

Press release: New register to help all children get the education they deserve

Landmark proposals for a register of all children not being educated in school, including those being taught at home, have been set out by Education Secretary Damian Hinds today (Tuesday 2 April).

The Government is [consulting on proposals](#) which will, for the first time, provide a clear picture of where children are if they are not in school. Estimates suggest almost 60,000 children are deemed to be educated at home – a figure that is thought to be rising by around a quarter every year.

A register of children not in school will transform a local council's capacity to identify and intervene where the standard of a child's education isn't good enough or, in the rare instances, where they are at risk of harm. It will also help the authorities spot young people who may be receiving a solely religious education, attending an unregistered school or not receiving an education at all.

The Department is also proposing new measures to support parents who choose to educate their children at home, in the form of a legal duty for local authorities to provide assistance like helping to pay for exam costs and more.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

The term 'home education' has now acquired a much broader meaning than it used to. It is now a catch-all phrase, used to refer to all children not in a registered school. So whilst this does include those actually getting a really good education at home, it also includes children who are not getting an education at all, or being educated in illegal schools where they are vulnerable to dangerous influences – the truth is, we just don't know.

As a Government, we have a duty to protect our young people and do our utmost to make sure they are prepared for life in modern Britain. That's why this register of children not in school is so important – not to crack down on those dedicated parents doing an admirable job of educating their children in their own homes, but to prevent vulnerable young people from vanishing under the radar.

Under the plans, it will be parents' responsibility to register their child if they are not being taught in a state-funded or registered independent school.

The Government is also consulting on proposals that would require local

authorities to provide support such as teaching resources or financial contributions to exam fees – at parents' request.

Damian Hinds continued:

Parents who choose to teach their children at home have often made huge sacrifices – even giving up their careers – so that they can do what is best for their families. I want to make those parents' lives easier and help them provide the best education for their children.

I also want to hear from home educating parents so we can understand what support they would benefit from and how we can help them and their children flourish.

The Government is also publishing today guidance for local authorities and for parents that clarifies their powers and responsibilities under current law, setting out the action councils can take if they have concerns a child is not receiving a suitable education. This includes school attendance orders – a legal power that already exists, compelling parents to send their child to a registered school.

For parents, the guidance sets out considerations they should make when deciding whether home education is the right choice for them and their child.

Today's consultation follows a call for evidence carried out last year which collected views from across the sector. The consultation will be open for 12 weeks until Monday 24 June.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, said:

These proposals offer an important opportunity to make sure that all children not attending school are safe, and receiving an education that prepares them for adult life.

Ofsted has long had concerns about the increasing numbers of school-age children not attending a registered school, many of whom may not be receiving a high quality education or being kept safe. We are especially concerned about children 'off-rolled' from schools, and those in illegal schools. The new register will make it easier to detect and tackle these serious problems.

Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, said:

The number of children who are not being educated in school has rocketed over recent years. For some families, educating at home will be a positive choice but many more children are falling out of school and their parents struggling on their own.

It is vitally important that we know that all children are safe and that they are receiving the education they deserve to help them to succeed in life. The introduction of a register for children not in school is very welcome and something I been calling for. I am pleased these proposals also include support for families.