

Home Education

Official Newsletter From Educational Freedom

May/June 2024

Building relationships between LAs and Home Educators.



We work hard to ensure every home educator has access to support.

GHEX

We have previously sent you details of the Global Home Education conference in Manchester this July, just a reminder that should you wish to attend you can use our unique discount code EDUFREE for 10% off. For registration and queries please contact [GHEX](#) directly

WE KNOW YOU ARE BUSY - PLEASE GIVE US 5 MINUTES - WE WILL KEEP THIS ONE SHORT

Over the past month, our team has had numerous phone and email conversations with EHE staff across the UK, and a clear pattern has emerged. Many of you who consider yourselves friendly, helpful, and supportive are puzzled as to why so many families prefer to keep communication in writing rather than meeting in person.

We've addressed some of these concerns in previous newsletters and encourage you to review them to understand the significant issues stemming from poor conduct by many Local Authorities.

We would like to explain this a little more, but in a nutshell it is because of the massive amount of harm done by EHE staff around the country, keeping communication in writing protects them from this possible harm.

Currently, no LA is fully compliant with the law. None!

All home education organisations recommend that maintaining written communication prevents problems caused by EHE staff who may not fully understand the legal requirements, or intentionally misrepresent their duties, or inadvertently cause harm. Written records ensure both parties have documentation of all communications.

Even if we know you personally and local families have no current issues, we must advise home educators keep communication in writing because circumstances can change rapidly, such as new staff members or changes in local policies. Our experience shows that a small change can have a massive, and negative, impact on the lives of home educators. Whilst you may be supportive, your successor may not be. We often see previous visits/meetings used against families when they now choose not to meet.

Many families are part of large national groups with tens of thousands of home-educating families who have faced significant issues with their LAs. They have witnessed the harm and the ensuing battles. They see the 'man-hours' needed to support these families to find security in their home education and to prove to the LA that all is well, therefore they choose to keep communication in writing. (Please note, this article refers to when there are no actual concerns about the provision, when there are genuine concerns about the provision we support families to improve the situation whilst also encouraging liaising with you.)

Problems include the EHE person refusing to leave homes, berating children, demanding performance, ignorance of disabilities, making families feel unsafe, unjust referrals to social services, declaring education unsuitable for arbitrary reasons such as the child not being there, concerns raised through the EHE person failing to ask relevant questions, and bias against educational styles other than "school at home."

In the last week we've seen numerous LAs acting unlawfully:

- An LA demanded another report despite accepting one in March as suitable.
- EHE demanded weekly reports via a third party despite no home education concerns.

- At least five LAs claimed duties they do not have, such as monitoring or conducting safeguarding checks.
- Seven LAs used the incorrect term "Home Schooling," confusing schools and causing problems for families. including 2 schools who thought they had to provide the learning and 2 families who did not create school at home and the EHE person deemed the education unsuitable.
- EHE were phoned by a hospital who were confused when the dad wrote home educated instead of a school name, EHE told the hospital they didn't know the family and they should therefore call social services despite no safeguarding concerns.
- Numerous letters failed to clarify that families can choose whether to meet the EHE person.
- Many LAs demanded future plans without explaining that home educators are not required to make such plans.
- Numerous claims were made that families must provide information about systematic approaches, undermining personalised educational styles.
- And despite ongoing discussions, an LA continually doorsteps families and requests entry to the home. The EHE person has been told many times the harm this does yet is determined to ignore this information from us and local families.

This list represents just two days from just one of our groups.

We hope this explains a little more about why so many families are now choosing to keep communication in writing, as already mentioned there are many more examples in our previous newsletters, which are publicly available in the blog section of our website.

We ask that instead of using the request to keep communication in writing against families, you should ensure full legal compliance, accurate paperwork, encourage your colleagues to improve practices, and you could go one step further to encourage colleagues from other LAs to do better. This is more likely to have positive impact on how home educators around the country communicate with their LA, more than the threats and aggressive nature currently seen around the UK. If you notice more families choosing written communication over meeting you, you can reach out to us as we likely know what is happening as we have tens of thousands of members from all around the UK

CHILDREN RECEIVING A SUITABLE EDUCATION IS EVERYONE'S PRIORITY

To improve how home educators perceive Local Authorities, there are several steps you can take, including reaching out to us. We offer a free service to review your letters, website, and policies, identifying legal inaccuracies and misleading details, and suggesting improvements. Our goal is to help you create an environment where home educators are safe and happy to engage with you, ensuring families who require your support can access it without fear.

In many LA areas, publicly available information is problematic, with threatening and misleading language. However, the local representative might be known as helpful. This is a great opportunity to update your information to prevent misinterpretations by new families.

We are currently working with a few LAs that have already made positive changes, though there is still progress to be made. We have also worked with many LAs in the past, but staff changes have sometimes led to a decline in standards. We believe a regular open dialogue is important, one we have with many LAs. Even if you believe your service to be good we welcome your contact, as we previously mentioned we can not find a single LA fully acting within the law, we may be able to point out (from a different perspective) some areas to improve.

We are an approachable, friendly and helpful team, who want nothing more than for children to receive a suitable education, that includes the LA being the best they can be to support those who require it.

We aim to create a situation where if a family chooses to meet with you it does not pose a risk, and where LAs are not seen as untrustworthy. Until then, we must advise families to keep communication in writing, even with the 'good' LAs.

If you would like to discuss ways we can assist you, please reply to this newsletter.

AND FINALLY, CONFIDENTIALITY

We want to remind you that sharing details about a family without their explicit consent is unprofessional and contributes to distrust within the community. We will always ensure the parent emails you giving their consent to discuss their case with us.

There have been too many instances where EHE staff have acted as intermediaries between parents, passing information that has caused harm, particularly in cases of domestic abuse or when a parent has no contact with the child.

We have also seen EHE departments share information with other professionals without obtaining the necessary permission to view the data.

www.educationalfreedom.org.uk

Educational Freedom

Whilst we have to give you the option to unsubscribe, we really hope that you don't. We promise not to spam you, instead we will keep you updated on any trends or important information we think you should know about.

[Unsubscribe](#)

