey, www.southeast-home-
educators.co.uk

South East Home Educators and Wealden Home Education Network

We are a group of home educators who try to meet regularly for trips out. Bowling, swimming, workshops and museums. We also meet once a fortnight in Tonbridge Wells in a hall for adults and children to get together. Lizelle, 01732 883850 : lizelle@lizellefdb.com or Bo, 07853 945206

LANCASHIRE

Joint EOLC: Pam, 08445 868908 : lancs-
lc1@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Kath, 08445 868829 : lancs-
lc2@education-otherwise.org

LEICESTERSHIRE

EOLC: Sharan, 08445 868847 : leics-
lc1@education-otherwise.org

Syston HE. A fun and lively group for the under 10s. We meet twice a month and each session has a theme - with art and science activities to help explore the topic. Tammy, mathamsam@btinternet.com : Vikki, martinvikki@aol.com : Christine, christine_wells@yahoo.com
Leicestershire, HE-AL, <http://www.he-al.org.uk/index.html>

LINCOLNSHIRE

EOLC: Janet, 08445 868862 : lincs-
lc@education-otherwise.org

North Hykeham Home Education Group, meet every Thursday 10-1130ish primarily for toddlers. Phone/text 07870 787328 Email: debi-crow@googlemail.com

LINCOLNSHIRE SOUTH

EOLC: Susanna, 08445 003861 : southlincs-
lc@education-otherwise.org

LONDON

London, Brandram Roaders, Meet 11-1pm Thursdays during term time at Brandram Road Community Centre, SE13 5RT (off Lee High Road) Then to nearby park. Ages mostly 0-12 yrs. All welcome. Subs £2 per family. Joolz, 020 8289 5026 : teachyourrown@hotmail.com

London, Fulham HE. Fridays from 11am, age 5+ (siblings welcome). Tennis, basketball lessons. Open house, play in park and some field trips. Kellan, 020 7384 3332 or 07796 687029

East London, Forest Group, meets on alternating fortnightly Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1-4pm at Quaker Meeting House, Bush Road, Leytonstone, London E11: Helen, 020 8553 0015 : h_long@sky.com : Ola Gasson 020 8520 0648 : olaglasson@googlemail.com

UK Home Educators, London/Kent, meetings in Bromley and Orpington. Outings and group events monthly. Ann: kent-lc@education-otherwise.org : 08445 868839

London-NW, The Otherwise Club. A community centre for families choosing to educate their children out of school, Leslie, 020 8969 0893

Dulwich, Woodland Club, age 8-teen. Science, Maths, various speakers, social afternoon. Idyllic venue. Gina, 020 8299 1135

Woodlands Study Group, 11yr old and over; English, Maths and Science classes every Monday, term time in Dulwich SE22 : deniseriddy@aol.com

East London, Magpie Home Educators. Meet every Friday, 1-3pm for social activities. All ages welcome. Corner Forest Lane and Magpie Close, Forest Gate. Annalise, 020 8500 1053 : annalise@tesco.net

Haringey Home Education Club. Group meets alternate Weds 12-4pm. See www.hhec.org.uk for details. Gaby, 020 8881 9463 : contact@hhec.org.uk

Hackney, Adventures with Education. Hackney group meets weekly in term time, Tuesdays 11am-3pm, Chris Swift 020 7254 4988

London Local Contacts

East EOLC: Stephen, 08445 003821 : londoneast-lc@education-otherwise.org

Enfield EOLC: Tina, 08445 868836 : enfield-lc@education-otherwise.org

North, EOLC: Tina, Tel: 08445 003823 Email: londonnorth-lc@education-otherwise.org

North West EOLC: Tina, 08445 003826 : londonnw-lc@education-otherwise.org

S.E. EOLC: Keith & Chrystia, 08445 003827 : londonse-lc@education-otherwise.org

SW Joint EOLC: Rehena, 08445 003828 : londonsw-lc@education-otherwise.org

SW Joint EOLC: Lei, 08445 003829 : londonsw-lc@education-otherwise.org

Waltham Forest EOLC: Jo & Jerry, 08445 003867 : walthamforest-lc@education-otherwise.org

West EOLC: Betsy, 08445 003831 :

londonwest-lc@education-otherwise.org

Middlesex EOLC: Betsy, 08445 003834 : middlesex-lc@education-otherwise.org

Central EOLC: Tina, 08445 853876 :

londoncentral-lc@education-otherwise.org

N. IRELAND

EOLC: Shevaun, 08445 003842 : nireland-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORFOLK

EOLC: 08445 003836 : norfolk-lc@education-otherwise.org

Thetford, swimming and indoor sports/play. Waterworld Leisure Centre, Thetford, Term-time Thurs 2.30-4.30pm, but weeks can vary so please ring first. Faye, 01953 681785

NORFOLK-WEST

EOLC: Desiree, 08445 853878 : norfolkwest-lc@education-otherwise.org

West Norfolk Home Educators, email list for home educators in West Norfolk: <http://groups.yahoo.com/WestNorfolkHomeEducators>

NORFOLK-SOUTH

EOLC: Anne, 08445 868904 : norfolksouth-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORFOLK-BRECKLAND

EOLC: Hannah, Tel: 08445 003998 : norfolkbreckland-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

EOLC: Imogen, 08445 003841 : northants-lc@education-otherwise.org

Northants HE. Informal Group that meets regularly for various activities www.northantshe.org.uk : info@northantshe.org.uk

NORTHUMBERLAND-North

EOLC: Mink, 08445 003843 : northumberlandnorth-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORTHUMBERLAND-West

EOLC: Liz, 08445 003844 : northumberlandwest-lc@education-otherwise.org

NOTTINGHAM CITY

EOLC: Damian, 08445 003846 : nottinghamcity-
lc@education-otherwise.org

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

EOLC: Jenifer, 08445 003961 : notts-
lc@education-otherwise.org

OXFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Louisa, 08445 868873 : oxfordshire-
lc@education-otherwise.org

RUTLAND

EOLC: Iain & Jacqueline, 08445 003853 :
rutland-lc@education-otherwise.org

SHROPSHIRE

**Newport, Nr Telford, Newport Home
Education Group**, meetings 1st and 3rd Friday
every month, Outings on other Fridays, from
12.30pm, for all ages. Julieann, 01952 401571,
weshalllook@aol.com

SOMERSET

EOLC: Vivian, 08445 003858 : somerset-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Festivals and Photos SW. A contacts and
events list for HEs to promote existing HE
options, help make new meet up options and the
choice to share your HE moments with our
photography section. Contact
andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

Wells Swimming Group, meets weekly for
swimming at Wells Leisure Centre - term time
only. Lesley, 01749 689241 :
mumfordturner@hotmail.com

FAB Times (local Somerset email newsletter), to
subscribe for this free monthly e-newsletter,
email Nicola: fab@phonecoop.coop

Wiveliscombe/Taunton area group, monthly
meetings on 1st Tuesday of month at Oake
Village Hall, & regular outings. Maggie, 01984
624651

**Somerset/Dorset/Devon borders, Home
Education Centre**, 2 days/week. Workshops,
sports, activities and support.
www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk : Karen, 01460
30461 : karen@homeeducationcentre.org.uk : or
Louise, 01460 61325

North Somerset Home Education Group,
weekly childrens gym, walks, outings etc, Vicky,
01275 848425 : victoria.preston@yahoo.co.uk

Shepton Mallet, FAB Home Education Group
Social Meeting - Fortnightly on Tuesdays from
1.30-3.30pm at Shepton Mallet Scout Hut, Old
Wells Road. £2.50 per family to cover
refreshments and hire of hall. Mandy 01749
347799 : Jojo 01458 443674

Bath Home Education Group, a new group still in
it's early stages consisting of children ages 3-7
years and a couple of 2 year olds. Maria, 01761
420771 : yoga.maria@yahoo.co.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Carrie, 08445 003862 :
staffordshirenorth-lc@education-otherwise.org
SCANS-HEAG. Regular activities, meetings and
trips for all ages. Separate teen activities.
Carrie, 01782 786720 : scans.heag@yahoo.co.uk
**Stafford HESEO (Home Educators Supporting
Each Other) Meeting** 2nd and 4th Wednesday
each month, 12-3pm, bring lunch. Karen, 01543
422577 : karen@karisto.co.uk

SUFFOLK

EOLC: Sue, 08445 868913 : suffolk-
lc@education-otherwise.org
Wetherden, meetings, 3rd Friday of the month
10.30am till 3pm, Wendy, 01449 614772 :
wenlyn@talktalk.net

SURREY

EOLC: Claire, Tel: 08445 003964 : surrey-
lc@education-otherwise.org
Godalming Group, meets alternate Mondays.
Serves South West Surrey and surrounding
area. Ruth: www.swsurrey-home-ed.co.uk
Sutton/Epsom HE Group, all ages welcome,
currently mainly under 10s. Liz:
julysea@yahoo.co.uk or Paul:
pauldmsn@hotmail.com Tel: 07506 781796

SUSSEX & SURREY & KENT (on the border of
all 3 counties)

F.L.A.G.S. active group meeting weekly during
term time for hall activities, sports and outings.
Karen, 01732 864524 : karenlow@uwclub.net :
www.flags-education.org

SUSSEX-EAST

EOLC: Winnie, 08445 003863 : sussexeast-
lc@education-otherwise.org

HEDGE based in **Hastings**, meet every Friday:
www.hedge-education-org: Catherine, 01424
812213

Forest Row, regular social gatherings and
tutorial groups. Winnie, 01342 826087 :
artofchange@msn.com

Brighton EOLC: Karen, 08445 868914 :
brighton-lc@education-otherwise.org

SUSSEX-WEST,

Chichester area, **ActiveEO**, meetings most
weekdays : www.activeo.org.uk : Julie 01243
552472

**Sussex - Home Educating in West Sussex
Facebook Group**. A group for home educators
and the home educated in West Sussex. Events
most weeks all organised on Facebook. Look up
Katie Pybus on Facebook or
roger.katie@virgin.net or Tel: 01798 875071

TYNE & WEAR(NEWCASTLE):

EOLC: Rosemary, 08445 003866 : tynewear-
lc@education-otherwise.org

WARWICKSHIRE EOLC: June, 08445 003869 :
warks-lc@education-otherwise.org

WARWICKSHIRE - COVENTRY

EOLC: Sarah, 08445 003792 : coventry-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Coventry and Warwickshire Home Educators,
monthly meetings held at various locations, plus
monthly outings and activities. Full details in
HELM (West Midlands)

Coventry meetings 4th Tuesday 1pm to 4pm :
sarah@nellyb.co.uk **Wolston meetings** 2nd
Thursday : lloyd@dash20.fsnet.co.uk

WARWICKSHIRE - RUGBY

EOLC: Fay, 08445 003852 : rugby-
lc@education-otherwise.org

WEST MIDLANDS

Wolverhampton & Walsall EOLC: Debbie,
08445 003871 : wolverhampton-lc@education-
otherwise.org

Sandwell EOLC: Andrea, 08445 003856 :
sandwell-lc@education-otherwise.org

Birmingham EOLC: Stuart, 08445 003967 :
Birmingham-lc@education-otherwise.org

HELM Newsletter, HE related articles and
events throughout the West Midlands and
surrounding areas.

helmeditor2112@blueyonder.co.uk : Jane, 01562
720046 : Andrew, 07709 468140

WILTSHIRE

EOLC: Shena, 08445 868907 : wilts-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Salisbury, social group meets Monday,
fortnightly, 1-4pm. Large hall, skate park, play
park, football pitch, basketball. Inside we have
games, pool and table-tennis. We have a real
mix of ages including teenagers. Very friendly
and new faces welcome. Ally, 01722 710525

WORCESTERSHIRE

EOLC: Sue, 08445 868846 : worcs-
lc@education-otherwise.org

North Worcestershire/Kidderminster meetings,
please see Worcs newsletter or contact Gail,
01562 822034 : gail@1921.net

YORKSHIRE EAST

EOLC: Alison, 08445 003874 : yorkshireeast-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Withernsea LC: Linda, 08445 003873 :
withernsea-lc@education-otherwise.org

YORKSHIRE NORTH + EAST

near **Malton**, meets weekly, Mondays, 12-4pm,
viv@flamangoes.co.uk : 01904 788374 (York and
surrounding area) or tess@chrisgeall.com: 01947
825772 (East N Yorks)

YORKSHIRE NORTH

EOLC: Denise, 08445 868852 : yorkshirenorth-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Harrogate Home Ed Group. Meetings held on
1st and 3rd Thursday each month, 13.30 to 15.30
Great Ouseburn Village Hall, between York and
Harrogate. Kate: eldival@googlemail.com :
07724 065091

YORKSHIRE NORTH+WEST

N/W Home Ed Group, meets **Skipton** monthly
and **Bradford Gym Club** - Meets weekly. Regular
meetings and outings. Judith, 01756 791356

YORKSHIRE SOUTH

Barnsley EOLC: Amanda, 08445 868854 :
barnsley-lc@education-otherwise.org

Doncaster EOLC: Nicola, 08445 003806 :
doncaster-lc@education-otherwise.org

Rotherham EOLC: Jayne, 08445 003851 :
rotherham-lc@education-otherwise.org

Sheffield EOLC: Fiona, 08445 003857 or Alison, 08445 008458 : sheffield-lc@education-otherwise.org

YORKSHIRE WEST

Bradford EOLC: Gillian, 08445 853891 :

bradford-lc@education-otherwise.org

Wakefield EOLC: Nicole, 08445 868874 :

wakefield-lc@education-otherwise.org

Huddersfield, Book Group, Monday, monthly, 2-3pm, Marsden Library - age range 6-12 yrs,

Jane, 01484 645034

Huddersfield, Art Workshops, Thursday, monthly, 10-11am, ages up to 8yrs. £1.30-3.30pm, ages 8+. Huddersfield Art Gallery, Mandy, 01484 460026; Jane, 01484 645034

Huddersfield Group - Lunch and Chat, Thursday, monthly, 11.30 to 1.30pm, Mandy, 01484 460026

Wales

ANGLESEY

EOLC: Nick, 08445 003713 anglesey-lc@education-otherwise.org

CONWY

EOLC: Dawn, 08445 003791 : conwy-lc@education-otherwise.org

DENBIGHSHIRE

Joint EOLC: Sam, 08445 003794 :

denbighshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Julie, 08445 868916 :

denbighshire-lc1@education-otherwise.org

FLINTSHIRE

EOLC: Sarah, 08445 868851 : flintshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

Cardiff Home Ed Group, we meet every

Wednesday from 12noon to

efa.rosina@yahoo.co.uk

GWENT EOLC: Bronwen, 08445 003812 :

gwent-lc@education-otherwise.org

GWYNEDD

Joint EOLC: Nick, 08445 003813 : Gwynedd-lc@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Judy, 08445 853879 : gwynedd-lc1@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Julie, 08445 008547 : Gwynedd-lc2@education-otherwise.org

Tregarth, Creative Learning and Support, meet every Wednesday 12 - 5pm. Free weekly newsletter of events via email. Active website at: www.creativelearningandsupport.co.uk Nick -

01407 811049 : Julie, 01286 678181:

jdchapmanmaurice@aol.com

North West Wales. CLAS - Creative Learning and Support. CLAS was born during 2005 and is the name of a group collective of like-minded parents and children living predominantly in North West Wales who believe in the ethos of home learning and education.

www.creativelearningandsupport.co.uk

MONMOUTHSHIRE (+ HEREFORDSHIRE)

Monmouth Home Educators, meetings on Tuesdays at Rockfield Community Centre for fun and friendship, arts, crafts, games and sports - football, hockey, rounders, cricket. Check for dates and times. Roxy: cdsnhf@googlemail.com : 01989 768128

PEMBS EOLC: Yvette, 08445 003847 :

pembrokeshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

POWYS EOLC: David, 08445 003849 : powys-lc@education-otherwise.org

Newtown, New Leaf Group. Fortnightly meetings for all ages, for activities, socialisation and play : siouxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk

Powys Yahooogroup, advertising home-ed activities in Powys for home educating families : siouxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk

NE WALES/BORDERS,

WREXHAM EOLC: Sam, 08445 003872 :

wrexham-lc@education-otherwise.org

Froncsyllte, HENWOS, fortnightly group meets 10-4pm. Social play and chat. Monthly newsletter for NE Wales area activities and events: kruger37@tiscali.co.uk

Scotland

Angus, Dundee, Perth & Kinross EOLC:

Marley, 08445 868896: dundee-lc@education-otherwise.org

Borders EOLC: Jane, 08445 003716 : borders-lc@education-otherwise.org

Aberdeenshire EOLC: Fiona, 08445 003712 :

aberdeenshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

Highland & Isles EOLC: Lesley, 08445 003817 :

highlandislands-lc@education-otherwise.org

Clacks, Falkirk, N Lanarks & Stirling EOLC:

Janice, 08445 003789 : stirling-lc@education-otherwise.org

Other Areas: scotlandenquiry@education-otherwise.org

Overseas

Australasia: Nicky, Email: australasia-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Europe: Diana, 08445 003809 : europe-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Americas: Sandy, 08445 853873 : americas-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Permission Form for inclusion in EO newsletter or website

Area(s) or County(s) entry is to be placed in:

Name of your group:

Details About your Group:

Contact Details to be included in Newsletter:

Contact Details if you wish to be listed on website under local groups:

I/We confirm that I am/ (we are) the contact/(s) for this group and agree to my/our details being included in the EO Newsletter and/or on EO's website. I/we understand the newsletter is distributed to EO members, and is sold to, or may be seen by other third parties.

EO Enquiry Volunteers often get asked about local groups in their area by families new to home educating. My/our contact details may be given to these callers by EO volunteers. YES / NO (delete where appropriate).

(Needs to be signed by ALL people whose contact details will be included in the entry)

Signed:

Date Signed:

Please return completed form to:

Education Otherwise Regional Diary, c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3FB

New volunteers for any of the groups or other vacancies most welcome, with expertise or just an interest. For more information email the group, write to EO's PO Box address or contact one of the Trustees listed (in italics). If you would prefer to volunteer for infrequent or small tasks please contact Lynda: database@education-otherwise.org

Small Groups:

- **Finance Group** Tel: 08445 003986
(financegroup@education-otherwise.org):
Fiona Nicholson, Roarke Newstead,
Lynda Hitchman
- **Govt. Policy Group** Tel: 08445 003987
(governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org):
Fiona Nicholson, Annette Taberner, Ann Newstead, Jo Berry, Kira Patefield-Smith, Janet Wilkinson, Julie Bunker
- **Disability Group:** Tel: 08445 003984
(disabilityawareness@education-otherwise.org)
Fiona Nicholson, Julie Bunker, Christine Waterman, Celia McDonagh
- **Scotland Group:** Tel: 08445 003989
(scotlandenquiry@education-otherwise.org)
Fiona Chaff, Rebecca Kail, Jane Bathgate, Jan Atkinson
- **Website and Publications Editorial Committee (WPEC):** (wpec@education-otherwise.org) Tel: 08445 003991
Fiona Nicholson, Joss Nowell, Lynda Hitchman

Grievances and Complaints:

Email: complaints@education-otherwise.org Write:
PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

- *Jo Berry* ~ 08445 884596
- *Pauline Butterworth* ~ 08445 884597
- *Lynda Hitchman* ~ 08445 884598

EO Yahoogroups:

EO runs a general list and single parent list with Yahoogroups. They're open to all, members and non-members. To join the general list go to:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eo>
To join the single parent list, go to:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-SingleParent/>

Media Contacts:

Please contact one of the following people if you would like to volunteer to be interviewed or are contacted by the media and would like help/advice/support on giving an interview:

Media Spokesperson: *Ann Newstead*, 08445 867548
media-spokesperson@education-otherwise.org

Northern Ireland: *Marion Kenny*, 08445 884528
ni@education-otherwise.org

North East: *Eva O'Rourke, Wilsden* 08445 884529
northeast@education-otherwise.org

Wales (S): *Celia McDonagh, Cardiff*, 08445 884531
wales1@education-otherwise.org

Wales(N): *Edwina Theunissen, Wrexham*, 08445 884532
wales2@education-otherwise.org

South West (Acting): *Kay & Simon Smith*, 08445 884533
southwest@education-otherwise.org

South East: *Ann Newstead, Kent* 08445 003978
southeast@education-otherwise.org

London: *Winnie Durdant-Hollamby*, 08445 884534
london2@education-otherwise.org

Isle of Wight: *Shara Ouston, Ryde*, 08445 884569
iow@education-otherwise.org

EO E-mail Lists & Forums

There is a Members Forum on the EO website, with discussion and support forums for members to chat and get information about home education etc., as well as EO business, and lots of other info (eg past NE articles, minutes of OTMs, etc). There are separate forums for EO Volunteers and Local Contacts and a new forum where EO children can chat together. To join the member's forum, register using the form at this url on EO's site:
<http://forum.education-otherwise.org/index.php>

To join the children's forum, both you and your child need to register from the above link and you need to complete the permission form that will be emailed to your child's email address and return it to us at: childrensforum@education-otherwise.org Do email if you have problems joining and we'll try and help.

Who Does What in EO

Trustees – Email: trustees@education-otherwise.org
Letters to: Education Otherwise, PO Box 325, St Germans,
Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW

Leslie Barson (London) ~ 08445 868817
lbarson@education-otherwise.org

Jo Berry, (Cheshire) ~ 08445 868821
jberry@education-otherwise.org (Enquiries Secretary)

Pauline Butterworth (Cleveland) ~ 08445 868826
pbutterworth@education-otherwise.org (Treasurer)

Nicola Haxell (S Yorks) ~ 08445 868824
nhaxell@education-otherwise.org (NL Coordinator)

Carla MacGregor (Bristol) ~ 08445 868827
cmacgregor@education-otherwise.org (Local Contacts
Coordinator)

Celia McDonagh (Glamorganshire) ~ 08445 883514 ~
cmcdonagh@education-otherwise.org

Ann Newstead (Kent) ~ 08445 853899 ~
anewstead@education-otherwise.org

Roarke Newstead (Kent) ~ 08445 868813
rroarke@education-otherwise.org

Fiona Nicholson (S Yorks) ~ 08445 868831
fnicholson@education-otherwise.org

Vicki Skinner (Dorset) ~ 08445 883513
vskinner@education-otherwise.org

Annette Taberner (S Yorks) ~ 08445 003992
ataberner@education-otherwise.org

Janet Wilkinson (Cambridgeshire) ~ 08445 868812
jwilkinson@education-otherwise.org (Co Sec)

Judi Wilson (London) ~ 08445 853897
jwilson@education-otherwise.org

Memberships

Membership and newsletter subscription enquiries, address changes, membership cards, new member admin, other queries or missing newsletters contact: ~ Lynda Hitchman ~ Education Otherwise, PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW ~ 08445 867541 database@education-otherwise.org (Please put EO in the Subject line of emails)

Stationery

Leaflets, posters, compliment slips, membership forms, car stickers etc: free (donations toward postage welcome).
08445 867549 ~ c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW ~ stationery@education-otherwise.org

Data Protection/Confidentiality/Privacy

Data Protection Officer ~ Joss Nowell ~ 08445 003706
dataprotectionofficer@education-otherwise.org

Lynda Hitchman ~ 08445 867541
database@education-otherwise.org

Useful Contacts

If you need help in dealing with your LA/EA please ring your Local Contact or any Council Member. If you have a query not covered below please contact your nearest Council Member.

Anti Bullying Support ~ Juno Charlett ~ 08445 003692
anti-bullying@education-otherwise.org

Autonomous Education Support: Vacant ~ 08445 003697
autonomoussupport@education-otherwise.org

Campaign Team Contact: Fiona Nicholson ~ 08445 884593
c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW
governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org

College Contact: (Acting) Roger Scaife ~ 08445 868918
~ collegecontact@education-otherwise.org

Concessions: Lucinda Smart ~ 08445 003698
concessions@education-otherwise.org

Designated Person: Jim Clossick ~ 08445 869091 ~ For EO members to call if they have concerns about a home educated child and are unsure about phoning the NSPCC.

Enquiries Secretary: Jo Berry ~ 08445 883539
enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org

GCSE Contacts: ~ 08445 003708
gcsecontact@education-otherwise.org

LA Liaison Volunteer: Julie Beviss ~ 08445 003709
laliaison@education-otherwise.org

LearnPremium & EO Members Forum Admin: Lynda Hitchman
08445 867541 learnpremium@education-otherwise.org or
forums@education-otherwise.org

Local Contacts Co-ordinator: Carla MacGregor ~ 08445
003876 lcco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org

Membership Secretary: 08445 003879
membershipsecretary@education-otherwise.org

Newsletter Coordinator: Nicola Haxell ~ 08445 883532
nlco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org

Publications Secretary: ~ 08445 003886
pubssecretary@education-otherwise.org

Research Contact: Contact details for the new Research Volunteer will be announced in next Newsletter. Meanwhile please contact: governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org

School Anxiety Support: Jayne Owen ~ 08445 008469
anxiety-support@education-otherwise.org

Single Parent Family Contact: ~ 08445 884527

Special Needs: Christine Waterman ~ 08445 003887

Structured Support: Jennifer Simmons ~ 08445 003996
structured-ed@education-otherwise.org

Treasurer: Pauline Butterworth ~ 08445 003889
treasurer@education-otherwise.org

Publications

Books, information leaflets and back issues of newsletter.
publications@education-otherwise.org

education otherwise

Education Otherwise is a membership organisation that provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Our principal aims are to:

- encourage learning outside the school system;
- reaffirm that parents have primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school;
- establish the primary right of children to have full consideration given to their wishes and feelings about their education;
- promote knowledge, understanding and acceptance of education otherwise than at school in the world at large.

For further information send an A5 sae to:
Education Otherwise, PO Box 325
St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Helpline 0845 478 6345

Information can also be found on the Education Otherwise website:

<http://www.education-otherwise.org>

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