

## **Notes All Party Parliamentary Group Home Education Meeting October 13<sup>th</sup> 2014**

<http://edyourself.org/appgnotesoct13th.pdf>

<http://edyourself.org/articles/allpartygrouphomeeducation.php#oct2014>

The session was introduced by Graham Stuart, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Home Education and Chair of the Government's Education Committee.

The theme of the event was 14-19 education, with 4 speakers taking 5 minutes each followed by the chance to put questions to all the speakers, with 15 minutes reserved for general comments at the end of the meeting. The last half hour of the session after the formal meeting closed provided an opportunity for informal conversation. Guests included home educators and local authority officers and managers dealing with elective home education.

### **14-16 College**

#### **Brendan Coulson Head of Employer Responsive and Choices at Central College Nottingham**

Home educated young people aged 14-16 in England are able to attend college and the Government will pay for the course. It is entirely up to the colleges whether or not to admit under-16s. These students can do any course agreed by the college, not just a designated 14-16 vocational course.

Many colleges don't offer GCSE courses, and where these are available, they may be one-year resit courses.

The rules are different for home educated young people because the parent retains responsibility and so the college does not have to make special arrangements for pastoral care or offer a full curriculum. This is quite separate from colleges deciding to go down the road of full 14-16 direct recruitment.

Any college can take home educated young people, not just the direct recruitment colleges. The post-16 funding formula should be used for 14-16s.

<http://edyourself.org/articles/14-16collegeFAQ.php>

Central College in Nottingham offers courses for home educated young people comprising vocational subjects plus a choice of up to 7 GCSEs (including English Maths History and Science). The GCSE classes are just for home educators. Potential students have to take a literacy and numeracy assessment to see what level they are working at. An Open Evening hosted by the college earlier in the year attracted 80+ home educating parents and young people.

Brendan explained that he initially conceived of a full time 2-year Key Stage 4 programme, but this wasn't what families wanted. Home educators didn't want to be tied in to all subjects, and didn't want the course to take 2 years. Families put a high value on flexibility. Confidentiality was also important to families and some of the standard paperwork had to be revised. In Nottingham the initiative came from the college but in other areas it might initially be the LA approaching the college.

Questions posed by Brendan: why is the Pupil Premium not available for home ed 14-16 at college, but only for students who are directly recruited onto a full-time programme? Why is the 16+ bursary not open to home ed 14-16 at college?

Read about other colleges here <http://edyourself.org/articles/WolfReport.php#14-16spositive>

## Contact details

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## Taking Exams as External Candidate

### Andrew Harland CEO Examination Officers Association

The EOA provides information and support to exams officers throughout the country and has members in state schools and private schools throughout the country. The EOA helped us to compile the Frequently Asked Questions for Exams Officers which explains about external candidates, the type of qualifications home educators can take, and how the exams officers should fill in the forms for private candidates <http://edyourself.org/articles/examofficers.php>

Andrew has helped the Faregos Home Education Group to set up its own exam centre. However, not all home education groups would be able to set up their own centre because JCQ regulations put additional management costs on running these centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

There may be an option in future for an exam centre such as Faregos to as a 'virtual centre' where candidates could register but then sit the actual exam at a local centre.

The EOA will shortly have a national database of exam centres which will cater for the home education community. Details will be placed on the EOA website and also on the Ed Yourself website news page.

Andrew's colleague Helen Simon is SEN advisor to the EOA and deals with additional needs in exams. Helen raised the subject of assistive technology. Read more here

[http://www.examofficers.org.uk/images/THE\\_FUTURE\\_OF\\_EXAM\\_ACCESSIBILITY\\_IN\\_THE\\_UK.docx](http://www.examofficers.org.uk/images/THE_FUTURE_OF_EXAM_ACCESSIBILITY_IN_THE_UK.docx) via <http://www.examofficers.org.uk/>

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## Home Educators Setting Up Their Own Exam Centre

### Julie Barker Faregos Exam Centre

Initially the home education tutor group in Hampshire used to drive to Rochdale to sit exams at a centre which accepted external candidates. Subsequently the group used a private school and a local Pupil Referral Unit but the volume of external candidates became overwhelming for the centre.

LAs and home educators may wish to adapt the model used in the past by the Hampshire tutor group. Hampshire LA told the APPG in 2013 that it is not practical for schools to manage a volume of separate enquires from EHE parents but they are happy to work through a nominated EHE coordinator from the EHE community. All correspondence goes between the parent community EHE coordinator and the examination officer. The parent EHE coordinator liaises with EHE parents and provides the necessary data and documentation"

<http://edyourself.org/hampshiremodelexams.pdf> via  
<http://edyourself.org/articles/allpartygrouphomeeducation.php#examsoctober2013>

Faregos Exam Centre runs tuition groups and accepts a wider range of exam candidates eg adults and students doing retakes, not just home educators. This helps to pay for the running costs of the centre. See <http://edyourself.org/faregos.pdf> via <http://edyourself.org/articles/exams.php>

### Contact details

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### Child Benefit and Tax Credits 16+

#### Tom Smith Director, Customers Strategy and Policy (Benefits and Credits) HM Revenue and Customs

Once young people get to 16, Child Benefit and Tax Credits will be stopped unless HMRC accepts that the young person is in full time education which can include home education.

Tom explained that a home educated young person does not have to be taking exams, and echoed the view set out by HMRC in 2013 that "Studying in this instance means a child/young person in a learning environment other than at school/college where they are progressing in an educational sense even though that learning environment may be structured differently than at a school/college."

More information here

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/questions\\_on\\_child\\_benefit\\_form#followup](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/questions_on_child_benefit_form#followup)

<http://edyourself.org/articles/childbenefit.php>

<http://edyourself.org/articles/claimbenefitspost16s.php>

Several people spoke about the unfairness of the rule whereby home education has to have begun before the young person reaches 16 in order for Child Benefit to be payable post-16, particularly in light of the raised participation age where home education is recognised by DfE as a legal option for participation up to 18. (More about the RPA as it applies to home education here <http://edyourself.org/articles/leavingage.php>)

The relevant regulation is here

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/223/made>

*"(3) A person is not a qualifying young person by virtue of paragraph (2)(a)(ii) unless he was receiving the education referred to in that paragraph as a child."*

We followed this up after the meeting. Tom says that he needs a sense of how big a problem this is for the home educator community, ie the scenarios under which this restriction prevents a young person from doing what they want to do; and the numbers involved. Once we are able to describe the impact, it may be possible to take this up with the Treasury.

**If you have been affected by this or you know someone who has or who will be affected or if you have any other views on the subject, please email [appg@heas.org.uk](mailto:appg@heas.org.uk)**

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### Points Raised At The Meeting

**Q:** Why does the CB form start with "why don't they go to school or college"?

**A:** it might be for medical reasons. "Because they are home educated" is perfectly acceptable answer.

The meeting felt it was off-putting and implied that home educators had to be on the defensive. (NB the questions can be found here <http://edyourself.org/articles/childbenefit.php#questions> )

**Q:** Why do parents have to pay £500 or more for an educational psychologist assessment in order to get arrangements for special needs in an exam?

**Q:** Can we have something from DfE about home ed not needing to do GCSE English and Maths at college if they have the IGCSEs (suggestion it could be on DfE website)

**A:** Graham Stuart will submit a Parliamentary Question which will achieve the same result as the answer will be on record in Hansard.

**Q:** What about using Pupil Referral Units or Alternative Education Centres for exam candidates with additional needs?

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

<http://ehe-sen.org.uk/exams.php>

Graham Stuart suggested people write to their MPs and ask them to support a proposal for an entitlement to a local centre

Graham Stuart asked the meeting what about the APPG producing a report on the state of home education, plus recommendations? This provoked a mixed reception. Some people felt that we already had the answers and didn't need an inquiry. Others said that "home education" covered distinct and separate groups and that local authorities mostly dealt with one type of family while networked home educators – such as those at the APPG meeting – knew completely different families.

**At present we don't have a topic for the next APPG meeting and the date has not been set. Any such meeting would have to be fitted in before March 30th 2015 because of the general election and parliament being dissolved. Please send any suggestions for a possible topic to [appg@heas.org.uk](mailto:appg@heas.org.uk)**