

HOME EDUCATION AND THE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY:
from conflict to cooperation

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Abstract

Home education and the local education authority:
from conflict to cooperation

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Home education is defined as the education of children in and around the home by their parents, guardians or tutors. The Local Education Authority (LEA) has a right and a duty to monitor home educated children known to them. Aspects of the conflict between the LEAs and home educators are explored. The major conflicts which have arisen between home educators and the LEA officials are identified and an attempt is made to establish why these conflicts and problems occur. Data were collected from LEAs by interview and questionnaire. In all, 83 (69%) LEAs responded. The responses indicated that 1693 home educators were recognised by these LEAs, although there are children who are educated at home about whom the LEAs know nothing. The procedures adopted by the LEAs and the criteria used when monitoring an 'efficient education' are given. The support services available to home educators and the problems the officials had encountered were identified. 20% of the LEAs had been or were currently involved in litigation with a few parents who had declared themselves to be home educators; the major reasons for court cases were the apparent inadequacy of the education provided and the difficulty when parents express the intention to home educate a child who had previously had a bad attendance record at school. 52% of the LEAs recorded instances of special difficulty that they had encountered when monitoring individual home educators and details are given. Some of the suggestions that the LEA officials made for an improvement in the monitoring of home educators are included in the recommendations which are intended to reduce conflict in a constructive and practical way. They include suggestions for increasing the effectiveness and the awareness of the officials, and proposals for effective ways of monitoring the provision of efficient education at home. Suggestions for officials wishing to create constructive relationships with parents and for the implementation of long term administrative solutions are given.

Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of any degree, qualification or course

Amanda J. Petric

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I also wish to thank my family, whose support and encouragement made the concept a reality.

Biographical note

Nine years ago, one of my daughters transferred from nursery school to primary school. She had been recognised by the educational psychologist as being advanced for her age and a school which had vertical age grouping was strongly recommended. During a discussion on schooling with an educational psychologist, I heard of home education for the first time. Being a teacher and convinced that school was beneficial for all children, I dismissed home education from my mind.

During the autumn term, I was told by both the headmistress and the class teacher that my daughter was settling down well. I was thus shocked to receive a telephone call from an educational psychologist, saying that visits had been made to my daughter at school during the previous three weeks, as she refused to speak. The school still maintained that all was well. Having faith in the school system and the psychologist, I believed that things would sort themselves out. One month later, I had begun to be less sure, and it was again suggested by an educational psychologist that I should find out about home education. I fought against this alternative, feeling that the school had 'messed things up' and would (and should) sort things out.

In January, the situation rapidly became worse. The withdrawal that my daughter displayed at school, also occurred at home. She would no longer talk to friends and family on the telephone and instead of running gleefully to the front door when friends called at the house, she would hide under the bed until they had gone.

Through the educational psychologist, I discussed home education with two of her colleagues and the head of the psychology service. I was searching for reasons why I should not take on the burden of home educating a child. The only reason given by members of the psychology service for not home educating my daughter was that she would miss the games and activities of the playground. Given that she was becoming so strange at home, it became apparent that the psychologists were right and home education should be undertaken. I reluctantly agreed to educate her at home until the following September when another school would be found.

The following week, the primary adviser telephoned to make an appointment for a home visit. I requested that she should come in the evening, as my husband would be present and my daughter would be in bed and would not be involved in discussing the difficulties she was having. On arrival, she requested to see my daughter and was extremely pleasant, reading her a book in bed, which was the beginning of a very good relationship. During the

discussion, the adviser stated her belief that school was not necessarily the right place for all children. This statement shocked both my husband and myself. The LEA officials offered all the assistance they could, supplying suitable books, with no compulsion to use them, making the school library service available and commenting constructively and enthusiastically during routine visits.

My daughter did not go to school the following September. It took two and a half years before she was able to function socially as she had done before going to primary school and a further six months before she went to school again. The headmaster was extremely pleased with her; she was academically ahead of her peers and was able to mix well with both pupils and staff.

During the last nine years, I have realised that the adviser's judgement was correct - that school is not necessarily the right place for all children. I also strongly believe that in a true democracy, an individual should have the right, when necessary or desirable, to reject what the state offers, whether in medical treatment, social benefits or indeed schooling. It is necessary, however, for this democratic 'right' of the individual to be monitored, in order that no 'harm' comes to those affected by the individual's choice.

There are, in Western Europe, few countries which have difficulty conceiving of home education as a legitimate alternative to education at school. However, in Greece and Spain home education is not legally permitted, but it is tolerated. In Germany, it is neither permitted, nor tolerated.

Just and equitable treatment of citizens requires complex laws and administrative codes.... A modicum of obedience is thus necessary for democracy. Should a government insist on total obedience, by contrast, democracy would be undermined, for unconditional obedience precludes criticism and dissent which are the essence of democracy.

(Blau and Meyer, 1971, p15)

ABBREVIATIONS

CEO	Chief Education Officer
CHEA	Children's Home-based Education Association
DENI	Department of Education for Northern Ireland
DES	Department of Education and Science
EO	Education Otherwise
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector(ate)
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
SED	Scottish Education Department
TES	Times Educational Supplement
WEO	Welsh Education Office
WES	Worldwide Education Service

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CHAPTER 1: Home education and conflict

Since the late nineteenth century, there has been statutory provision, in what is now known as the United Kingdom, making it compulsory for children between certain specified ages to be educated. For parents and children this has usually led to education at some form of institution: however, a small minority of parents has chosen to provide for a child's education not at an institution, but at home. This thesis describes and analyses various issues arising from parental decisions to provide education in the home.

1.1 Home education in the context of education

For the purpose of this study, home education is defined as the full-time education of children in and around the home by their parents or by their guardians, or by tutors employed by the parents or guardians. This education can be seen either as a temporary or as a permanent alternative to the full-time education offered by the State, usually through Local Education Authorities (LEAs), or by private schooling. Home education has sometimes, but not necessarily, involved the employment of tutors and governesses, by parents or guardians, or the use of correspondence courses. For the purpose of

this study, the term 'parents' shall include single parents and guardians.

Despite legislation making education compulsory for children between certain ages and despite the current identification of this period as 'compulsory school age', home education has always been legal and continues to be so. The legal history is further explained in Chapter two.

At present, in England and Wales, home education is governed by Section 36 of the 1944 Education Act which states that:

It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability, and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

It is the words 'or otherwise', which endorse the legal right of parents to home educate their children. The reasons for the inclusion of the words 'or otherwise', which give parents the legal right to home educate, are discussed in Chapter two.

It is only since the beginning of this century that LEAs in the United Kingdom have been involved in monitoring the efficiency of the education provided by the parent. An LEA consists of locally elected members of a local council, who are concerned with education matters within the political boundary where they have been elected and

who sit on an education committee. The role of the LEA is further explained in Chapter three. At present, it is the duty of LEAs to monitor the efficiency of the education provided by the parent; this duty in England and Wales is clearly set out in Section 37(1) of the 1944 Education Act:

If it appears to a local education authority that the parent of any child of compulsory school age in their area is failing to perform the duty imposed upon him ..., it shall be the duty of the authority to serve upon the parent a notice requiring him, ... to satisfy the authority that the child is receiving efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Although Sections 36 and 37 of the 1944 Education Act appear to define clearly the duties of parents and LEAs, court cases in England and Wales have clarified the meaning of these sections in the context of home education. Both the relevant sections of the Education Acts and the court cases involving home educators are presented and discussed in Chapter two.

The sections relating to home education in the 1980 Education (Scotland) Act (28 Eliz. c.44) and the Northern Ireland Statutory Instrument 1972/1263 have similar wording to the 1944 Education Act for England and Wales; the parent is expected to provide 'efficient ... education for [the child] suitable to his age, ability and aptitude'. The texts of these sections are given in full in Appendix 1.

In order to define home education, it is also necessary to interpret the meaning of the word 'education'.

Different interpretations can create problems when assessing 'efficient full-time education' provided by a parent. When relating the word 'education' to schooling, the Department of Education and Science (DES) expressed the view that:

There is general agreement that ... the humanities, mathematics, science, creative arts, physical, spiritual development should be the elements common to all curricula There should be opportunities in the latter part of the course for options which will match career interests, preferences and the emerging abilities of the individual It is commonly held that able pupils as they grow older require opportunities to study in depth, to embrace the ideals of scholarship and to become increasingly responsible for their own habits of study and their own progress.

(1977a, p31)

A checklist was also given of 'areas of experience':

The aesthetic and creative,
The ethical,
The linguistic,
The mathematical,
The physical,
The scientific,
The social and political,
The spiritual.

(Ibid, p45)

These 'areas of experience' were expanded in pages 46 and 47 of the same report. Later in the same document, the DES stated a belief that there would be 'wide agreement' that a child should be expected to be able to accomplish the following at the age of 16:

1. be able to participate effectively in a conversation; set down clearly what they want to

express; write letters and simple descriptive reports

2. be at ease with diagrams, symbols and graphs; have competence in arithmetic; understand money and the common units of measurement; use a pocket calculator
3. possess the dexterity and physical control necessary to develop manipulative skills
4. be able to draw on and apply the skills required to tackle a problem scientifically
5. have developed capacity for reasoning and judgement

In all these aspects there is need to consider the levels of competence that are appropriate and attainable for individual pupils.

(Ibid, p141)

Section 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Resolution 44/25, 1990, as reported by Bäckström, agreed that the aims of education should encompass the following:

The State's recognition that education should be directed at developing the child's personality and talents, preparing the child for active life as an adult, fostering respect for basic human rights and developing respect for the child's own cultural and national views and those of others.

(1989, p37)

Definitions and interpretations of 'education' vary greatly in the literature. Buckman, followed more closely Rousseau's views:

By education I mean a process of understanding the world, of acquiring the confidence to explore its workings.

(1973, p1)

Barrow believed that the level of education a person has received can be judged 'by his understanding and his capacity for discrimination' (1981, p38) and that schooling should lead to these goals. Pagnoni, himself a teacher and parent of home educated children, emphasised

that it is not only academic education which is important:

We should keep in mind what home schoolers seem to understand clearly - that the academic curriculum, although important, is only part of the total education of the child.

(1984, p73)

Craft et al. define education as a preparation for society and adult life:

Education is a social process, a preparation for the assumption of adult roles and values in a particular social and cultural context.

(1972, p4)

Coons and Sugarman, in commenting on previous attempts by others to define education, were very aware of the dilemma which faces people in the field of education:

Surveying the specific recommendations of the experts, one finds that some would teach children to work, others to loaf. Many exalt education for 'life', others for the after-life; some for responsibility or self-control, others for fun. Some hope to abolish schools altogether; others would eliminate only private or only public schools. Some would loose their children; some would bind. Some propose career education, others classical. If one seeks 'the answer', the picture is discouraging. No wonder many social scientists and educational leaders are truly puzzled.

(1978, p37)

Given the difficulty in interpreting 'education', it is thus not possible to define education as having a single unequivocal meaning in the context of home education.

This difficulty of the interpretation of 'education' in the context of home education has been demonstrated in the courts. The Harrison case in 1982 defined a 'suitable education' as that which would:

Prepare the children for life in a modern civilised society and to enable them to achieve their full potential.

(Court report, referenced in Appendix 4)

Autonomous learning was also recognised by the lower court. The 'autonomous' method of learning as defined by Blacker (1981, p26) 'uses neither timetable nor curriculum'. However, the judge in the appeal court ruled:

I would leave it [the definition] open and say no more about it than that the construction adopted by the learned judge in the court below is unquestionably ... a construction which was open to him and for which he could not be criticised.

(Court report, referenced in Appendix 4)

Further details of this case are given in section 2.5.1. There was an unwillingness on the part of the appeal court judge to define education; the definition of an 'efficient ... education' could thus vary, depending on the needs of the child under discussion and the person making the assessment.

Autonomous education is similar to that recognised as pedagogic-oriented home schooling in the United States. However, in pedagogic-oriented education:

Workbooks and textbooks, whether purchased as a packaged curriculum or collected by the parents, are adapted to fit into days that are organised around more informal and experiential learning.... These materials ... are based on the parents' perceptions of their children's individual needs and interests.

(Van Galen, 1988, p58)

Van Galen mentioned the use of externally supplied coursework which implies that pedagogic-oriented education could sometimes be more formal than autonomous

learning. These forms of education are further discussed in Chapter four.

In addition to the problems in defining 'education', the term 'full-time' education in Sections 36 and 37 of the 1944 Education Act has also never been defined. Full-time education could be believed to be as little as the number of hours provided by the LEAs when tutoring children who have been excluded from school. Alternatively, it could be considered as the number of hours of the statutory attendance for travelling children, who are required to attend 200 half-day school sessions in a twelve month period (Children's Legal Centre, 1987, p5). Full-time education could also be considered as the length of time of attendance at school per child per year, which is 400 half-day sessions, including a minimum of 3-4 hours of secular instruction each day (ibid, p9).

As 'efficient full-time education' has not been defined in the context of home education, it is not surprising that there have been instances of conflict between home educators and LEA officials, when those involved have defined 'efficient full-time education' in varying ways. This source of conflict between home educators and LEA officials is further explored in this thesis.

1.2 Home educators and LEAs

Past research into home education in the United Kingdom includes that by Blacker (1981), Brown (1978), Lowden (1988), Meighan (1984a, 1984b, 1988), and Webb (1988). Some of this research demonstrated that the manner in which LEAs interpreted their duties towards home educators varied considerably. For example Meighan concluded:

Officers of LEAs differ in their approach to home education. The records of Education Otherwise show that many LEAs have become sympathetic and have co-operated with many families over home education. Others are reported as vague, neutral, or grudgingly accepting. A few are noted as hostile.

(1984a, p279)

Brown (1978, p133) noted that 'the assumptions of one authority are not always the assumptions of another'. She expanded this further:

Not only was there difference between Local Education Authorities but sometimes difference within one single authority. Two ... families who were interviewed [by Brown], dealt with by different inspectors, one sympathetic, one hostile, received very different treatment. One inspector was friendly and helpful The other family were very coolly treated with several highly critical visits.

(Ibid, p135)

What is not explained in the above reference is whether the education that these two families were providing for their children was in fact markedly different: the one family which was 'coolly treated' may, or may not, have been providing suitable education for the child concerned.

Brown also cited 'one or two authorities who were extremely helpful'. She suggested that some LEA officials might not take kindly to questioning and being answerable to the public they serve:

[The] attitude of Local Education Authorities demonstrates their position among the 'people professions' - financed and administered by public authorities where in practice the people they serve are in no position to argue back. It comes as rather a shock to such professionals when they do; in fact the assumption often seems to be that rightly or wrongly, they have no moral or legal grounds for doing so.

(1978, p136)

Brown's view seems to be exaggerated, as public bodies can be held responsible for their actions and LEAs are no exception. The Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can be contacted; this is further explained in section 2.4.

Webb also noted that there was a variety of approaches to home educators from one LEA to another. She detailed individual instances of conflict between home educating families and LEA officials (1988, pp 529-538). A further example of the conflicting relationship of one family with an LEA was documented in New Era (Milner, 1976); it consisted of a series of letters between a home educator and the LEA which monitored the education he was providing for his children.

The variety of treatment from one LEA to another, was further illustrated by Education Otherwise which:

Strongly advise new members to find out the experience of other members of EO under the same local authority.

(1985, p37)

Much of the anecdotal research and publicity about home educators has been generated by the work of the group 'Education Otherwise' (EO, details are given in Appendix 2). This organisation was founded in the United Kingdom in 1976 and is run by home educating parents, mainly for the purpose of helping home educators. Brown (1978, pp96-101) and Johnson (1990, p49) gave details of the origins of the organisation; it is partly due to EO that more parents are currently aware of the legal right to home educate compared with a generation ago. EO gives initial advice and practical support to home educators when needed. It publishes a newsletter, Education Otherwise, every two months. The principal aims of the organisation, stated on the back of each newsletter, are to:

Encourage learning outside the school system;

re-affirm that parents have the 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.

As shall be demonstrated in this thesis, the aims of EO have sometimes clashed with the views of some LEA officials.

Bendell also mentioned the variety of treatment of home educators by LEA officials:

We knew there were families in some areas who were educating their children at home quite happily without any opposition from the authorities. We could gather this much from the Education Otherwise newsletters. However, the situation varied from county to county. We also knew of families in other areas who were running into difficulties. In some cases, they were being threatened with court action: there were one or two legal battles going on. Later we were even to hear of cases where families had to deal with the threat of a Care Order - of having their children taken into care by the local authorities - because of disputes over educational matters.

(1987, pp30-31)

In Chapter three of her book, Bendell described the stances taken by officials in her locality, indicating that some officials were supportive of her approach to education while one other was hostile. Meighan also noted that this was the case; he mentioned that the LEA officials in West Midlands were less in favour of home education among 'working class families':

Confusion arises because some LEAs approve some home education programmes and not others. In West Midlands Authorities at least there appeared to be an anti-working class bias.

(1984a, p280)

A survey by Blacker also demonstrated the existence of conflict between LEA officials and home educators. From the results of a questionnaire, Blacker (1981, p31), stated that nine authorities from a total of sixty-four (14%) showed a 'threatening' attitude. There have been many minor and some major conflicts. Examples of the smaller problems are reported regularly in Education Otherwise. These include a member who informed the LEA of an intention to home educate and wished she had not; she and her husband felt that the education they were to give

their son was probably not compatible with what the adviser 'wanted to hear' (Education Otherwise, Feb. 1985, p3). Another home educator's account of conflict was revealed when the LEA where he was residing:

Originally sent an educational welfare officer round, unannounced, to put 'the frighteners' on us. He scurried away with his tail between his legs when I told him the law, suggested I might charge him with harassment, and mentioned the Court of Human Rights. We then got a senior adviser. He and his colleagues chatted for two hours, received over 20 pages of requested 'programme' for [the daughter], and rejected it without explanation.

(Education Otherwise, April 1985, p2)

This family subsequently moved out of the LEA area of the officials concerned.

Knox noted that:

In some areas, home educators received great encouragement from Local Education Authority Advisers, but in others they were less welcomed, and in certain areas they appeared to be actively discriminated against.

(1989, p181)

Knox continued by giving examples of advisers who were supportive and others who were not. Rupik and Rupik (1989), founder members of the Children's Home-based Education Association (CHEA, details are given in Appendix 2), are the authors of a booklet for parents considering home educating. The publication claimed to be 'grounded on good legal advice and many years experience in the home education field'. In the section titled 'Your relationship with your LEA' Rupik and Rupik stated:

Most home educating families are able to strike a good professional relationship with their l.e.a.,

and in general those families that respect the position of their l.e.a. and are prepared to help it fulfil its duty have their own views respected in turn. However it is true that not all l.e.a.s are aware of the procedures involved regarding home education and the chance can never be ruled out that you may be unfortunate enough to live in an area where the l.e.a. is unsympathetic to home education, and who may 'try it on' in order to persuade you to send your child to school. Officials within an l.e.a. also differ in their outlook and whilst you may have a good relationship with one representative you may not be so lucky with the next Do not assume that because a person is involved in school education he automatically knows the laws and guidelines regarding home education. It is also unfortunately the case that l.e.a.s and their representatives are sometimes 'creative with the truth'.

The Rupiks expressed the view that it is only a minority of home educating families which experiences conflict with LEA officials, but as stated by Blacker, Brown, Meighan and Webb, LEA officials within one authority may have a variety of responses to individual families.

There has been a general assumption in the literature on home education that the variety of responses to families depends on the views of home education held by the individual official concerned; the variety of responses to home educators is thus not seen to be due to a perceived change in the educational needs of individual home educated children, or a different provision of education by parents from different families. The Rupiks, however, suggested that conflict could arise as a result of LEA policy when the LEA was 'unsympathetic to home education'. They also suggested that an LEA may be aware of the legal situation yet be 'creative with the truth'.

This would suggest that in some instances there was a hostility on the part of the LEA and its officials to home education generally and thus hostility towards the families involved regardless of the quality of home education being provided.

The hostility of some LEA officials to home education was also mentioned by Deutsch and Wolf:

Many people who work in the education system including, unfortunately, some LEA ... officers who deal with home educating families, are very hostile to home education. They try to keep families in ignorance of their rights and to intimidate those who are unsure.

(1991, p1)

Meighan also laid the blame for conflict on LEAs and the way they were handling the situation. His view of LEAs new to the concept of home education, was shown in the following:

New inexperienced LEAs appear to go through a stage of hysteria starting with ignorant claims of illegality, to obsessive visiting, lengthy correspondence, until some kind of reason prevails. Few appear to consult officials of other experienced LEAs, even when this is suggested. Urban LEAs seem to react in a more hostile manner than rural.

(1984a, pp279-80)

Fisher et al. acknowledged these behaviours as described by Bendell, Deutsch and Wolf, Meighan and Rupik and Rupik as negotiating tactics:

There are many tactics and tricks people can use to try to take advantage of you They range from lies and psychological abuse to various forms of pressure tactics. They may be illegal, unethical or simply unpleasant.

(1987, p134)

Fisher et al. further explained these negotiating tactics (pp 137-143).

A small number of instances of conflict between home educators and LEAs has been brought to the courts. There had been some important cases at the beginning of this century which confirmed the option of a parent to home educate a child, but Joy Baker's was the first documented case of a home educator who experienced legal confrontation with an LEA, following the implementation of the 1944 Education Act. Her correspondence with the LEAs involved began in 1953 and she was in and out of court for at least eight years to defend her right to home educate and choose the type of education she felt was best for her children (Baker, 1964). Details of this family are further documented and discussed in Chapters two and four of this thesis. Other legal cases are also discussed in Chapter two.

The wide variety of LEA reaction to home educators since 1944 demonstrated a lack of policy at national level (Lowden, 1989, pp132-133). The literature on home education also suggested an unsystematic approach by many of the LEAs, and sometimes an apparent lack of knowledge of the law, or a lack of compliance with it.

The above extracts from the literature on home education demonstrated:

- the existence of conflict between home educators and LEAs. The cited literature was also supported by the court reports which are examined in Chapter two;
- that the level of conflict varied from one LEA to another. However, the number of LEAs which had experienced conflict was unknown at the beginning of the present study. Also unknown were the views of LEA officials who had been or were involved in conflict with home educating families;
- that the views of officials within one LEA could vary. This was endorsed by evidence obtained in the interviews I held with LEA officials, details of which are given in Chapter three;
- that the conflicting situations arose as a result of LEA policy and actions.
- that published studies of conflict between LEA officials and home educators tended to report from the aspect of the home educator.

This thesis attempts to redress the balance and clarify the views and attitudes of LEA officials. LEAs have been subject to criticism in part of the literature, but the LEA officials' own experiences of conflict with home educators have not hitherto been documented. In order to

do so, it is helpful to consider the contribution of conflict theory.

1.3 Conflict theory

The literature on home education to date has cited examples of conflict and misunderstanding between the LEA officials and home educators. There have been court cases and individual instances cited by Brown (1978), Deutsch and Wolf (1986), Education Otherwise (1985), Lowden (1988), Meighan (1984a and 1984b) and Webb (1988).

Much has been written about conflicts between nations and within families or businesses (see, for instance, Banks 1984, Burton 1969, 1990, Dunnette 1976, Folber and Taylor 1984, Leung 1988, Rappoport 1965 and issues of the Journal of Conflict Resolution). However there has been little application of conflict theory to relationships between, on the one hand bodies funded directly or indirectly by the state, and on the other private individuals or families. It is necessary to turn to more general research on conflict and to extract elements which can be applied to conflict between LEA officials and home educating families. From the literature available, it has been, however, possible to establish:

- the meaning of conflict;

- that the personalities of the people involved are important;
- the significance of both the ability to communicate of the people involved and the level of communication between them;
- the importance of preconceived ideas held by each party;
- the possible misinterpretations by individuals of the actions of others in the conflict situation; and
- an analysis of conflict resolution.

Thomas felt that a conflict situation arose when 'the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible' and that conflict was:

The process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his.

(1976, p891)

In such instances of frustration, a person reacts assertively or cooperatively. Assertive behaviour involves the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his own concerns, while cooperative behaviour demonstrates the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns.

When defining conflict, Terhune agreed with Thomas, believing that:

Conflicts, almost by definition, involve an incompatibility of interests between contending parties.

(1970, p196)

Terhune thus emphasised the incompatibility of interests, but in the context of home education, this could also be an apparent incompatibility, one in which communication could be constructively used to reduce the apparent differences. Burton specified the communication by defining it as 'controlled communication' and from his research found that:

The impressive lesson was that in analysis and in resolution of conflict it was communication between the parties that was instructive and effective.

(1969, p7)

The level of conflict could thus be greatly reduced, by meaningful communication, bringing to the people involved a greater understanding of the situation and of each other. The communication skills involve both verbal and non-verbal interaction. This was further explained by Bell (1988) although he noted a lack of research into non-verbal communication in situations involving negotiation in conflict resolution. Knowles noted that the mis- and non-communication by home educating parents "impeded administrators' understandings of home schools" (1987, p7).

Nicholson described a state of conflict as existing:

When two people wish to carry out acts which are mutually inconsistent.

(1970, p2)

A situation, such as Nicholson suggested, could arise in the context of home education, if an LEA official were to believe that, for a particular child, the education

provided by the parents was inadequate; if the parents were of the opinion that the education was adequate, there would then be an inconsistency, and any conflict would have to be resolved. Conflict could also exist if an LEA official were to try to insist on monitoring the education of a particular child in the home and the parent were to believe this unnecessary. (These aspects are further discussed in Chapter two.)

The encouragement of positive outcomes to interactions increases the possibility of such outcomes occurring. Rupik and Rupik (1989) encouraged home educators to be positive in encounters with LEA officials. Such an attitude agreed with Terhune's analysis of behaviour. He believed the anticipation of another's behaviour to be important:

Behaviour potentials may also take the form of generalized expectations about others in the form of human nature, general trust-mistrust of others, generalized hostilities or feelings of kinship with others, and so on.

(1970, p197)

Terhune continued by emphasising the difficulty of interpreting an act made by one of the people engaged in the conflict:

A major characteristic of conflict situations that make them highly susceptible to idiosyncratic influences of the actors is the fact that the intention underlying a particular act is seldom obvious. An ostensibly cooperative move may be either a genuinely cooperative act or an attempt to lure another into a vulnerable position. Similarly, an apparent uncooperative act may be either aggressive or defensive in intent. Given such ambiguities, the

interpretation of one actor's actions by another is likely to be a function of the latter's predispositions, such as tendencies to be trusting or suspicious ... personality characteristics may be expected significantly to affect behaviour in cooperation and conflict.

(Ibid, p198)

It is not only perception of behaviour at a time of conflict which is important, but also the prior concepts that each party to the potential conflict has of each other.

When conflict arises in the monitoring of home education each side attempts to secure control over the education of the child concerned. Raven and Kruglanski pointed out that each of the parties to this 'power-conflict relationship':

Enters the conflict situation with prior perceptions and evaluations both of himself and the other.... [these perceptions] determine ... the extent of compliance of the recipient of the influence, the degree of acceptance of change, and subsequent patterns of interaction.

(1970, p82)

It has already been shown, and will be further illustrated in this study, that the level of conflict between home educators and the LEA officials varies a great deal. At one end of the spectrum, there is a deep rooted conflict in those instances where there is a profound difference of opinion between the parties: this can involve for example a different definition of 'education' or perceiving the educational needs of a particular child in very different ways. At the other end of the spectrum the conflict may stem from ignorance or

false assumptions on the part of either party: this can involve ignorance of the law, or ignorance of the procedures adopted by the LEA, or false assumptions by home educators about the characteristics of 'officials' or by officials about the characteristics of 'home educators'. In these instances of ignorance or generally false assumptions, how damaging the conflict becomes depends very much on the personalities of those involved and their prior concepts of the other party.

Certain types of personality have been found to relate to increased conflict:

Personality traits that have been found to correlate with increased conflict are high authoritarianism, high dogmatism, and low self-esteem.

(Lindelow and Scott, 1989, p342)

Leung hypothesised that:

The higher the stakes involved in a dispute, the more likely the dispute will be pursued.

(1988, p126)

In conflict situations relating to home education, both home educators and LEA officials are likely to believe that the education of a particular child is important.

Conflict can either be seen as a negative or as a 'creative and positive occurrence' (Lippert, 1982, p68).

Dahrendorf also believed that conflict could be constructive in society. He stated that:

Not the presence, but the absence of conflict is surprising and abnormal, and we have good reason to be suspicious if we find a society or a social

organisation that displays no evidence of conflict.

(1958, p126)

Dahrendorf also made the point that effective and speedy resolution was important. When 'carried too far, too long ... we must recognise the destructive nature of conflict' (Lippett, 1982, p68). Thus, society may evolve in some circumstances because conflict is present, but for individuals, speedy resolution is a necessity, particularly when children are involved. This was recognised by the Children Act 1989, Section 2:

In any proceedings in which any question with respect to the upbringing of a child arises, the court shall have regard to the general principle that any delay in determining the question is likely to prejudice the welfare of the child.

It is thus important to recognise the presence of conflict and pinpoint differences which have to be resolved as quickly as possible.

Porter and Taplin (1987) listed the means of conflict resolution from a 'compilation and synthesis of many sources'. The sources were from the areas of international relations, labour relations and the 'vast literature of law and judicial decision'. From the nature of its generality, the list which Porter and Taplin created can mostly be applied to the resolution of conflict between home educators and LEA officials. Schultz (1989), however, cautioned that different styles of conflict resolution may not be suitable in all

circumstances. Porter and Taplin recognised eight approaches to conflict resolution:

- avoidance;
- conquest;
- education and contact;
- spontaneous remission;
- transactional resolution;
- arbitration;
- judicial decision; and
- non-reconciliation.

It is doubtful whether arbitration or non-reconciliation are options in instances of conflict involving home educators. However, each of the various approaches to resolution suggested by Porter and Taplin are discussed below.

Avoidance: This involves the withdrawal of one or other of the parties and can be seen as a result of 'indifference, ignorance or reliance upon fate' (Thomas, 1976, p901).

Conquest: This occurs when one side gives up and declares defeat as the other side is overwhelmingly powerful. This could involve the LEA officials who 'may try it on in order to persuade you to send your child to school' or 'are sometimes creative with the truth' (Rupik and Rupik, 1989). If successful, it could result in the parents sending the child to school contrary to their wishes. On

the other hand, with pressure on LEA resources, officials may not have sufficient time to approach conflict with a home educating family. If such an instance were to arise, it would seem to the home educating family that they had made a conquest as they were seemingly no longer monitored by the LEA, or the LEA no longer pursued their objectives with the same enthusiasm. Lowden also believed that LEAs were reluctant to engage in legal proceedings (Lowden, 1988, p122).

Education and contact: This involves giving supporting arguments and supplying additional information. Swingle (1970, p76) referred to this as 'informational influence'. Both Education Otherwise (1985, p34) and Bendell (1987, p107) recommended this means of resolving differences. Deutsch (1958, pp 265-279) also endorsed communication leading to trust as an important factor in conflict resolution.

Spontaneous remission: One side acts irrationally by ceasing conflict and moving away from further conflict. This reaction to conflict will depend very much on the characters of those involved. Spontaneous remission could occur if a home educating family were to move to or choose to live in another LEA area if the parents believed that conflict were likely to occur.

Transactional resolution: Porter and Taplin divided this section into two parts - direct negotiation and mediation. Direct negotiation is a solution when:

There is enough contact and interaction ... to engage in a procedural encounter that will reduce or terminate contact.

(1987, p24)

This view was also taken by Pruitt (1981). In situations involving home educators, the termination of contact would seem not to be applicable, as contact between the LEA and the home educator cannot cease (apart from the instances of conflict avoidance and spontaneous remission). Contact can, however, be reduced when a mutually agreed solution has been reached, possibly involving compromise. Compromise is defined by Van der Vliert and Hordijk as:

A mutually acceptable settlement between two conflicting parties in which each party makes some concession.

(1988, p681)

Mediation, involving a third party can be applicable, when the Ombudsman or the Secretary of State are approached. This is further discussed in section 2.4. (See also Folber and Taylor, 1984).

Arbitration: This solution is seen to be similar to mediation, but involves an award, often financial, which is decided by a third party. This is not applicable in instances of conflict involving home educators.

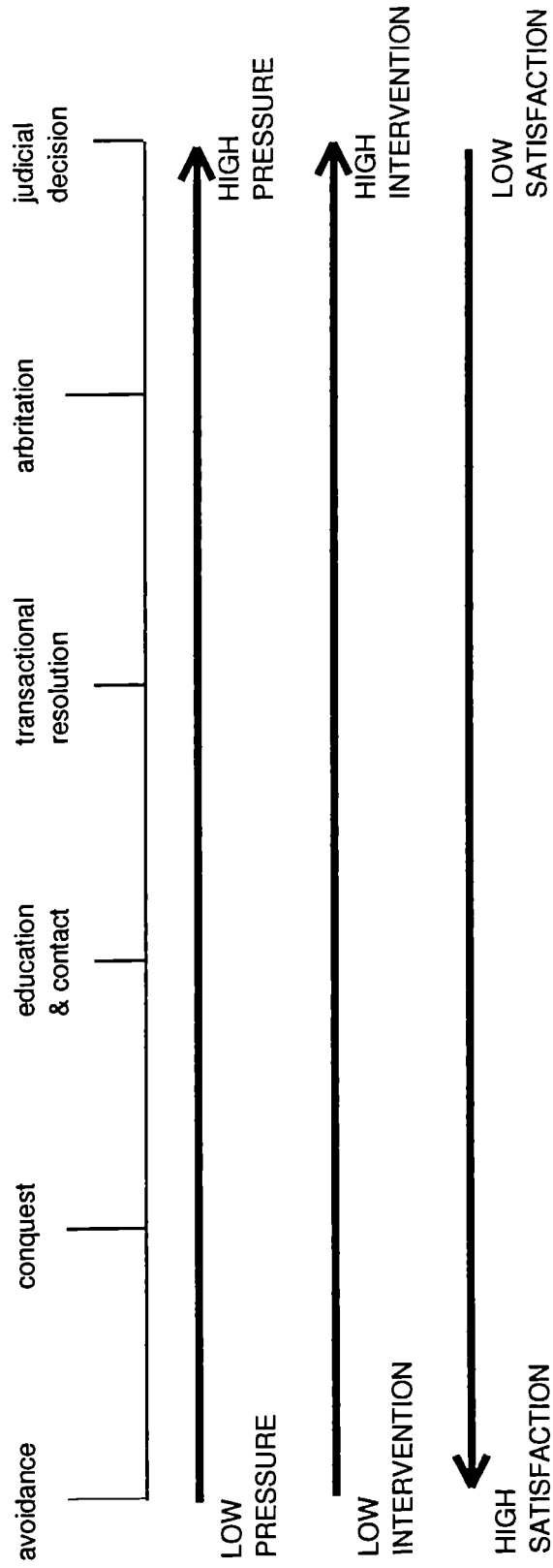
Judicial decision: this form of conflict resolution involves court cases. Only a few cases involving home educators have reached the courts. They are discussed in section 2.5.

Non-reconciliation: It would appear not to be an alternative in cases of home education. The home educated child must by law be educated with the approval of both the parents and the LEA, unless the outcome is decided in a court of law.

Porter and Taplin also explained each of the alternative solutions in terms of the coercive pressure brought to bear on each of the parties involved, and the degree of satisfaction involved following resolution by adopting each of the solutions (1987, pp34-35). It can be seen from Figure 1.1 that the greater the level of conflict, pressure and intervention the lower the satisfaction of the participants. The 'education and contact' solution is the least stressful and has a relatively high level of satisfaction, producing a positive solution, but will depend very much on the personalities and communication skills of those involved. Transactional resolution (negotiation and mediation), where contact can be reduced involved medium levels of satisfaction.

Existing conflict between LEA officials and a home educating family can thus be effectively reduced when:

Figure 1.1 : The relation of the resolution of conflict to pressure, intervention and satisfaction



based on Porter and Taplin (1987, pp 34-35)

- the education and the level of understanding of each party are increased;
- communication is improved;
- positive outcomes are encouraged;
- a contract suitable to each individual situation is drawn up between the conflicting parties, thus defining terms and clarifying the duties of each party;
- there is effective mediation.

The research attempted to improve the level of understanding of LEA procedures, attitudes and problems and to assess whether a contract suitable for many home educators and LEAs was feasible. It was also attempted to ascertain whether it was possible to reduce instances of conflict involving legal proceedings by analysing the problems and foreseeing when they could arise. Burton termed this 'provention' and believed it to be a significant way of reducing overall conflict:

The term provention has been introduced to signify taking steps to remove sources of conflict, and more positively to promote conditions in which collaborative and valued relationships control behaviour.

(1990, introduction)

1.4 Current research

As has already been stated, much of the past research into home education centred on the home educator; the procedures of the LEAs and attitudes of LEA officials had not been investigated in detail. Home education literature in the United States also reflected this.

The research which forms the basis of this thesis set out to:

- describe and analyse the major conflicts which have arisen between home educators and the LEAs; such major conflicts have strongly influenced the level of cooperation existing today. The historical and legal backgrounds to home education are investigated in Chapter two.

- describe and analyse the procedures used by LEA officials when monitoring home educators, the attitudes of these officials towards home educating parents, towards the home and towards the variety of education provided by parents and the difficulties experienced by officials when monitoring home educating families.

- describe and analyse the main reasons why parents choose to educate their children at home and to assess whether these reasons could explain some aspects of

conflict between home educators and the LEAs. These reasons are discussed in Chapter four.

Although there are differences between the education laws in Scotland, Northern Ireland and England and Wales, they are in principle very similar when concerned with home education (Chapter two and Appendix 1). The investigation into home education was therefore intended to cover the whole of the United Kingdom.

As no funding was available, it was not possible to interview officials from the Education and Library Boards who were involved in the monitoring of home educators in Northern Ireland. However, the Department of Education for Northern Ireland was contacted and through it, a telephone interview was arranged with an official in one of the Education and Library Boards. This was not as helpful as it first seemed: the Board concerned believed there to have been only one home educating family some years previously. The unique educational situation in Northern Ireland and the lack of face to face interviews made in depth analysis extremely difficult. Northern Ireland is, however, included in the current work as far as possible. Details of the legal aspects are given in Chapter two and Appendix 1. I also attempted to obtain information about the practices in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, but there was perhaps resistance to being included in a survey covering the United Kingdom.

However, Jersey did respond, indicating that in the view of the officials, there were no known home educators.

The opinions of the legal coordinators for Education Otherwise (EO) were sought both in England and Wales and in Scotland. The founders of the Children's Home-Based Education Association (CHEA) were also telephoned. Contact was made, by telephone and/or in person, with officials concerned with home education in the Department of Education and Science (DES), London, the Welsh Education offices (WEO), both in London and Cardiff, the Scottish Education Department (SED) in Edinburgh and the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) (including the legal department).

The major part of the data was collected from LEAs by both interview and questionnaire. Interviews with officials from six LEAs took place during the period when the questionnaire was being devised, so that a better understanding could be gained of the problems facing LEA officials. It was also intended that the proportionate response rate might be increased if the questionnaire were clearly perceived by LEA officials as being highly relevant to their work. Half of the LEA officials visited were asked to complete draft questionnaires and to discuss the content of the individual questions. In order to provide the qualitative and quantitative information required to make an assessment of the LEAs' approaches to

home education, the questionnaire was distributed to all LEAs in the United Kingdom. Copies of the final questionnaire are shown in Appendix 3.

The questionnaire was devised during the latter part of 1987 and early 1988 and was distributed before Easter, 1988. This date was chosen so that the questionnaire would arrive when the recipients would be making fewer visits to schools and might have more time for administrative matters. For the same reason, it was intended to wait until the end of the summer term before making a telephone follow up to those LEAs which had not initially responded. The follow-up was done gradually during the summer months and the questionnaire was analysed during the winter of 1988/89. Since July 1988, and particularly during the telephone follow-up, LEA officials have talked openly and frankly on the telephone, giving the opportunity for informal interviews. Furthermore, officials from two other LEAs were visited, giving a total of eight in all. Both the telephone interviews and the personal interviews provided much valuable material which assisted greatly, not only in formulating the questionnaire, but also in interpreting the results of the responses to the questionnaire.

During the initial phase of this study, research was carried out into both the legal and historical

backgrounds to home education; the results are reported in Chapter two. The structure of LEAs and the results of the interviews with LEA officials are discussed in Chapter three as a necessary preliminary to presenting the results of the responses to the questionnaire. The reasons why some parents choose to educate their children at home are discussed in Chapter four; the reasons given are based on the existing literature on home education and on the views of LEA officials given during the interviews conducted during this study. The results of the questionnaire survey carried out for this dissertation are presented in Chapters five and six. Chapter seven gives an analysis of the research and draws various policy conclusions aimed both at reducing conflict between LEA officials and home educators and at improving cooperation in the future.

CHAPTER 2: Home education, Parliament, government and the courts

The relationship of education to the law has historically been influenced by cultural attitudes, political circumstances, perceived economic needs and the changing role of children in society. The aims of this chapter are to place home education in this historical setting and to give the background of the sections of the Acts of Parliament which relate to home education at the present time; the court cases which clarify these sections of the Education Acts are also discussed.

2.1 Home education and the introduction of compulsory education

The freedom of parents to choose to educate their children at home has never been opposed by Parliament. Before state education was introduced, it was not unusual in all parts of what is now the United Kingdom for children from the middle or upper classes to be taught at home either by parents, or tutors or governesses employed by parents. In Scotland, various attempts at the provision of universal education had been made, but such provision was not written into law until the Acta Parliamentorum Gulielmi of 1696. These Acts compelled:

The heritors of every parish to provide a commodious house for a school and a small salary for a schoolmaster.

(Mackie, 1965, p253)

thus making education generally available in Scotland, but not compulsory.

The following assessment of the history of education gives the commonly accepted view of education before 1870 and the introduction of schooling for all which is provided by a number of standard works on the history of education, including Armytage (1970), Curtis (1965), David (1980), Scotland (1969) and Wardle (1970, 1974). Before the First World War, a basic education of reading and writing was not readily available to all children in the United Kingdom (McCann, 1968, p22); prior to 1870 it was possible for a child to live an 'adult' existence, working in paid employment for long hours in unsatisfactory conditions. Such institutions of education as were available, were frequently used for child minding rather than for learning. Only one in seven children attended school and '... not more than a quarter of the pupils were receiving a satisfactory education.' (Curtis, 1965, p250)

There is a very widespread idea amongst the general public that the Act of 1870 inaugurated universal free compulsory elementary education. Nothing is further from the truth. It was one thing to provide school places, but a very different thing to see that they were filled, and much of the interest in the next twenty-five years lay in the efforts to secure regular attendance, to make the schools free, and to raise the average leaving age. (Ibid, p282)

The main opportunities for education in England and Wales which existed before the Education Act of 1870 were:

- church schools
- dame schools
- endowed and grammar schools
- home education
- private boarding schools
- trade schools

In Scotland, there were also parish schools and academies and in Ireland 'hedge schools'. All these provisions of education, with the exception of home education, are very well documented in the history of education literature which is generally available, but there is conversely little mention of home education. There are, however, a few specialist references such as Kamm (1965), Pollock (1983) and Wardle (1970) which refer briefly to home education.

Between 1790 and 1910, a number of manuals of home education was published. Examples include those by Abbott (1883), Edgeworth and Edgeworth (1798), Mason (1906), Peabody (1887), and Taylor (1838). 'Practical Education', by Maria and Richard Edgeworth was perhaps the first guide to home education although they 'exercised a remarkable influence on educational ideas of the early 19th century' (Curtis, 1965, p143). 'Practical Education' was first published in 1798 and by 1822 had been

reprinted at least five times. The Edgeworths are mentioned by Birchenough as:

Being representative of that considerable body of middle-class opinion that favoured a domestic, in preference to a school education for its boys and girls.

(1925, p265)

Between 1838 and 1851 there were five editions of Taylor (1838, specified in Higson, 1967). The study of the use of such home education manuals seems generally to have been overlooked in the standard works on the history of education.

After the Industrial Revolution and before education for all in England and Wales, there was a need for workers proficient in languages, mathematics and more technical skills to develop new ideas and to encourage trade with other countries. Beattie (1980), when investigating the proliferation of language teaching books in the first half of the nineteenth century, indicated that much learning must have been done privately. Beattie also demonstrated that the number of tutors and language books was far greater than the number of schools available, although the use of these language books may have been in part for adult education.

When, in 1870, the concept of compulsory education was introduced, in a biography of Jonathan Schofield, a mill worker of Staleybridge, the perceived option to home educate was quite clearly expressed:

Jonathan Schofield at one moment appeared to be the herald of a vast battalion of parents hostile to the provision of schools on a national scale. But just as suddenly and unexpectedly, he retracted his claims, so too did the threat of a nation-wide backlash disappear. All that remained by way of hostility to the 1870 Act was the determination of a very few parents to educate their own children.

(Betts, 1989, p103)

David (1980) acknowledged home education, but only for girls being taught by tutors and governesses. Before the 1870 Education Act:

The daughters of the middle classes either attended private, 'family' schools or, if their parents could afford it, were educated at home by governesses. The schools provided for such girls tended to be run by women who owned the school, taught in it and may have made a profit from so doing. As the century wore on, it became more fashionable ... for girls to be educated within the home. It was proof of the fathers' respectability and station in life that they could afford staff both to run their homes and educate their daughters.

(David, 1980, p22)

Home education was not only for girls as David suggested, nor was it only for children who were 'aristocratic, ill or abroad' as Webb believed (1988, p65). William Pitt, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Macaulay, Jeremy Bentham, Samuel Coleridge and Alexander Pope were all largely home educated and often by their parents (McCurdy, 1960). Herbert Spencer (Musgrove, 1966, p29) and the explorer Ernest Shackleton were partly educated at home:

Until the age of eleven and a half, Shackleton was educated at home by a governess.

(Huntford, 1989, p7)

Similarly, in an autobiography, Vera Brittain wrote:

When I was eleven our adored governess departed and my family moved ... in order that Edward and I might be sent to 'good' day schools.

(1980, p27)

The Durrell family and Beatrix Potter were home educated for some, or all, of their years of compulsory education. Other examples of home educated people are cited by Goertzel and Goertzel (1965, pp257-267).

These are famous and thus well documented cases. Not every home educated child would have been gifted or distinguished: in both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, there must have been others lacking fame, both male and female who were regularly educated at home. Wardle mentioned that in 1851 '50,000 children were taught at home by tutors and governesses' but no sources are given (1970, p118). He also stated that:

Teaching by private tutors was surprisingly common in the nineteenth century even among families in quite modest circumstances.

(Ibid, p118)

With the exception of a brief mention by Birchenough (1925) and those by David (1980) and Wardle (1970), two features of importance to this thesis are common and permeate much of the writing of general educational historians. First, the effect of home education in the past is disregarded: Armytage (1970) for example is considered to be a standard work on the history of education, and is not alone in ignoring home education completely, not even giving it a mention. Second, education and schooling are thought to be synonymous; the

term 'compulsory schooling' is frequently used rather than 'compulsory education'; this can lead to a non-justifiable conclusion that school itself is compulsory. Even the wording of the 1944 Education Act is inconsistent; Section 36 refers to 'children of compulsory school age', and not 'the age of compulsory education'. A further example of the confusion between compulsory schooling and compulsory education is in the Education Fact File (Statham et al., 1989, p42) which mentions 'compulsory school attendance' and 'compulsory schooling' (p44); it is also falsely stated in the Education Fact file that the 1918 Education Act 'removed the exemptions to the requirement to attend school'. (Section 3 of the 1918 Education Act is given in Appendix 1.) However, this confusion exists in much of the history of education literature and in academic thinking.

There might have been a cultural desire among educational historians to demonstrate that there was a great improvement in education when schooling was made available to all children; there might also have been a wish to make other types of education seem undesirable (apart from public schools, which were available for the wealthy). For example, one of the instances mentioned by Curtis details a school in Liverpool, where the mistress was 'assisted by her daughter':

The mistress cannot write; she makes a mark for her name in signing it She said she was obliged to leave the school very much to her

daughter, as she was a 'martyr to spasms'. There was a strong smell of some spirit or other, and she seemed in a maudlin condition.

(1965, p275)

Historians, such as Curtis, thus emphasise the unfavourable types of education or the lack of education for large numbers of children and omit an important minority which was often socially privileged and educated at home by parents, governesses or tutors. The efficiency of the education provided at home would have depended on the personalities, knowledge and skills of the parents, guardians and tutors concerned and the facilities that were available in and around the home. This dearth of knowledge about home education and its history among students of education, due to lack of discussion in the literature, must contribute to the general impression of those working in education, that home education could be considered unusual. It is, in fact, the oldest form of education.

Although the right to schooling for all was enacted in 1696 in Scotland, the introduction of the Education Act of 1870 in England and Wales was timely for political reasons. This has been well documented elsewhere. David (1980), Mann (1979) and Wardle (1974) gave detailed accounts of the variety of schooling and the reasons for it, some of which are given below.

From the start, the reasons adduced for compulsory education were various. Manufacturers hoped that

discipline at school would ensure a similarly disciplined future workforce and thus output would be increased. There were, for instance, high levels of absenteeism and bad timekeeping in mining and manufacturing (David, 1980. p40). Others of a more radical persuasion believed that a social revolution was not possible until more of the population was educated and more aware of its rights. (This aspect was well documented in Steedman, 1990). Church people wanted more children to be able to read the Bible. Mothers often had to go to work; with the movement of people from the rural areas to the towns and cities, the extended family was no longer always available for child minding. There was also the problem of increasing adult unemployment; by encouraging children away from the labour market and into school, the number of jobs available for adults would increase, thus reducing unemployment (David, 1980, p37). This was mirrored a century later with the raising of the school leaving age at a time of increasing unemployment. Mann (1979, p5) also suggested that the technology of European countries which was displayed at the Paris exhibition of 1867 would lead to higher demand for technical training. Wardle (1974, p54) related the increase in the provision of elementary education to the perceived need for greater military might and a disciplined army. The introduction of schooling for all was not always supported for reasons which had much to do with an altruistic belief in the educational betterment of the poor.

It can be concluded that there is a great deal written about schooling and the reasons and need for schooling, but there is a general lack of attention in history of education literature to education provided in the home by parents, governesses or tutors. There is scope for further research in this area.

2.2 State control of education and the assumption of parental responsibility in England and Wales

As shall be demonstrated, during the twentieth century, there is evidence that the responsibilities of parents for their children have been reduced; some parents have shunned the responsibilities of parenthood while others believed that state education would be good for their offspring. Sutherland maintained that this has been a general long-term trend:

Reduction of parent power ... has been a matter of slow evolution in different countries during many centuries.

(1988, p64)

She also provided details of the legislation which was passed to protect children in extreme cases where parents had shunned their responsibilities:

Legislation has provided for removal of the child from the parents' care if physical injury to the child is being inflicted, or if the child's physical health is threatened by the conditions parents provide. Similarly, if the moral well-being of the child seems in danger because of the

home conditions or the behaviour of the parents, again, social agencies can remove the child from the parents' care.

(Ibid, p64-5).

It is not only in such extreme instances that parental responsibilities have been reduced. Musgrove felt that parents willingly ceded the responsibility:

[The family] seems to have staged a voluntary and deliberate withdrawal brought about by the 'final eclipse' of the domestic industry and the increase of non-domestic employment of children.

(1966, p5)

In 1904, a report of the Inter-departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration was published. The Committee was convened because it had been noticed that potential army recruits were undernourished and in some areas, children at school were starving and thus ill-prepared for an active school day. The report stated that:

It was nevertheless acknowledged that the evils arising from underfeeding were so widespread, and in certain localities so pressing, that some authoritative intervention is called for at the earliest possible moment to secure that the education of the children who are obliged to attend school shall not be hampered and retarded by the physical conditions thereby engendered.

(Fitzroy, 1904, p66)

Over many pages, the conditions which the committee found are specified. On page 68, however, it mentioned that the numbers of such children were 16% of the elementary school children in London and 15% in Manchester. Although this must have been a large number of children in total, the Education (Provisions of Meals) Act 1907 was enacted for all children, although it was not necessarily needed by the majority. This Act provided for school meals and

for school medical officers for children in England and Wales.

In providing meals, rather than stimulating a better distribution of wealth or a programme of health education and care, parents were partly relieved of two fundamental family responsibilities, first, ensuring the child was maintained in good health and second, ensuring that the child was well fed. In the 1944 Education Act, there was a further example of the state provision of nourishment for children attending school with the introduction of school milk.

Wardle thought that there was an assumption of welfare roles by the state and that home was not considered as 'an ally, but an obstacle in the educational process' (1974, p146).

Much modern thinking about the social function of education is based upon the same gloomy estimate of society as an educational instrument, and the consequent necessity for rescue work to be done by schools and similar formally organised institutions.

(Ibid, p101)

Wardle thus believed that educational institutions wished to 'redeem' children from the negative effects of society.

There was, therefore, a trend towards the state supplying for all children what some parents did not provide; money was spent by the state directly on children and was

monitored, and/or provided for, in the school environment. Many parents could not provide an academic education, but nearly all parents could have been directed to improve the physical well-being of their children. However, intervention by Act of Parliament obviously had a more immediate effect. The state saw its role as providing for all children that which only some parents could not or would not provide:

And the authorities almost became children's authorities, responsible for education, employment, health, welfare and care services for children.

(Mann, 1979, p21)

In 1948, the responsibilities for care were transferred from the local authorities to the 'newly established children's committees' (ibid, p22). The effect of central government was to transfer part of the responsibility for bringing up the child from the parent to the state. Later, this was also extended to such things as art, drama, music, sport, and visiting museums and art galleries. It has thus been accepted as normal in the United Kingdom that the state looks after the general welfare of the child.

More recently, the trend towards the assumption of parental responsibilities by the state in the United Kingdom may have been halted. There has been a change in the financial position of some schools. When combined with the appointment of more parent governors, the level of parental involvement in children's education is likely

to increase and the responsibility of the LEA for children's education may consequently decrease.

It may be relevant that, of the four most far reaching Education Acts in England and Wales (1870, 1918, 1944, 1988), two have been enacted during times of high levels of unemployment and the other two during world wars. During the wars, freedoms of the people were curtailed from necessity; there was a reduction in both the freedom of movement and the freedom of information. The population became accustomed to being informed about what was best. All areas of living became affected e.g. food, clothing, occupations of the workforce, housing. Education was not an exception. During the Second World War children were evacuated, without their parents, to homes they had never seen before, and looked after by people they did not know (Wicks, 1988). This was considered to be for their own good; it was considered safer to be out of the cities and in more rural areas. The feelings of the children were rarely considered to be important and some showed signs of being severely disturbed while others benefited.

In the early 1940s the nearly total acceptance of anything that the government declared was for the 'good of the country' was the background in which the 1944 Act was prepared and passed through Parliament. It provided the legislation which is relevant to home education at

present and set up the Local Education Authorities as they are known today. The 1944 Education Act and other Acts of Parliament as they relate to home education are discussed below.

2.3 Sections of Education Acts which currently apply to home education in England and Wales

Sections of the Education Acts which now apply to home education both in Northern Ireland and in Scotland were discussed in detail neither in the House of Commons nor the House of Lords during the passage of the Bills. It has consequently been necessary to exclude Northern Ireland and Scotland from much of the discussion in this section. However, all sections of the Acts of Parliament which relate to home education in the United Kingdom are given in Appendix 1.

The second reading in the House of Commons of the 1944 Education Bill (given in Hansard), which related to education in England and Wales, shows that it was not only historians who did not consider home education; most Members of Parliament also seemed unaware that some children were educated at home. The sections pertaining to home education (Sections 36, 37 and an amendment which became Section 76) were discussed in Parliament at length, particularly the words 'or otherwise'. Hugh

Lawson M.P. began the discussion on Section 36 by referring to the words 'either by regular attendance at school or otherwise':

The Bill is a step forward, but it still leaves this principle of education for the ordinary folk and education for the privileged, and it is something against which I wish to protest very strongly indeed, this fact of the two systems of education, which divides the community into two classes.

From this passage in Hansard, it appears that he believed the phrase referred only to those children who were to be educated in private schools. He continued:

Those Members who want to see the continuation of a society based on class privilege will support this clause; to those who want a different system, those who want to see the abolition of class privilege, I shall give a chance of showing that they disagree with this clause.

The debate continued, discussing privilege and class. Sir Frederick Messer declared that, 'Every child should be made to go to school'. Later, Percy Barstow M.P. said:

The last two words in the clause are 'or otherwise'. Although we are discussing the educational system of the future, we are not even concerned with whether the parent sends his child to school, or keeps him at home under private tuition. We are going to continue the pernicious system of allowing one child to go to a village school, or a council school, and another to go to a preparatory school.

In the middle of this quite lengthy debate, one Member of the House, Alderman David Logan M.P., who represented Liverpool, Scotland Division, was the only one to express his views on the important implications of this section of the Bill. He declared that he could not see anything in the clause with which to disagree. He continued:

If I had a child of tender years, and I thought that from a moral point of view, it would be better for that child to have tuition in private, or at home, I would arrange such tuition. It can be done at home, and it used to be done in the Middle Ages. (HON. MEMBERS: 'Oh,') And it was done remarkably well. I have not found anything better to-day in our public schools than some of the speeches for children ... which were produced some generations ago. Therefore, when I read about the duty of parents to secure the education of their children, I ask, if the child is up to the school standard, what more is required? Going to school does not make an educated child.

He continued by suggesting that it would be part of the responsibilities of the parent to bring tutors into the home. He also mentioned the 'travelling bodies that are giving public entertainment' and said that attending school regularly would interfere with their way of life.

This short speech was very perceptive for five reasons:

1. Logan recognised and pointed out the role of home education in some circumstances; this was not widely recognised during the debate;

2. He acknowledged that it was the duty of parents to provide for the education of their children. The debate had up to this point centred on the whether there should be a choice between the private and state sectors;

3. He mentioned the importance of equivalency with the school curriculum. This view has subsequently not been upheld in the courts but is still a subject for discussion (section 2.5);

4. He assumed that the child would be tutored at home, implying the employment of professionals by the parents and thus formal instruction;

5. He recognised the importance to travelling bodies of maintaining their way of life, which might not include education in the state sector. This has not been widely recognised by LEAs (ref: private interview with Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) with responsibility for traveller education). These issues, raised in Parliament by Alderman David Logan MP, have been discussed since 1944, and are still discussed today. The debate then reverted to a further lengthy discussion on public and state schools, home education not being again mentioned.

Section 17 of the Education Act 1981 amended Section 36 of the 1944 Education Act:

In section 36 of the principal Act (duty of parents to secure the education of their children) after the word 'aptitude' there are inserted the words 'and to any special educational needs he may have'.

This amendment reinforced the existing Section 36 that a child will receive 'efficient' education, suitable to the 'ability and aptitude' of the child.

Section 37 of the 1944 Education Act made it a duty of the LEA to ensure that the parent fulfils his or her responsibilities under Section 36 of the Act. The reasons for introducing Section 37 into the Bill in 1944 were given indirectly by the Rt Hon. James Chuter Ede, Minister for Education, during the debate:

Parents who desire that their children should receive a particular form of education that is demonstrably efficient should be allowed to give

it to them, even if it is not inside the State system. What we are determined is that they shall not make those wishes a cloak for giving a child an insufficient education in an insanitary room, in circumstances that make education very difficult.

It is unclear to what type of educational provision he was referring.

There is a further section of this Bill which is relevant to home education: Section 76 was not included in the original Bill, but was introduced by Lord Selbourne as an amendment in the House of Lords. Lord Rankeillor had tried to move a similar amendment, which specified that the parents should have choice of education for religious reasons. Lord Selbourne's amendment which was finally adopted was more general and thus permitted different forms of education which were not necessarily dependent on religion. Section 76 established that the parental choice of the type of education his or her child receives is paramount:

The Minister and local education authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.

It would seem that this amendment was carried for religious reasons: the discussion in Parliament centred on the support of the freedom of the parents to choose religious education. This section is extremely important in the context of home education. If the education (of its type) provided by the parents is efficient and the

costs to the LEA are not 'unreasonable', a parent may educate in accordance with the parents' religious and educational beliefs.

It is perhaps this right, given by Parliament, for a parent to pursue his or her own educational aims, which can cause considerable conflict between the LEAs and parents. The structure of LEAs and their role with respect to home educators is discussed in Chapter three. Types of education, which differ from those funded in part by LEAs, are usually provided by the private sector e.g. Montessori schools, Summerhill, Steiner schools. These establishments are all monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectors, who are not directly responsible to LEAs. It could be that an LEA official, although knowing the philosophies of Rousseau, has never seen them applied. His or her practical experiences may rest solely within the LEA provision; similarly, a different type of education such as strict religious teaching or 'autonomous' learning (Meighan, 1984b) may seem unrealistic and unworkable. This is further discussed in sections 4.3 and 7.2.

The 1988 Education Reform Act had wide reaching effects on the provision of state education, (in particular the introduction in state funded schools of a National Curriculum, which was to establish attainment targets in each subject for every child). However, the sections of

the 1944 Education Act which apply to home educators were not repealed. In addition, Section 17 of the 1988 Act stated that there could be exceptions to the National Curriculum at the discretion of the Secretary of State:

The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that the provisions of the National Curriculum, or such of those provisions as may be specified in the regulations -

(a) shall not apply; or

(b) shall apply with such modifications as may be so specified in such cases as may be so specified.

It is not clear whether home education was actively considered. In a letter to me from the Department of Education and Science (February 1989) it was specified that:

The provisions of the National Curriculum do not apply to children being educated at home.

Extracts of correspondence from the DES are given in Appendix 5. It was noticeable, however, that the present tense was used. It was apparent that if the Secretary of State could make the exception for home educated children (which he already had) he could equally rescind the decision under powers given by the Act. In order to clarify this point, I requested further information from the DES, which was given in May 1990:

As to the National Curriculum the Government has no plans to extend its application to children other than those registered at maintained schools.

There was speculation that the Labour Party would wish the National Curriculum to apply to the private sector. I

contacted the Shadow Secretary of Education, and received the following reply (a copy of the letter is given in Appendix 6):

We see the national curriculum as guaranteeing an entitlement to education which should be available to every child. So, in judging whether the arrangements made by parents for educating their children themselves were adequate, account would have to be taken as to whether such provision was consistent with the requirements of the national curriculum.

One can conclude that, were the Labour Party to come to power, home educators and the type of education they provide could be governed by the National Curriculum. The precise meaning of 'account would have to be taken' is not however clear.

Sections 12, 13, 16 and 36 of the Children Act 1989, given in Appendix 1, may also be relevant to home educators; these sections of the Act may apply in instances where LEA officials, who are monitoring home education, believe the education provided by the parents to be inadequate for the child concerned. This is further discussed in section 2.5.2.

With the exception of the speech given by the Rt Hon Logan during the passage of the Education Bill in 1944 it is not apparent that home education has been considered by either the persons responsible for preparing Bills to put before Parliament, or by the Members of either of the Houses of Parliament. This lack of direct application to

home education has necessitated further guidance for those involved. The clarification has thus had to come from the Ombudsman, the DES and/or through the courts as particular points of conflict have occurred. The mediating roles of the Ombudsman and the DES are further discussed below. Details of the court cases are given in section 2.5.

2.4 The role of the Ombudsman and the Departments of Education

Before recourse to the courts, if a parent who is home educating is dissatisfied by the procedures of the LEA, two of the possible courses of action (see also section 3.2) which can be taken to clarify the situation are that:

- the Ombudsman can be approached, or
- the Secretary of State can be informed.

The Local Commissioners (or Commissioner for Local Administration in Scotland), known by the general public as Ombudsmen:

Are responsible for investigating complaints from members of the public against local authorities
.... [They] are appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Certain types of action are excluded from investigation, particularly personal matters and commercial transactions.... Complaints can be sent direct to the local ombudsman or through a

councillor, although the local ombudsman will not consider a complaint unless the Council has had an opportunity to investigate and reply to a complaint.

(Whitaker, 1991, p339)

Deutsch and Wolf stated that an Ombudsman may only be approached if the case is not already in legal process; the Ombudsman will then assess whether an LEA is acting fairly:

For example [he is able to] address the question whether the parent has been given a reasonable opportunity to satisfy the LEA, or whether the LEA's decision was coloured by an element of bias, malice or unfair discrimination, or whether the LEA gave inadequate, false or misleading information to the parent.

(1991, pp15-16)

The Children's Legal Centre (1987, p49), however, noted that the Ombudsman has no power in law to force an LEA to take action following the Ombudsman's recommendations.

Home educators have used the Ombudsman to clarify the relationship with the LEA:

There are EO members who have made effective use of the Ombudsman's services.

(Education Otherwise, 1985, p30)

The exact numbers of home educators who have approached the Ombudsmen in the United Kingdom is not known. Lowden gave details of one parent:

Having received all the School Attendance Orders, complained to the Ombudsman about maladministration and won her case against the LEA who agreed to no access to the children for the rest of the year.

(1988, p47)

The case was, however, not clearly stated and no sources were given.

An instance of enquiry by the Ombudsman was reported in Education (24 August, 1990, p151). The LEA admitted maladministration because there were delays in monitoring the education which was provided and the officials of the LEA failed to comment on the education provided by the parents, before a further visit to the home was made. The Ombudsman believed that such comments would have enabled the family to make 'more acceptable educational arrangements'. The Children's Legal Centre (1987, p47) pointed out that some LEAs were considering the appointment of their own Ombudsmen in order to investigate parents' and children's complaints.

However, Marshall (1986, p106), believed that the Ombudsman's decisions demonstrated 'bias in favour of government departments he is supposed to be policing.'

Mann disagreed with Marshall:

The Ombudsman's existence is therefore a constant stimulus to the members and, above all, the officers of local authorities to be speedy, open and fair in their work.

(Mann, 1979, p151)

The views of both Mann and Marshall may demonstrate that the outcome depends on the case in question and possibly the point of departure of the parties involved in the conflict to be resolved.

Section 99 of the 1944 Education Act (Section 70 of the Education Scotland Act 1980, given in Appendix 1)

empowers the Minister of Education to act if the LEA has not fulfilled its duties:

If the Minister is satisfied, either upon complaint by any person interested or otherwise, that any local education authority, or ... have failed to discharge any duty imposed upon them by or for the purposes of this Act, the Minister may make an order declaring the authority, or ... to be in default in respect of that duty, and giving such directions for the purpose of enforcing the execution thereof as appears to the Minister to be expedient; and any directions shall be enforceable, on an application made on behalf of the Minister.

It is by this route that the DES and the SED become involved in clarifying queries from home educating families and organisations acting on behalf of such families. The SED has, however, clarified that the powers of intervention which they have are more limited than those of the DES (private correspondence with the SED):

In contrast to the position in England and Wales, the Secretary of State [for Scotland] has no power to determine that an education authority has acted unreasonably and give directions accordingly. The Secretary of State [for Scotland] can only give direction to an education authority where he is satisfied that they have failed to discharge a statutory duty. If complaints about home education/attendance matters are about the manner in which the Council have fulfilled their duties rather than about failure to discharge duties, it is unlikely that the Secretary of State's powers will be applicable, even if the complaints were substantiated.

At a meeting held at the DES in 1989, it was stated that there had been an increase in the number of home educating parents contacting the DES for clarification of the duties of LEA officials and of their procedures. At present, although clarifying each individual case, the

DES does not want to be further involved by issuing general guidelines for the monitoring of home education (Appendix 5).

2.5 Fine tuning in the courts in England and Wales

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, there have been no legal cases clarifying the education laws as laid down by Parliament. A literature search with negative results was confirmed in telephone interviews with the Scottish Education Department, the legal coordinator for Education Otherwise in Scotland and with the legal department at the Department of Education in Northern Ireland. It was stated in a letter from a regional solicitor to a Scottish Director of Education (ref: documentation supplied to me by the authority concerned) that the solicitor had:

Been unable to trace any case in Scotland this century where a court has considered what constitutes efficient education of a child at home.

The solicitor added that details of the English cases were indicative of the interpretation of the Scottish Acts, which he believed used 'similar phraseology' to those in England.

It would seem, however, that one difference which affected home education was introduced with the 1962

Education (Scotland) Act and repeated in the 1980

Education (Scotland) Act: Section 37 of both these Acts are identical and specify that:

It shall be the duty of the authority to serve a notice on the parent requiring him within such time as may be specified in the notice (not being less than seven or more than fourteen days from the service thereof) either

(a) to appear (with or without the child) before the authority and give such information as the authority may require regarding the means, if any, he has adopted for providing education, or

(b) in the option of the parent, to give such information to the authority in writing.

This section could perhaps be used to elicit detailed information about the methods of home education within a short time period. The effect of this section on home education should be borne in mind when evaluating the relevance to Scotland of the situation in England and Wales.

In England and Wales, the Acts of Parliament have been qualified in the courts. A few of the cases which have reached the courts have had wider implications than just for the individual family concerned and are further discussed below. The quotations given from each case are taken from the respective court reports unless otherwise stated and the court reports are all fully referenced in Appendix 4.

The cases involving home educators have attempted to clarify points such as whether equivalency with school

education is required, whether an authority has a right to monitor home educated children, and whether it is necessary to visit the home in order to efficiently monitor the education provided. They have also tried to ascertain the methods of the deregistration of a child from school. These various aspects of the legal conflict between parents and LEAs are described and discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter.

2.5.1 Comparison of home education with state education

As compulsory education and the provision of state education became more widespread, home education was more restricted, but it was still accepted as being suitable for the middle and upper classes. In 1911, Lord Alverston and Judge Darling heard two cases (Bevan v Shears in June and ex parte Dutton in July) on appeal; both related to home education.

The first case (Bevan v Shears) involved a boy, Ernest, who had attended the local council school for two months and was then withdrawn. This involved not a belief in home education as such, but more a rejection of the quality of both the council's provision and supervision. The parents had felt:

Aggrieved by the conduct of the headmaster in punishing his son by keeping him in school during play hours for one month.

They had tried to enroll him in another school, but this had been rejected by the Pembrokeshire education authority as 'capricious'. The parents therefore employed a tutor.

When the case came to court, the education authority, considering the education to be inadequate, wished Ernest to be returned to the local school. The justices questioned the tutor as to the 'nature and quality of the instruction given to the child'. The equivalency of the education at the local school was seriously considered:

The list of subjects taught at the Lamphey School was produced to the justices, and also the list of subjects taught by Miss Grant, and, in their opinion, the two lists were almost the same.

Lord Alverstone, one of the justices in the case pointed out that:

In the absence of anything in the by-laws providing that a child of a given age shall receive instruction in given subjects, in my view it cannot be said that as to a particular child there is a standard of education by which the child must be taught ... therefore the justices have to decide whether in their opinion the child is being taught efficiently so far as that particular child is concerned We have not been referred to any minutes of the Board of Education prescribing that children of a certain minimum age are to receive any particular standard of education ... nor have we been referred to any authority containing any definition of 'efficiency'.

Mr Justice Banks, who was also hearing the case, believed that the standard of education in the elementary school should not be disregarded and that 'a test may be a most

useful guide in considering whether a child is receiving efficient instruction'.

Important factors emerged during this case. The justices, when evaluating the teaching that the child was receiving, consulted the curriculum at the local school. They also pointed out that, as the Board of Education did not have a set standard of education for any particular age of child who attended the schools in the area, there could be no comparison with what was provided at home. As the level and type of education at the local schools were not specified, the final decision was made that the education of Ernest was efficient, based on its own merits.

In July 1911, during the Dutton case, lack of equivalency with school was mentioned as the reason why the three children Cecil (12), Hugh (10) and Rhoda (6) should have been attending school. At the hearing where the father, Mr Dutton, had been summonsed for lack of compliance with a school attendance order, evidence was given by the:

Director of education to the local education authority, to the effect that he had examined the two said children [Cecil and Hugh], and that in his opinion they were being educated, but were not educated to the standard of efficiency ordinarily attained by children of similar age at a public elementary school. The three ... justices thereupon determined that the two said children had not been efficiently educated within the meaning of section 4 of the Elementary Education Act 1876.

In the appeal court the defence lawyer stated that the Director of Education's evidence:

Was that the children were being educated, but that they were not being educated up to certain standards in a public elementary school. That is not the test. The question was whether Mr Dutton's excuse was good for not sending his children to the public elementary school, being that he was providing the children with efficient elementary instruction in some other manner.

However, the details of the examination by the Director of Education had been reported in the lower court case. The judges were thus satisfied that the boys were not receiving a suitable education and that this had been demonstrated in the court by the detailed evidence given by the Director of Education. This was not dependent upon a comparison with school, but because their arithmetic and writing were not at the expected level for their ages.

At a much later date, in 1985, the Perry case came to the Court of Appeal. The main thrust of this case concerned the deregistration of a child (David) from school. However, during the hearing, equivalency of school was mentioned as a reason for not permitting home education. The advisers concerned had visited the house and made an unfavourable report:

They thought that he was an intellectually able child who was being retarded in his academic development by inadequate home tuition. They took away certain of his school books and obtained a report ... from the headmaster of the Junior School. This report, which mentioned that throughout his time in school David had been placed in the top ability group, but was highly

critical of the contents of his work produced at home and the level of textbooks provided for him there.

Thus there was a direct comparison between school and home education. Although the parents tried to expand their interpretation of education to include mental health and emotional adjustment, these were considered not to be relevant by the Education Committee and the court, as it was the education of the child which they were considering. The education provided was found to be inefficient in itself and in comparison with the education which David had received in school. Further details of this case are given in section 2.5.4.

These three cases acquire a new relevance today, with the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act. This Act will have the effect of specifying the standards to which a child should be educated, having benchmarks at certain ages, for measuring the effectiveness of education. The Department of Education and Science has indicated that the National Curriculum will not directly apply to home educators (Appendix 5). A possibility could arise, however, at a future date for other court cases to demonstrate that a child is not efficiently taught (by either a local authority or a parent) if these benchmarks are not measured and reached. The importance of Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act would then have to be further discussed, that children should be educated

'according to the wishes of the parents'. In the Perry case, it would seem that Section 76 was not considered.

Both Deutsch (1986) and Lowden (1988) believed that two other cases had attempted to define 'education' in its relation to home education. It would seem, however, that Judge Goff in Wood and Others v. Ealing London Borough Council was making the definition solely in the context of schooling and was not attempting to define education per se:

In my judgement, however, education in s. 76 must refer to the curriculum and whether it includes any, and if so what, religious instruction and whether co-educational or single-sex, and matters of that sort, and not to the size of the school and the conditions of entry.

In Harrison and Harrison v Stevenson (1982), the parents appealed against a definition of 'education' as 'systematic instruction', which had been given in the magistrates court. As stated by Lord Ormrod in the Appeal Court, the lower court had defined 'education' as:

The development of mental powers and character and the acquisition of knowledge through the imparting of skills and learning by systematic instruction.

Lord Ormrod made a point of neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this definition and said that it was an interpretation of 'education' which was open to the lower court. The Harrisons had dyslexic children and it was decided, in the appeal, that 'systematic instruction' was needed for these particular children.

The lower court had also stated that the education the Harrisons had provided was efficient, as that which the parents had set out to achieve had been achieved with 'striking success'. This was described as:

The 'autonomous' method of self-directed study, recognisable as such by educationalists, which could properly be described as systematic and which was certainly 'full-time'.

The lower court had also attempted to establish the meaning of 'age, ability and aptitude' in Section 36 of the 1944 Education Act:

(ii) That the purpose of the Act, or indeed by any standard, education ... is only suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child if (a) it is such as to prepare the child for life in modern civilized society; and (b) it enables the child to fulfil its best potential

(iii) that the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic are fundamental to any education for life in the modern world as being essential for communication, research or self-education. We would not regard any system of education as suitable for any child capable of learning such skills, if that education failed to attempt to instil them (whatever the chosen method) but left it to time, chance and the inclination of the child to determine whether, if ever, the child was to attain elementary proficiency in them.

It would seem that it has not yet been established that home education should resemble or be comparable with that provided in state schools; it has however been established that reading, writing and arithmetic are 'fundamental to any education for life', whatever approach to education is adopted by the parent. In three of the four cases of home educated children mentioned in this section, a comparison has been made between the

education received at home and that of the child in school. However, in all these cases the education of the home educated child(ren) has been judged on its own merits.

2.5.2 The right of an LEA to monitor home education

The right of the LEA to monitor home education has been raised in the courts on at least three occasions. The first instance was in 1953, when the court appearance was due to a non compliance with a school attendance order. Baker had received the order, because it did not 'appear' that the education she was providing was adequate. There had been lengthy correspondence with the LEA concerned. She firmly believed that she was responsible for her children and she 'did not see what it had to do with the State' (Baker, 1964, p17).

When the Bedfordshire LEA sent her a 'notice of failure of duty regarding education of child', she replied that she had:

Repeatedly informed you and your representatives, in response to numerous calls and communications, that it is not my intention to send my sons to school at the present time, and they are receiving efficient education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude, in their own home.

I would be glad if you would inform me what reasons you have for stating that it 'appears to you' that this is not the case.

(Baker, 1964, p21)

She subsequently expressed concern that it was not sufficient for the parent of a child to issue a statement declaring that the child concerned was receiving an adequate education:

I could not understand a law that gave to paid Government officials the right to disregard a reasonable statement made by someone whose word they had no reason to doubt, a statement concerning a person's own home and child. It seemed ... this amounted to putting [me] on trial for a criminal offence without any evidence having to be produced that any offence had ever been committed.

I resented the unavoidable implication that my word was worthless, and the sweeping away of all the normal elemental rights and meaning of the proper responsibilities of parenthood.

(Baker, 1964, p22)

She continued to request upon what grounds the LEA officials could consider that her children's education was not adequate. With the LEA wanting a description of the education she was providing and her strong feeling that the LEA was trying to erode her right of parenthood, the case came to court as a failure to comply with attendance orders.

She continued to educate her children at home, although she had moved house and was in a different local authority area. In one letter to the LEA she wrote:

Is it now a ruling in this country that the word of an individual must necessarily be treated as worthless unless investigated by an official?

(Baker, 1964, p30)

Her appeals against the attendance orders were allowed because the LEA had not made sufficient enquiries into

the education the children were receiving, before the attendance orders had been served. The lack of her compliance with attendance orders or her appeals against the rulings of the courts were the reasons for her frequent appearances in court. Her defence was the right to educate children according to a parent's interpretation of the term 'education'. She also strongly questioned the qualifications and abilities of LEA officials to monitor education outside the school system. It was apparent that her own view of a suitable education for children differed from the education provided in schools.

Although the issue of the right of an LEA to monitor home education had been raised by Baker, it had not been directly contested in the courts until 1980 (Phillips v Brown). In a second letter to Phillips, the LEA had written, requesting:

Details of the educational programme which [the child] is now following, together with any relevant information which may assist the Authority in satisfying itself that the education being provided is appropriate in the circumstances.

To its surprise, a reply came in a letter from a solicitor:

We can do no more than reiterate what we have said previously. Your powers under the Education Act 1944 only come into operation if 'it appears ... that the parents of any child ... are failing to perform their duty.' In this case there has been nothing to give any such appearance.

The LEA again attempted to obtain information about the education the child was receiving and then subsequently served a school attendance order. At the hearing, the parents pointed out that before an LEA could:

Issue a notice under section 37(1) of the Act, something positive must have come to their notice as a result of which it could and did appear to the LEA that there was a failure by the parents in their duty under section 36 of the Act. The parents contended that there was no evidence of any such matter. It followed that it could not appear to the LEA that the parents were failing in their duty.

The judge declared that LEA officials have the right to request information from parents of children not attending state schools. This can enable the LEA to ascertain if the children are attending private schools, are being educated at home, or not being educated properly at all. The judge added:

The most obvious step is to ask the parents for information. ... the parents will be under no duty to comply. However it would be sensible for them to do so. If parents give no information or adopt the course ... of merely stating that they are discharging their duty without giving details of how they are doing so, the LEA will have to consider and decide whether it 'appears' to it that the parents are in breach of section 36 ... if the parents refuse to answer, it could very easily conclude that prima facie the parents were in breach of their duty.

In this instance, it would follow that a school attendance order could be issued under section 37(1).

If the parents fail to comply with the School Attendance Order, they commit an offence unless they prove that they are causing the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school. This is a matter which falls to be proved to the satisfaction of the magistrates to whom

complaint is made that an offence has been committed.

He expanded this further by saying that it would be for the parent to place evidence before a court to demonstrate that the parent had not been in breach of his duty. It was thus concluded that it was for the LEA to try to establish that an efficient education was being provided, by requesting information. Lord Justice Ormrod, in the Harrison case in 1982, emphasised that it was also the duty of the LEA to monitor home education:

The local authority has a duty to see that the children are properly educated. Included in that duty is something more than just seeing that the parents are doing what they like about the children. There comes a stage when, in certain circumstances, children have to be protected against the views of their parents, if those views are held with a high degree of tenacity which may ultimately be damaging to the children. Children are separate individuals and are entitled to have their interests considered as separate individuals. They are not possessions of their parents, and parents must realise that they are not totally in control of their children's lives.

The view that, on occasion, a parent's power over children should be limited, is reinforced by the Gillick case (referenced in Appendix 4), which had no immediate relevance to home education. This was a judgement in the House of Lords which recognised the:

Rights of children and young people to make their own decisions about their lives if they are mature enough to understand the issues and make up their own minds.

(Children's Legal Centre, 1987, p50)

The Children Act 1989, Section 36(3) is also of note:

A court may only make an education supervision order if it is satisfied that the child concerned

is of compulsory school age and is not being properly educated.

At a meeting at the DES in 1989, it was evident that on occasion there was difficulty when trying to distinguish parents' endorsement of truancy and certain instances of home education, when the LEA believed the education provided by the parents to be inadequate. It is possible that this section of the Children Act 1989 was an attempt to overcome these problems. This Act empowers the magistrate's court to impose an education supervision order, when an education supervisor is appointed for a period of one year. In such an instance, the supervisor, not the parent is responsible for ensuring that the child is educated, but he, or she, must take into account the wishes of both the child and the parent(s).

The sections of the Children Act 1989 which may apply to home educated children were not implemented until October 14, 1991 (Statutory Instruments 1991, No 828(c.19)) and to date, the relevance of this Act to home educators has not been verified in the courts. However, the possible application of the Act to home education was investigated by Deutsch and Wolf (1991). Bainham (1990, p115) believed that home educators might resist education supervision orders in the courts, but that they would be unlikely to succeed. White et al. (1990, section 12.11) noted that if an education supervision order were made, Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act would cease to apply; this might

limit the type of education provided by a home educating parent in such circumstances.

It has, however, been established in the courts that it is the duty of the LEA to monitor home educators and they have the right to ask for information about the education that is provided by the parents. If the information is not provided, or the provision of education is deemed to be inadequate, then a school attendance order could be issued. In such instances, it would be the responsibility of the court to decide whether an education is being provided and how suitable this education might be for the child concerned, whether the child should attend school, or, if applicable, impose an education supervision order and appoint an education supervisor.

2.5.3 The right of LEA officials to visit the home

The right of LEA officials to visit the home of parents who notify the LEA of an intention to home educate a child was discussed in the Tweedie case in 1963. Mr Tweedie had ten children and 'he and his wife were determined to educate them at home'. The LEA was not satisfied that the educational arrangements made for six of the children were adequate; the policy of the LEA was that a visit to the home was the only method of establishing the efficiency and suitability of the

children's education. Mr Tweedie refused to allow a home visit. Attendance orders were served and they were not complied with. The justices declared that Mr Tweedie had failed to 'comply with the requirements of the orders' and:

Held that he had not satisfied them that the children were receiving efficient full-time education.

At a subsequent appeal, it was decided that:

Although as a general rule, an education authority should not insist on inspection in the home as the only method of satisfying themselves that children are receiving an efficient full-time education, there are exceptions where the authority is entitled to insist on such inspection.

In the Tweedie case, it was decided that LEA officials did have the right to a home visit if they were to monitor the efficiency of the education provided: they were, in this instance, 'entitled to insist on inspection'.

It would seem that, if the LEA believes that a home visit is necessary in order to monitor home education efficiently and this is refused by the parent, it is the responsibility of the courts to decide whether a home visit is necessary in the instance of the individual child concerned. LEA officials have no right of entry to a house on the grounds that it is a place where education is said to be taking place and they can enter the home solely at the invitation of the family concerned or by

recommendation of a court of law, if subsequently the family wishes to home educate.

2.5.4 The formalities involved when a child registered at school begins to be home educated

The case which clarified the procedures for the deregistration of a child from the attendance register at a school where s/he recently attended was an appeal on behalf of J. G. Perry in July 1985. Until this case was heard, the only way to deregister a child, in order to commence home education, was to either wait for the child to be old enough to transfer to another school e.g. a middle or secondary school or to move from the area monitored by one LEA to that of another. In both cases, there is a natural deregistration until the child begins at the subsequent school. It was also feasible for the child to attend a private school for a term, permitting deregistration from the state system; the child could then be withdrawn from the private sector relatively easily.

Compared with children who have never been to school, there could be more opposition to allowing a child who is registered at school to be home educated. The parents are, in effect, actively rejecting the provision of schooling which the LEA provides for that particular

child. Until the Perry case, the deregistration depended mostly on the cooperation of the headteacher. Bendell expresses the dilemma:

If you want to withdraw a child from school in order to educate her at home, you first have to get her name removed from the school register. This can be a perfectly straightforward procedure, but it partly depends on your child's headteacher. She can simply remove your child's name from the roll at your request or keep her registered while reporting you to the LEA.

The problem is that if your child is registered at a certain school, you are legally obliged to see that she does attend. Although education elsewhere - at home, for example - will be grounds for deregistration, the LEA may argue that home education is not taking place if the child is actually registered at school. During term time this can present a paradoxical situation: how can you say that home education is taking place if your child must attend school?
(1987, pp109-110)

The following account of the Perry case, which is taken from the court reports, attempted to clarify this paradox.

Two children from the Perry family, David and Elizabeth, were mentioned in the case. Elizabeth attended for one day in April, 1982. Advisers visited the home in June and July and were 'not satisfied with some aspects of the education' which Elizabeth was receiving. David attended school for four and a half years before the parents withdrew him from school and wrote to the headmaster requesting deregistration in January 1983. The Perrys were requested to return David to school and when he did not attend, the parents were issued with a summons. When

the LEA had suggested that the reason he should return to school was that the provision of home education for Elizabeth had been found to be lacking, the family engaged a solicitor to act on their behalf.

The house was again visited the following April and the parents were given a period of six weeks to establish home education before a decisive visit was made to monitor the efficiency and suitability of the education being provided. In June the parents replied, giving details of the curriculum and further requesting that both David's and Elizabeth's names be deleted from the school attendance registers.

Two advisers visited in October. Mr Perry believed that the visit of the advisers was 'cursory and inadequate':

They first tested Elizabeth for forty minutes in reading, writing and arithmetic and then interviewed David and tested his reading, English and mathematics for some fifteen minutes. They asked for and were allowed to remove some of his books.

The two advisers were not satisfied, except with regard to David's reading. They thought he was:

An intellectually able child who was being retarded in his academic development by inadequate home tuition.

The schools sub-committee then discussed the assessment of the education the children were receiving. At this meeting, Elizabeth's education was found by the sub-committee, on the recommendations of the advisers to be

'approximately suitable'. This is of note as only eight months previously it had been found to be inadequate. It is not established in the case whether this was due to the methods of teaching which the parents were using or perhaps due to the level of expectation of the advisers concerned and the methods of assessment which were employed during the visit. They did not approve of the level of mathematics teaching she received as it was:

Of a mechanical nature and her understanding of mathematical concepts is less sure than one would expect of a child of her intelligence.

Her name therefore had to remain on the register of the school which she had attended. David's education was not considered suitable. They compared the level of teaching he would have received in the local school and considered that the home education he was receiving compared unfavourably. The Perrys were informed that he should return to school immediately.

Mr Perry then wrote to the Director of Education to complain that the assessment visit had been too short and that a:

Teacher friend of theirs had studied David's books also and she considered that all were quite suitable ... and she was willing to come to court to testify to this effect.

A letter was sent to Mr Perry after a meeting of the education committee of the Council at the beginning of November, saying that David must return to school within fourteen days. Mr Perry was again summonsed at the

beginning of January 1984. The Perrys then attempted to obtain independent assessors of their children's education. These people were prepared to testify on the Perrys' abilities to teach and the level of the children's knowledge, maturity and sociability. The lack of emotional adjustment of David at school was also mentioned by the family doctor and one of the experts:

Of considerable significance, I feel, is the question of David's emotional adjustment whilst at school. The behaviours which David exhibited whilst at school correspond closely with many of those on the Rutter Behaviour Questionnaire (Rutter 1967) which would give rise to concern about the development of any child. The fact that every one of those behaviours reverted to normal when David's home education began is indicative of the possibility that David is one of a minority of children whose development could actually be impaired by enforced attendance at school.

An educational psychologist concluded that David was:

Receiving an education suitable to his age ability and aptitude ... he would undoubtedly suffer were his attendance at school enforced His emotional and educational needs are closely interwoven, and removal from home, for example, in order to enforce his attendance at school, would be so emotionally damaging that his formal education would certainly suffer.

The reports were considered by the Council. The Director dismissed the experts' reports in favour of that given by LEA advisers because:

The reports do not address themselves sufficiently (if at all) to the nature of the education being provided for the children.

When arriving at his decision, the judge said that the decision to deregister a child should be an

administrative one. The parent should satisfy the LEA that the:

Child is receiving an efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than by attendance at school.

He continued:

I have no doubt that there is an obligation on an Authority to give a parent a proper opportunity to so satisfy the Authority. In order to do that it is necessary, therefore, for the Authority to make it clear in relation to what matters it requires to be satisfied. ... there will be from time to time situations where there is a particular specific matter which is causing concern to the Authority of which a parent could not reasonably be expected to be aware, and in a situation of that sort fairness will require the Authority to bring that matter to the notice of the parent so as to give the parent an opportunity to deal with it. It is important ... not to approach the matter too rigidly.

and later:

It was incumbent on the Council in fairness to let Mr Perry know the specific matters which were causing concern, so that he could have the opportunity of making his representations on these matters before the final decision was reached.

The duty of the LEA is to first allow:

The parents sufficient time to set in motion their arrangements for home education, send representatives to the home to inspect for themselves the syllabus and other educational facilities being provided for the child in question, and, on seeing the child, to see for themselves their end product as reflected in his intellectual and other development.

In some special circumstances fairness will demand that after a visit of this nature, the Authority should draw specific matters to the attention of the parent and invite further information or comment, so that they may be given the opportunity to correct information or impressions which may be false.

It is thus made quite clear that a parent who requests that his or her child's name be deleted from the school attendance register in order to home educate should be given time to 'set in motion their arrangements for home education'. An LEA cannot deny the right to withdraw a child from school while the parents are setting up the home education to be provided. The education provided should then be assessed. If it is found to be inadequate, the parent should be informed before a final decision is reached, in order that any further information supporting the application can be supplied by the parents to the Education Committee. This was also the opinion of the Ombudsman (Education, 1990, 24 August, p151).

It was not clarified in the Perry case how long the time for establishing the practice of home education within the family should be. The Perry family were initially given six weeks, but in effect, the procedures spanned more than a year. If a child is considered at first to be inadequately home educated and later this decision is reversed (as in the case of Elizabeth), does this imply that quite a long initial period to establish home education would be suitable? Children may take some time to adapt to home education, particularly following perceived problems at school. This is further discussed in Chapter seven. If the application for deregistration is made and home education is satisfactory, the child's name should be deleted from the register.

This case left several questions unanswered. The decision of LEA advisers were held to be more relevant than those of external experts; this could imply that advisers should have special training in assessing home education which might differ from the education provided in school. It also questions whether one adviser, often acting alone, during a brief visit, can adequately assess the education being provided by the parents: if the education is thought to be inadequate, should a longer, more detailed assessment be made by more than one LEA official? There is also left in doubt the validity of external experts testifying on behalf of the parents and whether an opportunity should be given for their evidence to be presented and discussed before the family and the LEA are engaged in an expensive court case.

In this case there is mention of an 'education plan' and 'curriculum' and that the parents should satisfy the LEA. It has not been determined how this should be achieved. If the LEA is not satisfied with the education a parent is providing and the parent disagrees, then it is at present up to a court of law either to assess the education provided by the parent or impose an education supervision order and appoint an education supervisor.

The Director of Education, in this instance, defined the education provided at home in an academic way. In David

Perry's case, the parents believed that the psychological problems he had experienced at school were also important. The LEA did not consider these problems to be relevant. It is noticeable that the judge stated in his summing up that it was important for the LEA to be able to monitor the facilities provided and to see for themselves the 'end product as reflected in his intellectual and other development'. This statement was not further expanded or clarified, but it was obviously the judge's intention that not only academic factors should be considered.

There is great diversity in the definition of education (section 1.1) and at present, in cases of deregistration, the LEA's definition can be different from that of a parent. When a child has been withdrawn from school in a stressful situation, this naturally causes stress to the family concerned and instances of conflict between the LEA and the family can arise.

2.6 Conclusions and reflections

Home education has always played a part in educational provision in the United Kingdom, although it has been marginal to the state's sustained drive to establish a system of schooling. It is generally considered to be unusual, and has not been included in much of the

literature on the history of education. Home education in the 19th and 20th centuries has been more common than is widely held and has sometimes been used for part, rather than all, of the years of compulsory education for individual children. More research needs to be undertaken to establish the extent to which home education has taken place during the last two hundred years.

It has been established that an LEA has a right and a duty to monitor home educated children, but that LEA officials cannot demand access to the home, except (indirectly) through a court of law. It has been suggested that monitoring need not take place in the home but that other means of satisfying the authority could be found.

The question of approximate equivalency of home education and that provided by the school continues to be discussed, but never legally decided upon. In Bevan v Shears, the equivalency was dismissed because the education authority itself did not have an education plan. In ex parte Dutton the lack of an equivalent education was seen to be one of the grounds for the child's return to school. Now there is a National Curriculum, although this is said not to apply to home educators, an informal equivalency could be expected. However, in Harrison and Harrison v Stevenson, the judge

recognised:

The autonomous method of self directed study, ...
which could properly be described as systematic.

as an interpretation of 'education'.

When considering school equivalency, it should be noted that in many instances, home educated children are expected to be average or above average in their attainment levels. At school, children sometimes underperform, but as demonstrated in the court cases, this is not permitted if a child is home educated. A possible solution for this 'average academic attainment' expectation problem is given in Chapter seven.

Most of the families involved in the court cases mentioned in this chapter could be considered 'atypical'. They sometimes had large numbers of children or needed legal assistance or government benefits because of a low family income; the parents were sometimes not both the natural parents of the child concerned, or they might not have been married. When a child attends school, the impact that these factors have on the monitoring of the child is greatly reduced. When the home is exposed, as on the occasion of a home visit, there can be tension on the part of parents or of LEA officials. The LEA officer may be jolted by a lack of similarity with his own experiences. In these situations there can be immediate

tension, which is not alleviated by the process of monitoring. The legal coordinator of Education Otherwise, in a telephone interview, stated that it would seem that during the assessment of efficient education, the social status of the parent is considered important by LEA officials: many more cases of parents who are unemployed or who fall within a low income bracket come to court or marginally avoid a court appearance after the intervention of Education Otherwise. The different treatment of home educators with differing social backgrounds was also noted by Meighan (section 1.2). The effect of the social background on the monitoring of home education needs further investigation: it was included in the questionnaire, the results of which are given in Chapters five and six.

In addition to causing stress to the parties concerned, large amounts of money are spent on legal cases. However, Lowden (1988, p122) suggested that there was a reluctance of LEAs to engage in legal proceedings and he believed that there should be more litigation in order that 'legal definitions of educational terms can be achieved and case law modified'. This reluctance of LEAs to become involved in court cases may be partly explained by Marshall's theory that such cases are not compatible with the image that local government bodies 'wish to promote' (1986, p111). Marshall also believed that court cases involve

disproportionate costs to those involved, often increase the level of conflict and do not encourage resolution (ibid, p65).

My perception is that conflict can on the one hand be effectively reduced by increasing the level of effective communication between the two parties and by increasing the knowledge that each party has of the other; conflict can on the other hand be augmented by legal action. When communication breaks down, Folber and Taylor (1984, p8-10) believed mediation to produce an interactive approach and the creation of a plan for future action to be the key factor for a positive outcome.

The self-esteem and sense of competence derived from the mediation process are important by-products that help to provide direction and lessen the need for participants to continue fighting.

(Ibid,p11)

At present, the process of mediation in cases of home education would involve the Ombudsman or representatives of the DES (SED or DENI) or, in cases which had reached the magistrates' court, could involve an education supervisor appointed by the court.

To further investigate possible origins of conflict between LEAs and home educators, it was necessary to establish the identity of both parties to the potential conflict. LEAs and the duties and responsibilities of some officials who are employed by them are investigated

in Chapter three. The apparent reasons for parents choosing to home educate their children are given in Chapter four.

CHAPTER 3 : Local Education Authorities

In order to investigate the causes of conflict between home educators and Local Education Authorities (LEAs), it is necessary to examine both parties. In this Chapter, the history of LEAs, the emerging and changing structures, and their powers and duties are discussed. The functions of some LEA officers are also outlined; accounts of interviews with LEA officials who monitor home education are given. Home educators and their reasons for choosing to home educate their children are discussed in Chapter four. It must be emphasised that, although conflict can occur in a minority of albeit important instances, this is not true of most relationships between home educators and LEAs. At the outset of this research, it was not known, however, how many LEAs had experienced conflict; this was clarified in the results of the questionnaire which are given in Chapters five and six.

As shall be demonstrated, LEAs can have very different characteristics. This is due in part to the history of LEAs themselves and to the differing needs of the population served. It is also dependent on the politics of the elected councillors and the management styles of the Chief Education Officer and the Chief Executive of the Local Authority.

3.1 The history of LEAs

The history of LEAs is well documented elsewhere, for example, by Blishen (1969), Fowler (1980), Gosden (1966), Knowles (1988), McPherson and Raab (1988), Mann (1979) and Pearce (1986). The development of local responsibility for the welfare and education of children has gradually evolved over the last one hundred and twenty years.

Until the 1870s, schooling had mainly been provided by voluntary bodies or privately (see section 2.1). In Scotland, the parish had been officially responsible for providing schooling since the end of the seventeenth century. In the rest of the United Kingdom, locally elected school boards became responsible for providing and monitoring standards of schooling within the locality between 1870 and 1888. Some of the county areas were particularly late to elect school boards (Mann, 1979, p64).

In England and Wales, these boards had the power to levy a local education rate. A department of central government, which was to supervise the education system, was set up in 1899. The 1902 Education Act 'abolished the school boards and replaced them with a system of local

education authorities' (Statham et al., 1989, p42). A similar law was enacted for Northern Ireland in 1923. However, the type of authority and its consequent responsibilities varied from area to area. This largely depended on whether it was an urban or a rural area and on the density of the local population. Locally elected councils by stages became responsible not only for education, but also other local administration, for example, maintaining roads, libraries, sports facilities, public wash houses, some museums, art galleries and parks. From 1936 onwards, some services such as trunk roads, public health and social services were transferred to central government (Mann, 1979, p64). The areas were reorganised in the late 1940s, again in the 1960s when the number of Scottish authorities was reduced and the London Boroughs and the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) were created and yet again in 1974.

In 1988, when the present research began and before the 1988 Education Reform Act began to take effect, there were seven different types of authority in the United Kingdom (based on Mann, 1979, p65):

- 1 Shire counties (39)
- 2 Metropolitan districts (36)
- 3 Outer London Boroughs (20)
- 4 Scottish authorities (12)
- 5 Welsh education authorities (8)
- 6 Education and Library Boards of Northern Ireland (5)

7 Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) (1)

8 Isles of Scilly (1)

The ILEA was abolished following the 1988 Education Act. Maps, showing the boundaries of Local Authorities in the United Kingdom, are given in Statham (1989, pp85-94) and in the Municipal Journal, published annually by the Association for Geographic Information.

Local Authorities have, over the years, increased in size and changed their responsibilities and duties, while maintaining responsibility for education. They can be described as a bureaucracy (Blau and Scott, 1963, p32-33); this is further explored in sections 3.2. and 3.5. The internal structures of authorities also vary, as explained in section 3.2; the individual responsibilities and roles of some of the officials working for LEAs are described in section 3.3.

The roles and structures of LEAs are unlikely to be any less variable in the future than they have been in the past. Edmonds (1989, p51) and Morris (1990, p9) believed there would be fewer, bigger Local Authorities, with greater privatisation of services than those traditionally provided.

3.2 The role of the LEA

LEAs, which are responsible for education within a Local Authority, fall into the 'commonweal' group of bureaucracies which are those where 'the prime beneficiary is the public at large' (Blau and Scott, 1963, p33). Thus an LEA is not an autonomous body, but receives direction both from central government and from the locally elected council and through them from the local community. In the United Kingdom, the wishes of central government are represented by the Department of Education and Science (DES), the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI), the Scottish Education Office (SED) and the Welsh Education Office (WEO). These offices are responsible for drafting Bills, which are presented in the Houses of Parliament and for issuing directives and circulars to LEAs. They are also responsible for liaising with LEAs on a day to day basis. (The responsibilities are listed in detail by Statham, 1989, pp82-84). LEAs:

Have many statutory obligations with respect to educational provision. But they are not completely controlled by Central Government and are not merely their agents. There are large areas of discretion over the formulation and implementation of educational policies There is essentially a partnership between central and local government and scope for initiative for each local authority over policy and the use of resources.

(David, 1973, p24)

The LEA is accountable to, and guided by, the locally elected council, although the extent of this guidance

depends from council to council (Kogan and van der Eyken, 1973). The council is required to appoint a Chief Education Officer (CEO) and an education committee:

To which it may delegate all its powers relating to education, except the power to borrow money or to raise a rate.

(Blishen, 1969, p6)

Mann (1979, pp65-70) describes the relationship between the council and the administration in detail. A circular from the DES (8/73), reaffirmed the 1944 Education Act that the education committee should include members with experience of education from the locality and that these members should be appointed if necessary.

Persons of experience in education and persons acquainted with the educational conditions prevailing in the area for which the committee acts...

(Mann, 1979, p69)

are to sit on the education committee where the majority of members, including the chairman, must be elected. The education committee has the largest local service budget to administer. In order to deal with the large volume of administration, it is usually necessary to have sub-committees, which consider and discuss different aspects of education in a Local Authority area, although the number of sub-committees varies from authority to authority. This means that:

Education committee members are particularly busy, partly because of the volume of business and the number of sub-committees.

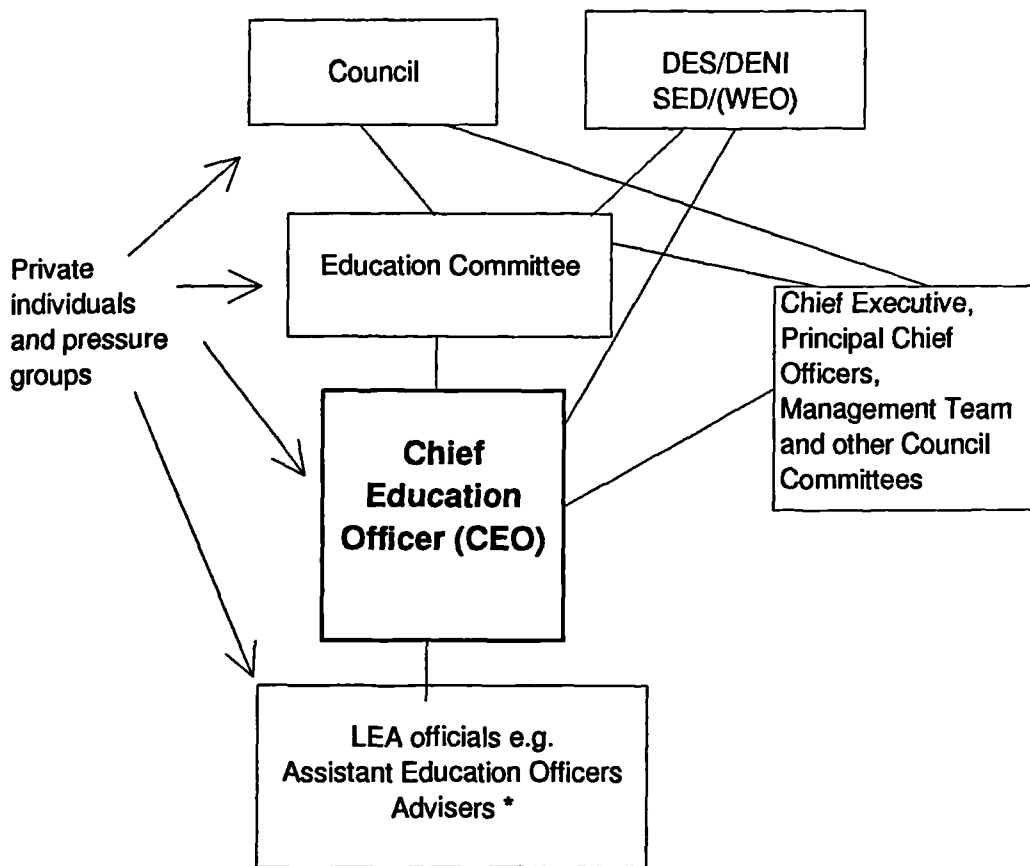
(Ibid, p66)

The sub-committees report to the education committee and all meetings 'must be open to the public and the press'

(Blishen, 1969, p6). Details of the members of each of the committees is usually available for the public at the education offices, or through a locally elected councillor. By approaching the councillor, or a chairperson of one of the relevant committees, a person in the community, who is dissatisfied with the attitudes or decisions of one of the officials of the LEA can attempt to clarify the situation. The LEA must be contacted for such clarification before the Ombudsman is approached (section 2.4). However, the Chief Education Officer (CEO) can also be contacted. The CEO can also be termed a 'department head' or a 'director' (Knowles, 1988, pp64-65). The relationship of the CEO to the council, the education committee, government departments and officials of the Local Authority is shown in Figure 3.1.

The role of the LEA and thus the CEO is varied. A balance has to be established between on the one hand, those employees of the Local Authority delivering the education service, and on the other, the public, the council and central government. The main task is to provide adequate and efficient education at primary and secondary level. It includes maintaining the fabric of the school buildings (constructing or closing them where necessary), attending to the special needs that some children may have and the health and safety, careers and equal opportunities of all children within the area. They must also ensure that all children who are registered at

Figure 3.1 : The role of the Chief Education Officer



Adapted from Kogan (1973) p. 25 and Knowles (1988) p. 291

* The relationships between these officials are further documented in fig. 3.2

school do attend. (Other duties are listed by Blishen, 1969, p6). The CEO has a number of professional administrators and support staff to carry out the responsibilities of the office. Because of the many actions that an LEA undertakes, it is inevitable that there is a degree of specialisation among the officials working for the CEO and that a managerial structure is developed within which the staff is organised. This internal structure of the education department is also the responsibility of the CEO.

The external purposes of LEAs and the legal framework within which they work are thoroughly documented. The internal workings of LEAs below the level of CEO are a different matter. Following an extensive literature search and enquiries at the DES, the SED, DENI, two LEAs, the Institute of Local Government Studies, Birmingham and Henley Management College, it was not possible to discover any comparative studies on the internal management structures of education departments within Local Authorities. Subsequently, twelve authorities were contacted and of these, six supplied details of the internal structure of the education departments. To emphasise the degree of change within LEAs at present, five of the twelve were reviewing or had recently reviewed the internal management structure. One of these structures, which is in part representative of all six

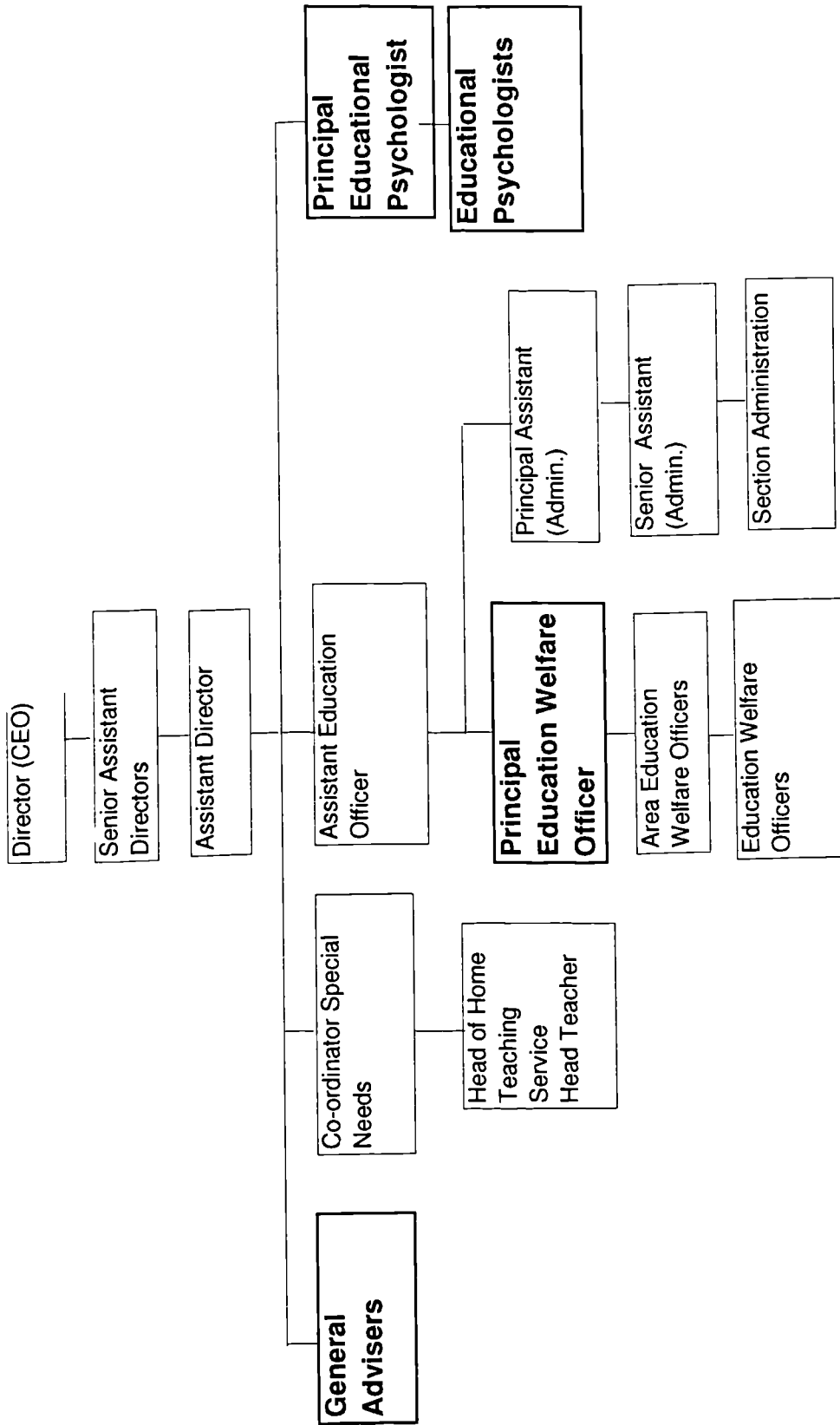
structures received, is given in Figure 3.2. The other management structures are given in Appendix 7.

The internal structures of all six LEAs demonstrated that the advisory arm which supervises the monitoring and maintenance of educational standards was separate from the sections concerned with the welfare of individual children. This division of tasks was shown to be both important and relevant to the monitoring of home educators. The duty of the LEA towards home educators can either be seen as the monitoring of standards of education and thus delegated to the advisory staff, or rather as a monitoring of an educational problem, to be delegated to the welfare or psychological services. This is likely to depend on the attitude of the CEO and of support staff to home educators, but might also be dependent on the levels of staffing and staff availability.

The CEO has a number of objectives, policies and procedures within which the staff (LEA officials) are required to work in a coordinated way. This is one of the features of a 'formal organisation' (Knowles, 1988, pXXIX) or a bureaucracy, as described by Blau and Meyer:

Bureaucracies can be defined as formally established organizations designed to maximize administrative efficiency. In other words, they are characterized by formalized procedures for mobilizing and co-ordinating the collective efforts of many, usually specialized, individuals

Figure 3.2: Management Structure of Education Department - Authority 6



and sub-groups in the pursuit of organizational objectives.

(1971, p58)

Blau and Scott (1963, pp32-33) stated that a formal organisation is government by paid officials who keep their posts whatever political party is in power. It involves:

- division of labour, which in turn leads to expertise and officials with 'impersonal orientation';
- a hierarchical command structure;
- full-time employment with a lifelong career structure;
- a formally established system of rules and regulations, which govern official decisions and actions.

The formal organisation:

Sets up the mechanisms, such as formal rules, information channels, and training programs that help to narrow the range of alternatives the official must consider before making his decisions.

(Blau and Scott, 1963, p37)

Statements about formal organisations can be interpreted from different points of view. For example, narrowing a view in order to make decision-making easier may normally be good practice, but it may be more difficult when a client's case is not routine, as with home education in some LEAs. This is further discussed in section 3.5. The roles of LEA officials who may come into contact with home educators are discussed in the following section (3.3). Details of interviews with LEA officials are given

in order to illustrate the variety of experiences of officials when monitoring home educators (3.4).

3.3 Officials of the LEA

During the current research, I interviewed, severally and together, members of eight education authorities in person and many more by telephone. Those members of the LEA who had an interest in, or contact with, home educators were interviewed. These visits confirmed that a CEO delegates one or more departments to be responsible for the monitoring the education of home educated children, and the department(s) to which it is delegated varies, reflecting the internal structure. The internal structure of the LEA is mainly dependent on the CEO, who acts as 'the manager and monitor of the local system.' (Kogan, 1973, p14).

3.3.1 The Chief Education Officer

As already stated, the major role of the CEO is to administer the large number of officials, who, together with the government, the DES (SED, DENI), the locally elected council and the education committee are responsible for providing an efficient education service in a Local Authority area. The role of the CEO is one:

Of leadership, monitor and innovator [and] is played out against constraints imposed not only by the agencies of central government, committees, budgetary control, legal requirements and historic inheritance, but by some largely undefined boundaries.

(Kogan, 1973, p14)

It is the CEO who is able to 'raise questions about educational purpose and style' and is able to determine policy on aspects of education such as home education usually after consultation with officials from within the department. This was confirmed at a meeting at one LEA where the CEO and a relatively newly appointed advisory head with responsibility for monitoring home educators were both present.

The CEO is ultimately responsible for the development of educational policies for his area which he must recommend to his education committee.

(Ibid, p28)

The CEO, having knowledge of education in the locality, has a great deal of influence over the decisions of the education committee, although the CEO is limited by those resolutions which the elected councillors may want to make for political reasons. In an interview with a second CEO, it was specified that, when the adviser was not satisfied with the level of home education offered by the parents, it would be referred to him (the CEO) and then, if necessary to the sub-committee for primary or secondary education, after consultation with legal advisers and other LEA officials. When a matter was urgent, it could be referred to an executive education committee for immediate discussion; the members of this

committee often accepted the recommendations of the CEO and his support staff. As was established at the interviews given in section 3.4, the CEO usually delegates the monitoring of home educators to the advisory staff, the Education Welfare Officers or the Educational Psychologists. As will be argued in the following sections, aspects of the expertise of all three of these professionals are likely to be required for the monitoring of home education.

3.3.2 Advisory staff

Although a majority of advisory staff are called advisers, some are designated as inspectors or advisory heads (Pearce, 1986, pp103-104). In this section, the term adviser includes all other variations. The major part of an adviser's work is to visit schools and to advise and help staff in schools to improve the education provided by the LEA which children receive. Advisers also act as a communication link between the schools and the education department of the LEA. They:

Are usually responsible for a particular field, such as computing, pre-school provision, adult education, political education or equal opportunities. There is no uniformity of numbers; some large authorities have 50 or more advisers, while a few LEAs have none, relying on the centrally appointed HMIs for inspection and advice.

(Statham et al., 1989, p99)

Some examples of the ratio of advisers to schools are given by Pearce (1986, p29). They range from 7.1 schools per adviser to 19.5 schools per adviser. Much of an adviser's time is spent visiting schools: when needed, on the basis of observations of the children, teachers and the school, the adviser makes suggestions for improving the provision of education within the school, such as suggesting in-service courses, additional teaching material or additional equipment where possible. A full list of the responsibilities of advisers is given by Pearce (ibid, pp101-102).

When visiting a school, an adviser notices much about the environment of the school, indicating the type of teaching which is carried out there (ibid, p156). This would also be true of the monitoring of home educators in the home. Pearce believed that for an adviser to:

Approach a classroom visit with preconceptions or obsessions is uncharacteristic in any inspector, though doubtless it can seem to happen now and then.

(Ibid, p157)

In addition, Pearce noted that a visit to a new classroom can be stressful to an adviser. Three of the advisers interviewed during this study confirmed that the initial visits to home educators were indeed stressful as it was initially unknown by the advisers whether the family would be assertive or cooperative (Thomas, 1976). Pearce stated that advisers must:

Have freedom of action to decide when and where they will visit; as representatives of their Chief Education Officer they have no need to wait for an invitation.

(1986, p102)

When inadvertently applying this 'right' of advisers to visit places where education takes place, when and where they wish, to home education, it was inevitable that conflict would arise. The Tweedie case (section 2.5.3) clarified that an LEA official could enter a home only at the invitation of the occupants or by ruling of a court of law. It is also apparent from the advice that Education Otherwise gives to its members, that unexpected visits in some instances are seen to be unpleasant:

If you are bothered by visits being made without prior appointment, explain that you are due to go out in a few minutes. Be polite about this, but quite firm, and continue on your way after saying that they are quite welcome to return on another day with a prior appointment. It is reasonable also that both parents should want to be involved in any discussions, and it should be possible to arrange an evening visit if necessary.

(Education Otherwise, 1985, p35)

This advice given by Education Otherwise takes no account of the adviser's busy schedule or the need for a limited number of working hours. Demands such as these, if made frequently in any one LEA could exacerbate a situation of conflict.

One adviser, in interview, stated that he felt visits to home educators to be a waste of his valuable time, although necessary by law; he monitored between fifteen and twenty families per year, visiting each family once per term (and more frequently if the education provided

by the family was thought to be inadequate). He believed that each visit and the writing of a detailed report, when combined with the travelling time to and from the home, consumed between four and six hours of his time. This feeling of time-wasting may explain why in one LEA home educated families rarely receive visits from LEA officials. Another adviser, in an authority where there were very few home educators, was however willing to make an evening visit in order to talk to the parents and made other visits once per term to monitor the education the children were receiving. Two advisers interviewed also noted that monitoring education outside the school system had heightened an awareness of the provision of education in schools.

Pearce, having studied the role of the adviser, concluded from the literature:

That advisory staff in almost all LEAs are very seriously overworked.

(1986, p124)

Recently, the workload of advisers will probably have increased, due to the introduction of the 1988 Education Act, where there has been a need to inform teachers of the implementation of the National Curriculum.

Where an instance of home education is seen to be less than satisfactory, an adviser may feel under pressure from lack of time and may therefore be more assertive in order to bring the matter more rapidly to a conclusion or

the adviser may cease visiting the home educating family, to make use of time in other ways. In the Perry case (section 2.5.4), the advisory service was criticised for lack of time spent monitoring the education of the children concerned and for the length of time between visits. The frequency of visits made by the LEA officials was also criticised by the Ombudsman's report (Education, 24 August, 1990, p151). It is, however, inevitable that there are great pressures of work and, in most LEAs, visiting home educators has to be marginal part of the work of an advisory team. Details of interviews with advisers are given in section 3.4.

3.3.3 Education Welfare Officers

Education welfare officers (or education social workers) are, as the title suggests, normally responsible for the welfare of children other than their intellectual or academic development. They not only ensure that registered children attend school regularly, but they also deal with grants, allowances or services which the children may need in order to attend, for example, clothing and transport. The job involves a substantial amount of fieldwork, such as visiting families where there is a record of absence, lateness or other difficulties at school (Statham et al., 1989, p100). Blyth and Milner (1989) also note that EWOs are

associated with attendance and truancy and that 'local education welfare services ... are committed to social work'.

Given that LEAs, by law, should monitor primarily the education that a home educated child is receiving and not the social situation, it would at first seem inappropriate that EWOs should monitor home education. However, after an interview with two EWOs in a rural area (given in detail in section 3.4) it became apparent that this delegation may occur because EWOs have experience of making home visits and can make an initial assessment of the ages of the children, their previous educational experiences, note the methods of teaching which the parents are using and perhaps assess why the parents have decided to home educate. An EWO who is qualified in education in addition to social work would be able to assess the education provided, and when in doubt could consult other departments within the LEA.

It is not clear, however, how an EWO would view a notification by parents of an intention to home educate a child, following a period of difficulty of the child at school. This may well depend on the relationships and thus the level of effective communication, already established between EWO, parents and child. If the family has been dissatisfied with the previous advice of an EWO, a non-endorsement of home education could be seen as a

continuation of a previous struggle rather than an inadequate educational provision at home. The effective monitoring of education by an EWO would seem to depend on:

- the extent of the educational experience of the EWO in order to be able to assess the level of education provided in the home;

- the previous experiences the EWO may have had of home educating families;

- the level of communication between the welfare services and the advisory services;

- a distinct delineation between truancy or difficulties at school and the intention to home educate in cases of deregistration from school.

It has not yet been established in the courts whether it is legal for a person who is not qualified in education, but working for an LEA, to monitor home education.

3.3.4 Educational Psychologists

The educational psychologist usually monitors and assesses children who have physical, social or behavioural difficulties within education:

Every LEA has a team of educational psychologists.... They generally have a psychology degree, a teaching qualification, some teaching experience and further specialist training. They work with children who have

learning or behavioural problems in school, administering tests ... and designing remedial work in conjunction with teachers. ... A large proportion of their time is taken up with identifying and assessing children's special needs.

(Statham et al., 1989, p99)

It is not immediately apparent that the monitoring of home educated children needs the expertise of an educational psychologist as not every home educated child has special educational needs. Statham did, however, state that educational psychologists are usually qualified in education. This is in contrast to EWOs, some of whom may not have any qualification in the provision of education. In contrast to advisers, educational psychologists are used to monitoring children in situations other than in the school environment and in the course of their work, they frequently interview parents and make home visits.

The views of educational psychologists towards home education vary. Emilia Dowling, a psychologist and Director of the Tavistock Clinic, London, stated in a telephone interview that it would be difficult to agree to home education if the child had previously experienced problems when registered at school; however, none of the families, after experiencing problems with a child's schooling, and after being referred to the Clinic had suggested home education as a solution to the child's problem. Only one interview with an educational psychologist was held during this study (given in detail

in section 3.4); this interview demonstrated the difficulty an educational psychologist may have in agreeing to the provision of education by a parent. However, one example is not indicative of educational psychologists in general, as in another authority an educational psychologist recommended home education for a child who was having problems at school.

Effective monitoring of home education by an educational psychologist could be influenced by:

- the prior concept of home education held by the educational psychologist;
- the level of communication between the psychology services and the advisory staff;
- past experiences of monitoring home education;
- the ability of the psychologist to differentiate between parental condoning of truancy and requests to deregister children from school in order to provide home education; and
- the perception of the parent as an ally in education, rather than an obstacle (Wardle, 1974, p146).

3.3.5 Summary

As can be seen from the role descriptions of the LEA officials who usually monitor home educators, there is no one official whose regular duties make him or her suited

to the role of monitoring home educators without having to acquire additional skills to those needed for more routine duties. It would seem that the advisors are overworked and are accustomed to monitoring education in schools which may differ from that provided in the home. EWOs and psychologists, who are accustomed to home visits, either may not have the professional qualifications to monitor home education, or may be involved with children who have problems and need special help in order to learn. It became apparent during the interviews that the department of the LEA holding the responsibility for monitoring home education varied from one LEA to another. In addition, the policy of the LEA, the personalities of the LEA officials involved in monitoring and the preconceptions of the officials combined with previous experiences of home educating families also varied and affected the general attitudes of the officials within the LEA.

Five LEAs in England and Wales were contacted at the beginning of December 1991, following the implementation of the Children Act 1989 in October 1991; LEA officials were telephoned in order to establish the policy of the LEA with respect to Education Supervisors (section 2.2). Of these, one LEA official refused to comment, as the social work department, to which the EWOs were responsible, had a policy of non-cooperation with people involved in research. Two LEAs had not formulated a

policy towards the establishment of Education Supervisors; the remaining two LEAs had decided to use Education Welfare staff, possibly retrained, although this intended policy had still to be further discussed and implemented. This endorsed my perception of the variety of provision for children who are temporarily or permanently not in school and a lack of general policy guidance from the DES for the monitoring of the education of children temporarily or permanently not in school.

3.4 Interviews with officials of the LEAs

Accounts of the interviews taken during the study are given here in detail, to demonstrate the variety of LEA approaches to home educators and the concerns felt by each official when monitoring home education. The interviews also demonstrated the complex interplay between the interviewee's official and legal roles and his or her personal experiences and opinions. Most of the visits took place before or during the period when the questionnaire (which formed the major part of this study) was designed in 1988. Other visits took place during the remaining period of the research. LEA officials were interviewed from both urban and rural areas in Scotland, Wales and England.

Interview 1

This LEA was largely urban, although having some rural areas. Most of the recognised home educators were in the city concerned. The adviser felt that, with few exceptions, education offered at home was inferior to that in school. It was therefore the intention of the adviser to help home educating parents and cooperate with them, and thus hopefully persuade as many of the parents as possible to register their children at school. The adviser expressed antipathy towards a parent who had been 'found out' rather than notifying the LEA of the intention to home educate, feeling that perhaps the parents had 'something to hide' and would not be cooperative.

Concern was expressed by the adviser that some of the families involved in home education were not in the mainstream of society: among those involved in home education, there was a family of devout Methodists, an only child of a psychologically disturbed divorcee, and a Muslim family which sent male children to school, but wished to home educate a girl. In these instances, it was recognised that the academic education these children were receiving was adequate. However, the quality of wider education the children were receiving about society was doubted; it was felt that the children would have to be more widely educated in society to be prepared for adult life. The adviser recognised that there were

difficulties over the interpretation of 'education' when monitoring home education; it was doubted whether magistrates and judges would consider the wider definitions of education when a good academic education was provided by parents.

There were also difficulties, with another family, where access to the family's house for monitoring purposes had been denied. I suggested that the assessment could be undertaken at the education offices, but the adviser firmly believed that monitoring would be more successfully done in the home, as it was better to see the available resources and the child's daily environment.

Interview 2

The second interview was with an educational psychologist who monitored home educators in a mainly rural LEA; advisers were not involved. The psychologist was very much against home education, believing that many parents who 'requested' to educate a child at home had dubious psychological reasons for making the 'request'. He did not feel that it was a healthy option for the child.

However, one family, with many children, was home educating in the locality and was visited regularly by the psychologist. The parents had a reputation for being uncooperative and they were not averse to stating their

rights and going to court in connection with matters unrelated to education; there had been no court case in connection with home education as it was considered by the authority that the family was 'best left alone'. At the beginning of each visit, the family had a prayer meeting before the monitoring began. The family had a structured programme of work, some of the children followed a correspondence course from the United States and so it was considered that the home education provided was adequate.

The psychologist felt strongly that the ability of the child to communicate and the responsiveness of the child were important. Whether the child sat down to formal academic work was regarded as less important. The current level of attainment of the child was also given less weight, but it was essential that, at each visit, academic progress should be seen to have been made, compared with the previous visit. Another home educated child in the area was autistic and had been given help by the authority with music and mathematics teaching.

This LEA official demonstrated ignorance of the law; he strongly believed that parents who intended to home educate, first had to ask for LEA permission. The permission could either be granted by the LEA or, as in most cases, refused. This misconception of the law was illustrated by an instance of a gypsy family where the

father had written a letter to the LEA stating the intention to home educate his children. The psychologist's description of his arrival at the 'encampment' showed his distaste for the way of life led by these people. He felt that it was impossible for a child to receive an education in such surroundings. The psychologist advised the family to either send the children to the local school the following morning or to move out of the area. The family left the area to be, as he stated, 'someone else's problem'. It would appear that the education the children were receiving was, in this instance, neither assessed nor monitored.

It was my perception that in an LEA area with this policy, there might have been families home educating, unknown to the LEA officials. When questioned on the initial recognition of home educators, the psychologist confirmed that three families had been 'found out', although usually LEA officials were notified of intentions to home educate by the head of the school the children had been attending. It was evident that, the assertiveness of the official concerned when meeting families intending to home educate and the misinterpretation or ignorance of the law could lead to further conflict. The LEA, however, had a policy of monitoring home education if the officials felt that the home educators might be assertive.

Interview 3

At the third LEA visited, it was again evident that there was ignorance of the law. In this rural LEA, the adviser stated that home education was 'never' allowed at secondary level. Even were a family to use a recognised correspondence course, he declared that the policy of the LEA was not to agree with home education at this level. When a group of very well-educated and strongly motivated parents refused to send their secondary age children a considerable distance to school and said they would be educated at home, the LEA adopted a policy which encouraged these parents to set up a small school.

At primary level, the LEA was supportive of parents wishing to home educate. In the more remote areas, it was acceptable and cheaper for the LEA to pay for courses from the Worldwide Education Service, than to send tutors for the child, maintain very small schools or pay for transport for the isolated child to go to the nearest school. Most children using the correspondence course were believed to be ahead of their peers when entering the state system at secondary level. Information about the existence of home educators came from headteachers, neighbours and anonymous telephone calls and letters. In this LEA, the conflict arose over the definition of 'education' at secondary level.

Interview 4

During a telephone interview with a metropolitan LEA, it was noted that there had already been some conflict with a home educating family. This was due to the adviser's belief that the level of work at home was inferior to that provided in school. In principle, the LEA was not against the concept of home education, and was well aware of the law. It was stated that most of the parents who chose to home educate their children in this area were from more academic families. The LEA official was not aware of any single parent families or families where there was a shortage of money who were home educating and commented that it would be difficult for such families to home educate as they would not have sufficient resources. This LEA made the schools' resources centre and the central buying agency available to home educators, in contrast to the other LEAs so far interviewed.

Interview 5

The fifth interview was given by two education welfare officers, who were aware of the application of the law. They both had had teaching experience and had subsequently become interested in children's welfare.

The EWOs supplied a copy of the information which was sent to parents, who had notified the LEA of the intention to home educate. The LEA requested timetables of work to be done each week (including Saturday and

Sunday) and curriculum details of the education to be provided. The forms had been compiled by administrators within the LEA. Copies of similar forms are given in Appendix 8. The EWOs felt that the approach was all too formal, but were prepared to help home educators complete the form. The EWOs also felt that their major duty was to make the parents realise the 'enormous' responsibility they were assuming when deciding to home educate their child(ren). The advisory staff were involved only when there were particular problems or a family needed specific advice.

The home educated children known to the LEA were mostly of primary age. In one part of the county, grammar schools had been retained; concern was expressed that many of the children were being home educated, approximately half by tutors, in order to enhance the child's chances of gaining a place in a grammar school or a scholarship to a local fee paying school with a good reputation. In another part of the county without grammar schools, there were few known home educators.

There was also a number of 'New Age' home educators (described in section 4.1). These home educated children were regarded as aware and happy and progressing academically, although the way in which the children were educated was sometimes very different from the education provided in state schools. These children were only a

small proportion of the total and the families chose to live in the more remote areas of the county.

There was no apparent conflict with home educators within the LEA. This could have been due largely to the knowledge of home education, the EWOs experience of monitoring home education and the collaborative personalities of the EWOs involved.

Interview 6

The area covered by the sixth LEA was mostly rural, but included two large market towns. The adviser involved in monitoring home education was largely supportive of the parents and their aims. He believed that in one family which educated for religious reasons there were very high academic and moral standards. This LEA had a policy of catering for the individual child, even if this included supporting home educated children (e.g. the LEA had a centre for gifted children and created work packages for such children).

The adviser had experienced problems with one family, where the children were mostly left to their own devices during the day, had been found a long way from home, and the parents had not known where they were; it was felt that this family, although believing in autonomous learning (sections 1.1 and 2.4.1), needed to give the children more direction. In connection with another

family, the adviser thought that there was a narrow dividing line between being educated in the family and a form of child labour; the child helped a great deal in the house with younger siblings and was only being educated by the parents answering questions that he posed; no particular events were organised for the child and the lifestyle was not particularly geared towards his needs.

The adviser believed that a rural LEA would be more likely to attract 'New Age' home educators with different concepts of life, including education (section 4.1). It was felt that in some cases there could be more of an accent on the adults' lifestyle rather than the needs of the children, particularly with respect to education.

The adviser thought it would be interesting to undertake a study to analyse the home visits made by the officials, as this was a sensitive moment, and could lead to subsequent conflict. As an adviser, he believed it was necessary to better understand the situation in order to be more effective. This adviser, in supporting home educators at secondary level and believing the education that some of these students received to be very effective, was extremely concerned that with the introduction of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, the opportunities for home educated children to obtain formal qualifications were

decreasing. This was further investigated and the results of this research are given in Chapter seven.

Interview 7

This seventh interview was held with officials from a well populated county LEA in southern England. The CEO and an advisory head, responsible for monitoring home education in half of the county were interviewed. One problem that was experienced by this LEA was that the number of home educators was quite large and consequently the education provided for each child by the parents was monitored at twelve to eighteen month intervals; this was thought to be too infrequent for efficient monitoring. There was a new policy of encouraging older secondary age children to undertake courses in adult education centres and thus receive a more formal education in less formal surroundings. If it were felt that the family needed more social supervision, an EWO was involved to help monitor the family concerned.

Membership of Education Otherwise was encouraged, but it was believed that only approximately 30% of the home educators belonged to this parental organisation. Many of the home educators known to the LEA were home educating for religious reasons and were mainly Jehovah's Witnesses; it had been suggested to these parents that if they wished, the LEA would support the foundation of a

small school for the children concerned, but there was a lack of interest by the parents concerned.

The monitoring of a small number of home educators had been done prior to 1988 on an ad hoc basis. However, with an increase in the number of home educated children, the administrative procedures had been revised, to become more formal. The potential conflict arose over the interpretation of the term 'education' which to these LEA officials meant that home education should be as similar as possible to that provided in schools. For example, it was felt that in only two of the large number of families were parents providing an adequate education for their children and in both these families correspondence courses were being used. It was felt that in order to educate, the parent should be aware of current teaching methods.

Interview 8:

The primary adviser from this LEA was responsible in half of a large county for monitoring primary education, both for education in schools and for home education. For the previous three years the adviser had been monitoring between fifteen and twenty home educated children; the number of such children was growing, particularly among those who were home educating for religious reasons. The religious families were mainly Jehovah's Witnesses. About a third of the home educators he visited were using

correspondence courses and others were also thought to be providing a suitable education.

Many of the home educated children in the area were young and the adviser expressed reservations about educating older children at home, particularly with respect to examinations. He also questioned that his time should be used in monitoring home education, believing that a whole morning spent visiting one family could be better used by helping a greater number of children in school.

Socialisation was not thought to be a problem as all the home educated children were involved in clubs and/or church groups. A colleague of the adviser, monitoring home education in the other half of the county was dissatisfied with the type of education provided in one instance and in another instance disagreed with the parents' views on socialisation where they did not wish their children to have contact with other children.

3.4.1 Assessment of the interviews

The interviews demonstrated some of the problems facing LEA officials when encountering home educators. Other concerns and problems of LEA officials were included in the responses to the questionnaire and are detailed in Chapter six. There was a range of views on the

effectiveness of home education, largely determined by the LEA official's definition of 'education'. At two of the meetings the view was expressed that home educating families were offered cooperation solely as a means of 'getting them back into school as soon as possible'.

In two LEAs, the officials were clearly ignorant of the law, particularly with respect to home education at secondary level; there was disagreement with the concept of home education at secondary level, expressing a fundamental belief that no home could provide the facilities available in schools and 'necessary' for secondary education. One of the officials indicated that the LEA had a policy of disagreeing with home education at secondary level, even were the children to undertake a comprehensive correspondence course.

In sharp contrast to those LEAs not 'permitting' home education at secondary level, two other LEAs were in favour (one strongly) of home education for older children, providing it was undertaken in a conscientious way. One family was providing for each child in such an excellent manner that the adviser thought it would be an example to some schools. At secondary level, a favourable judgement on home education seemed to depend on the definitions of 'education' of both the home educator and the LEA official being mutually consistent.

Five of the eight LEAs expressed concern over a few families, considered to be a small minority. These families insist on a form of autonomous learning, with education solely at the request of the child when it demands to know. Sometimes these children do not learn to read and write until much later than children attending school. In addition, perhaps no written record of the work that has been achieved is maintained. The concern of the LEA officials centred around the difficulty the official has when trying to determine whether the child is educated at all. In this instance, the official then has to decide whether to give an adverse report, thus indicating that the parents might be taken to court, which is a major step. This has been partly clarified by the Harrison case (Section 2.5.1).

At primary level, autonomous learning seemed to be far more acceptable to LEA officials than at secondary level. Thus, as a child grows older, families who believe in autonomous learning would seem to be far more likely to experience conflict with LEA officials who thought that home education provided by a parent at secondary level should be similar to the education provided in school. In some areas where the LEA policy is that home education should not be 'permitted' at secondary level, the parents would be advised that the child must attend school. For parents who are determined to continue with an autonomous form of home education in these LEA areas and who are

aware of the legal situation, this differing interpretation of education and the differing perception of the needs of the child could lead to extensive conflict when both parties to that conflict are assertive.

When asked about the criteria used for assessing home educators, three of the officials stated that 'you just know' or 'we get a good feel' when the home visits were made. This professional subjectivity, although valid, did not seem to be an adequate basis for decision making, when the outcome might be a court case. In the normal course of their work, advisers do not often make home visits. The assessment of the visit could thus be largely dependent on the visits previously made to home educating families and the personality of the official concerned, whether collaborative or assertive.

One of the major issues to arise was that many of the LEA officials were involved in monitoring the progress of education in schools and thus possibly relating home education to schooling; other officials were involved with children who had problems in the schools and some of the officials saw the task of monitoring home education as encouraging home educated children to return to school. As numbers of home educators in all but one of the LEAs I visited were still relatively small, training for the monitoring of home educators was gained mostly

'on the job' and monitoring was thus very dependent on the types of home education practised by the families which the officials had encountered. Gaining 'on the job' experience may not be adequate training when monitoring home educators using the autonomous method of study, 'New Age' home educators, those from traveller families or families with an unusual lifestyle, such as those who belong to devout religious groups. Conflict might not necessarily arise, but a feeling of unease could arise within the official, fuelling other dissatisfaction.

The visits highlighted the number of parents home educating for religious reasons. Although this had been recognised in the United States for some time, it had not been acknowledged in Great Britain. LEA officials were generally supportive of these families. However, in two LEAs, the concern of the officials about the religious issue was strong because it was felt that the children were not being educated to 'fit into society as it is' and it was not 'healthy' for the children to be exposed to such a narrow experience. It was believed that the social life of the children was often based exclusively on the church and its activities. In another LEA, concern was expressed over the inequality in a home educating family practising the muslim faith; the girl was home educated for religious reasons, while the boy was sent to school. The LEA officials were not 'against' these families educating at home for religious reasons; from an

academic standpoint, the standard was in some instances considered to be very high. The concern was based on the apparent lack of exposure to a range of social experiences; the perceived social needs of the child by the two parties were mutually inconsistent.

In two of the LEAs, the officials had an overall feeling of responsibility towards the family, despite the fact that the parents had chosen to home educate. It was felt that collaboration in the form of 'education and communication' should be given to parents by offering access to teachers' resources centres, central buying agencies and the schools' library service. One adviser believed that part-time attendance at schools for certain courses should be made available to support home educating parents; as such parents were paying taxes and/or rates, they should be able to have access to educational support and advice.

In two LEAs, the officials saw home education as a part of the wide spectrum of education to be available to children and not as a competitor to the state system; this made a difference to their overall attitudes. In all but one of the interviews, a need was expressed to have a forum, workshop or conference where home education could be discussed; the people involved in monitoring home education sometimes felt isolated in this aspect of their work.

These interviews demonstrated that there was a range of views held by LEA officials and a variety of attitudes. The causes of potential conflict centred on:

- mutually inconsistent definitions of 'education' and/or of the perceived social needs of the child. These inconsistencies mainly centred on the educational needs of the secondary age child and the acceptance by the official of autonomous learning;

- the LEA official's previous experience of monitoring home education and the official's knowledge of the law;

- the availability of support for both the LEA official from within the LEA and support for the home educator by the LEA; and

- the level of assertive or secretive behaviour on the part of the home educator.

3.5 The effect of formal organisational structures on the monitoring of home education

What the LEA officials interviewed did not express, but what became apparent during the study was that conflict could also occur due to the bureaucratic nature of the LEA itself. For example, Blau and Scott believed that impersonal detachment of the officials towards the public being served, is developed to prevent the personal

feelings of the officials from distorting their rational judgement in carrying out their duties:

Clients are to be treated as cases, the officials being expected to disregard all personal considerations and to maintain complete emotional detachment.

(1963, p33)

This detachment could be seen by some home educators as uncaring and alien to their lifestyles, for example when completing complex forms.

An official is also expected to create effective neutrality which is:

To protect the client from being emotionally exploited and the practitioner from being torn apart by sympathy for his troubled clients.

(Ibid, p61)

For every professional, it may be difficult on occasion to exclude one's personal feelings. The official also has to:

Maintain independence of judgement and not permit the clients' wishes, as distinguished from their interests, to influence his decisions.

(Ibid, p52)

In instances of monitoring home education, the client(s) can be seen as the parent and/or the child; the interpretation of the term 'interests' of the client, can be one of the most contentious. The parent may reject outright all provision of state education; LEA officials will believe the state provision of education to be good. As shown in the interviews, it was on occasion also believed that the best interests of a child would always be served in school:

Obviously administrators believe that schools educate their clients.

(Tucker and Zeigler, 1980, p10)

The view that the educational and social interests of the child are best served in school was conveyed by LEA officials to me on numerous occasions during the course of this study. There can be a danger that the interests of the child can become confused with the life history or the needs of the parent (private correspondence with J. Gary Knowles).

Middle-management LEA officials, dealing with home education are likely to be specialised in some way, by training or by experience. Meighan expressed the view that LEA officials who had not previously encountered instances of home education could mis-manage the situation (1984a, pp279-80). This could occur in an instance where a professional is expected to take decisions based on little or no experience. This was interpreted by Blau and Scott:

Professional decisions and actions are governed by universalistic standards; that is, they are based on certain objective criteria which are independent of the particular case under consideration.

(1963, p63)

In instances of home education, or any marginal or unusual provision of education, in which the LEA is involved, it is necessary to first establish 'universal standards' or guidelines, otherwise the criteria on which decisions are made may not necessarily apply in the

circumstances (e.g. the right of an adviser to visit the home as an educational establishment). How able an LEA official is to create these new guidelines would depend on the personality of the official and his perception of the need for new guidelines, combined with the support and resources of the LEA.

It could be that some LEA officials might exercise 'objective criteria' when these are no longer suitable, for example a belief that children must attend school, when cases of home education are rare, or that science education must involve the use of complex equipment, when a home educating family might undertake similar experiments with home-made equipment at the kitchen sink. This may also be the case when there is a belief that organisation of the day, by timetable and into subject areas is the 'universalistic standard' and an official comes into contact with a family who believes in a form of 'autonomous' learning. On occasion, the resistance of members of the public to the specialist knowledge of the bureaucracy can be viewed as at fault:

In the eyes of experts, those who resist are not in possession of adequate information. Once such information is available, they believe that resistance will dissipate. When it does not, experts believe that laymen are behaving irrationally.

(Tucker and Zeigler, 1980, p9)

On the other hand, with greater experience of home education, 'objective criteria' can be re-established and this may explain Deutsch and Wolf's (1991) belief that

the conflict 'situation has improved noticeably' between home educators and LEA officials.

It is thus apparent that the general characteristics of the formal organisation or bureaucracy as expressed by Blau, Scott and Tucker, could, in some instances lead to conflict between some LEA officials and home educators. In the following chapter, the motives of the home educating parents, being the other party to a potential conflict, are explored.

CHAPTER 4: Home educators

By establishing who home educators are and what their reasons might be for choosing to home educate their children, an attempt can be made to ascertain whether these reasons contribute in any way to the conflict that arises between some home educators and the LEAs concerned. The research undertaken in the United States was first assessed, in order to give some bearing on an analysis in the United Kingdom. Subsequently, the reasons for home education in the United Kingdom were evaluated, using the available literature and information given in interviews with LEA officials and with other people involved in home education during this study.

4.1 Home educators in the United States

The literature describing the reasons why parents choose to home educate their children in the United States is much more abundant than that for the United Kingdom. However, some reports tend to be lacking in research results and are largely anecdotal and hence, the views expressed must be viewed with some caution. For instance, Bolick, an attorney with the United States Department of Justice, stated that:

Home schooling is one of the most eclectic, coalescing an extraordinary diverse group of individuals around a single purpose - the education of children outside the traditional school structure.

The growing ranks of home schoolers span the entire political spectrum, encompassing conservatives and liberals, libertarians and populists.

Many home schoolers are rigidly traditional and scrupulously law-abiding, while others are long-time practitioners of civil disobedience.

(1987, p84)

Bolick continued that some home educators considered schools to be too secular while others believed them too religious.

This view of the variety of home educators was echoed by Knowles:

Home school families run the gamut from the religiously conservative right, to the liberal left, representing the poor and the rich, the uneducated and the educated.

(1987, p6)

During the last few years, detailed studies of the reasons parents choose to home educate have been published (Bliss 1989, Kilgore et al. 1987, Knowles 1987, 1988a, 1988b, 1990a, 1990b, Mayberry 1988, 1990, Van Galen 1988, Wartes 1988 and Williams et al. 1984). Such research has been possible, due in part to the freedom of information in the United States and, in some of the states, the obligation for a home schooler to register with the state education administration. Washington is an example of a state which requires home educators to register and in which much research has been carried out.

The nationwide organisations which support home educators, such as the Hewitt Foundation, are also willing to furnish information to research workers. These factors have simplified the problem of collecting accurate research data in the United States.

Mayberry (1988) analysed the situation in the state of Oregon; the research involved a state-wide questionnaire with a 37% return and in-depth interviews with fifteen families. She discovered that 65% of the families involved in the questionnaire were motivated by religious beliefs:

These parents are primarily concerned with what they perceive as a family right rather than a state right, to take charge of the education of their children. They believe that it is their duty to instil particular religious beliefs and values in their children.

(Mayberry, 1988, p37)

The second largest group in Mayberry's study comprised those who were concerned with academic achievement (22%). The third type considered social development of their children to be of major importance (11%). In Mayberry's terms, 'social development' included negative peer influences, the restoration of family unity, the desire of the parents to be more personally involved and the importance of children learning at their own pace. 'New Age' parents - those who chose to reject materialism in favour of a more idealistic, sometimes itinerant life - comprised only 2%, although Mayberry recognised that these were often the parents who did not declare

themselves to the authorities, fearing that they could be misunderstood and rejected.

Mayberry found that the education of the different groups of home educating parents, their occupations and their incomes, with the exception of the New Age families, were remarkably similar. New Age people were liable to be slightly better educated than many of the other home-schooling parents, have slightly less money and were in 'craft oriented' or self employed jobs. In addition, it was more likely for the woman to be in paid employment.

Gustavsen also used a questionnaire approach, the sample of home educators being taken from the files of the Hewitt Research Foundation. The potential respondents were parents who indicated that they had current experience or interest in 'home schooling operations'. Of 312 questionnaires which were distributed, 70.8% were returned (Gustavsen, 1981, p75). Gustavsen believed there to be five major reasons for the respondents to choose home education:

The respondents' ratings of twelve possible reasons yield the following as most relevant for the respondents' decisions to operate their own schools. The reasons are listed in order of their importance:

- a. concern for the moral health of their children
- b. concern over the character development of their children
- c. the prevalence of excess rivalry and ridicule in conventional schools
- d. the overall poor quality of education in public schools

e. desire to enjoy the children at home in their early years.

(Ibid, p142)

The first four reasons were based on a negative reaction to the states' school provision. The positive development of the child as a future adult and moral and character development of the child were found to be much more important than the academic aspect of education. It is unclear, whether Gustavsen included religious reasons for home education in 'the moral health' response; if these two are considered to be similar, then the findings of Mayberry and Gustavsen are not incompatible.

Knowles carried out research into home educators in the State of Utah. Over a period of several years he has studied in depth a group of home educating families. This has usually involved twelve families, a sample which, although small in number, has given insight into many different aspects of home education. He has studied in detail, for example, the different educational and sociological backgrounds of home educating parents in an attempt to discover whether there could be a possible pattern (Knowles, 1988b). He also carried out research into the reasons why families choose to home educate. In contrast to others, he concluded that 'grounds for home schooling are complex and interwoven' (Knowles, 1987, p21). The reasons:

Seem to fall into the following categories (arranged in no particular order):

1. dissatisfaction with academic standards

2. dissatisfaction with standards of discipline and moral values perceived in many public schools
3. opposition to school socialization
4. desire for family unity
5. desire to provide for the spiritual needs of the children
6. desire for an holistic approach to education that emphasizes direct and experiential learning.

(Ibid, p13)

Knowles believed dissatisfaction with schooling, the moral and spiritual wellbeing of the child and the type of education provided at home, all to be reasons for parents choosing to home educate a child.

Among the studies of Mayberry, Gustavsen and Knowles, there was partial agreement on the reasons for home education which included a general dissatisfaction with public schools and a need for family unity. However, both Knowles and Mayberry indicated home education for religious reasons to be important in the United States as did Kilgore et al. (1987, p2), while Gustavsen did not. It is difficult to establish the reasons for the differences in the outcome of the research. They might have depended, for example, on the attitudes prevalent in the different home educating samples used or the wording of questions which elicited particular responses in questionnaires.

Mayberry and Knowles, working together at a later date, reassessed their research and concluded that the similarities in the reasons for home education included the importance to home educating parents of 'family

relationships' and 'family unity'. This included those parents home educating for religious reasons:

For those parents, home schooling was intricately connected with the development of family unity. It was important for parents to have their children's active participation in family activities, of which schooling at home was only one of many unifying activities.

(1990, p10)

The parents home educating for religious reasons stressed the importance of parent-child bonding for understanding the educational needs of children. Their home school activities represented their conviction that a child's education should be the responsibility of the parents. Mayberry and Knowles also believed the parents to be high in 'human capital', in the resources that they individually had to offer. Kilgore (1987) and Williams et al. (1984) stated that, in the samples of home educators used in their research, positive socialisation of family and friends, away from the negative aspects of school, was an important factor in the decision to home educate.

The relevance of research undertaken in the United States to the reasons people home educate in the United Kingdom has yet to be investigated. However, in the course of my research, it became apparent that there were similarities. As shall be demonstrated, this was evident particularly with respect to those parents who had chosen to home educate their children for religious reasons. In the United Kingdom the reasons for parents choosing to home educate their children has not been researched using

a representative sample; it is my belief that the reasons in both the United Kingdom and the United States for parents to choose home education may well be similar. However, perhaps Knowles touched on the most important aspect, that the reasons for people to choose home education are not clear cut but more a combination of factors.

4.2 Home educators in the United Kingdom

Although some studies have been carried out in the United Kingdom, the most notable by Blacker (1981), there seems to be little detailed research published in the United Kingdom on the reasons why parents choose to home educate their children or why they wish to withdraw their children from the school environment. It is extremely difficult to undertake research which involves detailed analysis because of the initial difficulty in identifying the subjects which could form an objective sample. LEAs have incomplete lists of home educators, due to the lack of a requirement for a home educated child to be registered with them. The LEA officials also have no power in law to request information from home schooling families, except that pertaining to the efficiency of the education provided by the parents.

Education Otherwise (EO) has not recently supported the investigations of independent researchers, nor does it have the finance to undertake many investigations of its own. In a recent newsletter, a student attempting a thesis on home education had written to the Publicity Officer of EO, for permission to use one of the contact lists to mail a questionnaire to the members. Permission was refused on the grounds that it was stated quite clearly that the list was for the use of members only and even members did not have the right to use it for mailing purposes. The student was requested to:

Contact the local coordinator in her region and ask their cooperation, it would be up to them whether to tell their members about the questionnaire.

(Education Otherwise, June 1989, p29)

This method of research would be unlikely to produce a representative sample. It must be stated that during my research, the Children's Home-Based Education (CHEA) and individual members of EO have cooperated and supplied non-confidential information when requested.

There is some doubt whether membership of these parental support groups is comprehensive. It is not known, for example, how many home educators recognised by LEAs, are also members of parental support groups. Very superficial questioning of a few LEAs would indicate that this could be as low as 50%, although not all members of the parental support groups may indicate their membership to the LEA official who monitors the family's provision of

education. In addition, religiously motivated home educators may have less need for home education support groups, as they could have the support of other members of the religion to which they belong.

In the United Kingdom, the reasons for parents to home educate a child can thus at present remain only poorly researched and speculative. However, an appraisal of the literature to date can be given.

Brown (1978) studied some members of EO in an attempt to establish why these parents had chosen to home educate their children. She distinguished three main reasons (pp72-76):

- parents who were family centred and believed the family to be important;
- parents who were enthusiastic about the concept of 'free schools' or community networks; and
- parents who rejected schooling.

However, Brown's study was undertaken only two years after EO was begun and the sample was necessarily small.

In 1980, again with the co-operation of EO, Blacker interviewed sixteen families which were, or had been, involved in home education. She divided them into three groups:

- Competitors:

The parents in this category would prefer schooling for their children but feel that what is available is neither adequate nor effective.

- Rebels:

This is a small but very significant group of parents whose attitudes towards schooling are part of a total rationale that rejects most social institutions as they operate at present.

- Compensators:

These parents had accepted, with few reservations, that schooling was the means by which their children were to be educated. At some point during their child's career at school a problem has arisen which could not be resolved. According to parents, consultations with teachers and local education authority officers proved fruitless. The parents usually examined possible alternatives but finally withdrew the affected child or children from school as the crisis was reached.

(Blacker, 1981, pp 20-34)

She emphasised that these were not distinct groups:

Some parents would, perhaps, see themselves as belonging in more than one category. Others perhaps, have, with time, changed categories.

(Ibid, p20)

In her sample of sixteen families, ten were compensators, and one was a rebel. Unlike Brown, Blacker recognised that some parents wished to send their children to school, but felt the choice to be too limited and that yet others had sent children to school, but the children had experienced problems which could not be solved except by withdrawing the child from the school system.

Webb's attendance at EO meetings had suggested 'a diversity of experience' among home educators (1988, p95). She also found that there was 'no evidence' (p278) in her study to support the existence of competitors as

categorised by Blacker. Throughout her thesis, Webb gave many individual examples of families who home educated and their individual reasons for so doing. She also gave the results of a questionnaire sent by EO to their membership in 1982 (p153). 173 people replied to the question which requested information on the reasons for joining EO, some responding to more than one part of the question. (As Webb stated, the phrasing of the question may also have included responses to the question by those people who were members of EO but were not actively involved in home education.) The reasons given were;

- Parents could educate well or better than school (63)
- Parents disapproved of the morals and social attitudes implanted by schools (129);
- religious (26);
- parents had adopted an alternative lifestyle (59);
- children had experienced previous problems in school (55).

These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, parents indicating that they had rejected the moral and social attitudes of the schools could also be home educating for religious reasons. However, there was a clear indication that some parents felt that they could do better than schools, while others wished to reject schools for a variety of reasons, including the general attitudes within schools or the particular problem of an individual child. The questionnaire indicated that only

15% of the respondents (who were members of EO) were home educating for religious reasons.

Lowden inserted a letter in Education Otherwise in an attempt to elicit replies from the members. He then sent a questionnaire to those members who wrote to him. Thirty completed questionnaires were returned. From the replies, Lowden concluded (1988, pp110-113) that there were five main groups of people who chose to home educate for:

- academic reasons: the child would not be undertaking the appropriate level of work in school, and the parents felt they could give the child a superior education;
- the child's happiness: the child was unhappy in school;
- ideological reasons: either the parents preferred learning through living, or they objected to the play and learn approach in the primary school;
- religious reasons: Lowden estimated this to be 10% of the total;
- a belief in alternative styles of living, referred to above as 'New Age' families.

The reasons established by Lowden are similar to those of Brown with the addition of parents wishing to home educate for religious reasons (10%) and the importance of the happiness of the child. My research would indicate that Lowden's estimate of the importance of home education for religious reasons is underestimated, due to

the limitation of the distribution of his questionnaire to members of EO. In addition, many parents would consider happiness of a child to be important when choosing education for their child, whether the child should attend a state school, a private school, a religious school or be educated at home; it is doubtful whether 'happiness of the child' can be seen as more than a general reason for a parent to choose a particular type of education for an individual child. Johnson stated that:

Parents given an opportunity to record their reasons for choosing a school tend to rate highly the personal happiness of their child.
(1990, p66)

More research needs to be undertaken in both the United States and the United Kingdom to compare the motives of home educators with those of parents whose children attend school.

Bendell (1987) provided a far more detailed account of reasons for people to choose home education. However, this was written through her own perceptions and experiences as a home educator and as a coordinator for EO. The many reasons for choosing home education she herself had and noticed in others, were given in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of her book, entitled, 'Our reasons - Practical', 'Our Reasons - Political' and 'Our Reasons - Poetical'. The following is a summary of the many reasons

she gave for parents to choose home education as an alternative to school:

- Parents like to keep responsibility for a child's education;
- Hours of school are too long;
- Parents do not want school to be a caretaker;
- The socialisation myth is a great delusion;
- School is not the real world;
- School is a game of chance (e.g. teachers, children's acquaintances);
- The responsibility for learning should belong to the child;
- More can be learned when there is freedom from the school day;
- Freedom from worries about school;
- Why start school at five?
- The parent is the expert on his/her particular child;
- School perpetuates inequality (class);
- School makes children responsible for their own failure;
- The secrecy of school files;
- School as a tool of social control;
- Schools are unfair to girls (inequality of opportunity);
- Schools are unfair to boys (pressure to belong to an aggressive peer group);
- School children experience a loss of 'bloom', self confidence and freshness;
- Religious considerations;
- Loss of access to the great outdoors;
- Loss of the poetic spirit.

Many of Bendell's reasons centred on the child, and the view that the child has of the world around it; others involved the negative pressures that she felt school could have on the child and family. It can be concluded that she believed so much more could be learned when a child, particularly hers, was not in school: many positive attitudes could be instilled, and many negative ones avoided, by educating the child at home. Bendell, without the need to pose questions for analysis and questionnaire response, was able to be more specific

about her ideas, although the basis for her experiences seemed to be mainly through her own family and through EO. With the exception of parents home educating for religious reasons, the reasons Bendell gave divided into two main areas, those which were critical of school and others which supported home education.

4.3 An analysis of the reasons for parents to choose home education.

The following analysis of why some parents choose to home educate a child is based on personal experience, limited contact with home educating families and extensive reading of the home education literature, including magazines produced by the parental groups, during the last nine years. Since undertaking this study, extensive contact and discussion with officials from LEAs and education departments in the United Kingdom have given further insight into, and a different perspective on the reasons why some parents choose to home educate.

Among home educators, there are those who have never intended their child to go to school and have always thought that they could provide for the child's total education: others have tried the school system and found it wanting in some way for a particular child. Parents who have never sent a child to school, tend to have more

confidence and only have legal difficulties if the respective LEA officials perceive the education the parents provide to be lacking. Within this group there are different fundamental reasons for having chosen home education. Other home educating parents, who have previously sent a child to school, may have experienced lengthy difficulties with child behaviour, or disappointments with the school system which they have unsuccessfully tried to correct and/or compensate for in other ways.

It is not uncommon for parents to have problems from time to time with their children's schooling. Parents may feel dissatisfied with the standards of education provided by a school, but do not home educate. Others may wish to give a religious education to the child, but will do this at times when the child is not at school. Some parents take what may be a difficult step, to remove a child from school. There is a danger in believing that families choose home education for one reason only. It is more likely that each family has a combination of reasons, one or more than one being of greater importance than others. When the combined reasons seem large and overwhelming, only then do the parents consider home education seriously. This can be at any stage of the child's life, from birth to adulthood.

Another essential component in a discussion on the reasons why some families choose home education is that the parents must have some confidence in their abilities to carry out this task as well as, or better than, the choice of schools available. When a high enough confidence level is achieved, perhaps aided by parental support groups, extended family support, wider reading about home education, excessive distance from a suitable school, strong negative feelings about the parents' own school experiences, enrolment of the child in a correspondence course, contact with other home educating families or a worsening situation in the school the child is attending, it is perhaps only then that the family finally decides to home educate. Webb also indicated confidence to be an important factor and offered this as an explanation for the 25% of home educating families having one parent who is a qualified teacher (1988, p154-155).

The reasons for parents choosing to home educate a child depend on a variety of factors. One, or a combination, of the following factors are likely to be important:

- the freedom to use different educational methods (4.3.1);
- the apparent decline of state education (4.3.2);
- respect for the child as an individual (4.3.3)

- fundamental religious and moral education (4.3.4);
- geographical mobility (4.3.5);
- alternative lifestyles (4.3.6).

Each of these factors is further discussed below.

4.3.1 Freedom to use different educational methods

Some home educators have a formal approach to education, using exercise and text books purchased from local bookshops, similar to those used in school (ref: meetings with LEA officials). Others prefer correspondence courses; Mercer's College, for example, is prepared to adapt its courses to each child's abilities in different subjects (ref: private correspondence with Mercer's College). Some home educators use the Worldwide Education Service courses (WES) which were started in the last century by Charlotte Mason (ref: telephone call to WES and meetings with LEA officials). Some correspondence courses, which can be obtained from the United States, have a high religious content (ref: meetings with LEA officials). In this way, in a formal context, each child's needs can be assessed and met.

Sometimes parents experiment with different approaches until a suitable way of educating a particular child is found. Meighan expressed the view that:

Many parents report that they start with an authoritarian vision and in practice move to a non-authoritarian, often autonomous ideology.
(1984a, p279)

A member of EO stated:

We started with PNEU/WES, it was well worth it for the first two years, as it gave us, the parents, a foundation on which to build. To start with we must admit to being overly strict. That was mainly due to the worry about pleasing the authorities. Everyone must feel frightened at some time about their LEA's. Eventually we all settled down.
(Education Otherwise, Dec.1987, p20)

This comment agrees with Meighan's analysis and could indicate that parents practising a more authoritarian approach to education are attempting to emulate the school.

Home educators encompass many different concepts of education. They may, for example, admire and wish to follow Rousseau, Neill, or Montessori, or to have a fully timetabled academic or technical curriculum, or to undertake a correspondence course which may have a high religious content. As each child develops and matures, different approaches can be found, suited to the individual child's age and ability. Thus, these home educating parents believe they can provide a 'better' education for their children. Four examples of this variety of provision are further discussed:

- pedagogic-oriented / autonomous learning;
- correspondence courses;
- provision for the gifted or the less able child;
- type of curriculum similar to private schools.

Pedagogic-oriented / autonomous learning

With the introduction of the 1944 Education Act, it was not the law as it applied to home education which had changed, but rather that the state had taken control of more of the day to day management of people's lives in general, for example in health and welfare (Chapter 2). Baker had been partially educated at home by her parents; she was enthusiastic about wildlife and learning naturally through the environment and consequently did not wish her children to be 'cooped up' in school. She felt that education did not consist of sitting in a classroom and learning things by heart: it was about exploring the world in general, directed by the child's needs and interests. Webb also mentioned that families recognise the importance of the child being responsible for learning and for choosing the curriculum (1988, p96).

Baker's first legal case began in a magistrates court in 1953 and was followed by others which were sometimes protracted. She stated:

I fought the education authorities for nearly fifteen years, in almost every court in the land,

in order to achieve my purpose; none of my seven children ever went to school.

(Education Otherwise, April 1987, p5)

Baker's own accounts of her contact with LEAs were well documented (Baker, 1964, Wilding, 1961). She had a strong enough personality to endure the lengthy courtroom 'battles' in order to uphold her ideals. One of her fundamental beliefs was that a child is a responsible person in his or her own right and should be treated as such. The responsibility is acquired at an early age with loving care and the constant nurturing by an involved and concerned adult. In the teenage years, this responsibility then comes to fruition with constructive contact with the surrounding community.

Baker, like other parents enjoyed the experience of watching a child between birth and five years explore the world. She expressed her ideas quite clearly:

No one is expected or advised by health experts to force food down a child's throat because it has reached an age when a textbook says it should have that type or quantity of food. In feeding a child you judge what is required by its consumption of what is given it and its apparent need for more. Why then should the mind be forcibly fed? A child's mind and body grow without referring to textbooks - or consulting education authorities. It is as senseless to put a child day after day in a classroom and give it instruction, nine-tenths of which its mind is not ready to receive, and call the result education, as it would be to seat a child at a table and surround it with plates of food which it could not digest, and maintain it was properly fed.

(Baker, 1964, pp59-60)

Later she explained:

A flower opens in its own time. If interfering hands force open the bud before it is ready, the

flower is deformed and spoiled. A child's mind opens as a flower does under the warmth and light of the minds which influence it. Those who are responsible for the influencing and educating of a child should be those who also love it.

(Ibid, 1964, p60)

Thus she believed that the principal way that children learn is to explore the world at their own pace. Some home educators think of education as a continuum from birth to adulthood (and beyond) and not as a process which occurs in isolation between 5 and 16+ years.

There are many parents of pre-school children who read widely about parenting. Thirty years ago, the main manual for parents was that written by Dr Spock and articles on parenting were occasionally written in women's magazines, such as Woman and Woman's Own. Today it is evident that there are many more child care books on the shelves of bookshops and libraries and many more magazines and articles on child development. Recently, in a small newsagents in a middle-class suburb of Liverpool, there were five such different magazines for sale. Being a parent is now seen not only to be the physical care of children, but also their mental development. Having helped a child to develop for the first five years and seen how much a child can learn from a pedagogic-oriented approach, a few parents question educational provision at primary level.

Coons and Sugarman endorsed the view that a parent has more knowledge of his or her child's development than LEA

employees, although with reservation. In the decision-making process involved in a child's education:

Adult knowledge about a child can be of two kinds. One is the direct knowledge of a particular child, derived from personal observation and interaction. Through intimate and continued contact the adult comes to share in some degree the child's reality, what he perceives and what he is. This affective insight of the adult stands in contrast to knowledge gained through experience, study, and professional practice with children as a class of humans. Each of these two types of knowledge, personal and professional, has an important role to play.

(1978, p49)

Coons and Sugarman later qualified this further:

As long as it has ready access to information and professional counseling, the family's claim to special competence is strong; that in its unique opportunity to listen and to know and in its special personal concern for the child, the family is his most promising champion and a fit senior partner of the decision-making team. The family's capacity for voice, knowledge, and caring are inextricable one from the other.

(Ibid, pp 52-53)

Coons and Sugarman also pointed out that educators and administrators from necessity, handle children in large groups, unless they stand out in some way (e.g. remedial teaching, handicapped, truants). It is extremely difficult (but not impossible) under the present education system to cater for each child's varied capacities and special needs (ibid, 1978, p54).

In six out of the eight LEAs I visited, the officials were happy with the pedagogic-oriented approach at primary level, when it was undertaken responsibly. Appendix 8 gives a favourable report on a teenage child

who was educated in this way. Officials in two LEAs requested timetables and details of subjects to be taught, believing in a more structured day and week; an example of a form used by such an LEA is given in Appendix 9. The structured, subject approach was endorsed in the state system, with the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988. The interpretation of the provision of education by either the home educator or the LEA official can be different and the level of conflict will depend on:

- the previous educational experience of both parties;
- the ability to communicate the preferred aims of education;
- the ability of the parent to prove that the preferred education is effective.

Correspondence courses

During the interviews with the LEA officials, it became apparent that there was a substantial number of home educators using correspondence courses. These are suggested by both CHEA and EO as a means of entering for state examinations. They are also, however, used by parents of younger children.

One rural LEA had a policy of encouraging the use of the WES correspondence courses for children of primary school

age who lived in isolated areas. If, feeling sufficiently confident, the parent requested to undertake home education, the LEA was prepared to help finance the course. The home education alternative was seen to be cost effective to the LEA, which then did not have to maintain small schools and could reduce the number of peripatetic teachers employed in remote areas. The adviser was, in general, appreciative of the results, believing children who had undertaken the course to be academically ahead of their peers. However, not all parents in the remoter areas of this LEA chose the option to home educate.

Officials from four other LEAs mentioned that some of the home educated children undertook courses from the United States; these tended to be children who were being home educated for religious reasons and the courses had a high religious content, for example references to religious teachings throughout the curriculum, particularly in science. In two large families monitored by different LEAs, it had been noted by the LEA officials that some of the siblings used such courses, while others did not. The officials noted that home educated children using correspondence courses were progressing well academically, although doubts were expressed about the desirability of the high religious content. It was not possible to establish the number of children undertaking such courses.

Special provision for gifted and less able children

The parents of gifted children sometimes find state schooling inadequate. A parent's letter in Education Otherwise stated that she had tried school for her first child and it had not been suitable. She wrote about school and the gifted child:

My husband and I are both teachers and we know that the majority of teachers will not listen and have not got the knowledge about such children.

and later:

Many 'gifted' children refuse to show their abilities at school because they wouldn't have friends otherwise. They have to fit into the group, but this leads to all sorts of psychological problems.

We think that home education is excellent because it enables them to pursue their intellectual interests AND have friends, because the others don't know what they are up to. Many children who show themselves to be gifted at school end up with no friends.

(Education Otherwise, Dec. 1987, p7)

This letter also gave examples of problems a gifted child could have in school.

In the United Kingdom, people involved in education are not always aware of gifted children, who are often able to go along with the flow of the daily classroom experiences, quietly unrecognised (Tempest, 1974). Others can develop severe behavioural problems (Irvine, 1980).

An HMI report also stated that:

Many schools either have not thought about giftedness or hold very imprecise notions regarding its nature, so that to suggest that school policies exist for identifying giftedness is to overstate the case.

Many schools, however, do have practices for identifying individual differences.

(DES, 1977b, p13)

Giftedness is not rare and does not depend on class.

Roslak and Deutsch, perceived that:

Three out of every one hundred children in school are potentially gifted [They] have exceptionally bright minds and creative imaginations.

(1982, p304)

Roslak and Deutsch thus suggested that on average, in the United Kingdom, there could be one potentially gifted child in every class of approximately thirty children.

Tempest believed that gifted children:

May be expected to form about 2 percent of their age group and will be regularly encountered by teachers ... but never ... as more than a very small minority in class.

(1974, p8)

Tempest also emphasised the difficulties of recognising these children.

Using Clendening and Davies' analysis of who these children are, it becomes easier to distinguish gifted children:

Gifted children learn to read earlier often before entering school and sometimes on their own and with a greater comprehension of the nuances of language.

They usually have large vocabularies for their age.

They learn basic skills more quickly and need less practice.

They display an ability for abstract thinking in advance of their peers.

Their concentration and attention spans are longer.
They often have a wide variety of interests and experiment with them.
They have a highly developed sense of curiosity and a limitless supply of questions.
They are good guessers.
They can construct relationships between things that are not readily obvious.
They can retain a lot of information.
They usually relate well to peers and adults.
(1980, p471)

Faced with children who have a 'wide variety of interests', a 'limitless supply of questions' and 'learn basic skills more quickly and need less practice', it could be that these children are better catered for in small groups. This is not often possible in schools. Parents who have a close relationship with their children can be very aware of the level of the child's ability when it is at either extreme of the intelligence spectrum.

Although special educational services are available for less-able children, there can be other, non-academic problems. My own experiences of teaching less-able children demonstrated that a change of class teacher each year can add to the child's plight; permanent small groups can often help them. In England such small groups can be available for statemented children (recognised by the LEA as needing special school provision), but not for those children who are well below average at more academic tasks. Professional help in the form of remedial teachers or teachers helping dyslexic children is given in small groups to those children who are in need.

Because of the expense which small teacher-pupil ratios entail, it is not always possible to give this attention for the extended time periods that are desirable for children with learning difficulties.

In France a family from a small village was told that the son would probably never read and write and could go to a special school in the nearest big town. The parents were not convinced that it would be good for a young child to travel the distance involved and his mother, with the agreement of the state, started to educate him at home. He is now 19, can read and write, and has had sufficient confidence to successfully complete a course at a technical school to be a mechanic. The mother had no formal qualifications and had herself left school at thirteen (ref: personal contact with the family).

The interviews revealed that LEA officials could be enthusiastic about the achievements of parents who give constant patience and determination, and have a vested interest in a less-able child. However, other LEA officials felt that home educating parents did not have the specialist knowledge needed and might put unnecessary pressures on the child to succeed; these officials believed that children requiring a special form of education should attend school.

At present, conflict between home educators and LEAs can arise when there is a child with dyslexia (section 2.5.1) or one who is less able; the children do not seem to have the average academic success which is expected by many LEA officials of most home educated children. Thus home educators with a gifted or very intelligent child would seem to experience fewer problems with LEA officials than those with a less able child. This question of average academic success is discussed in section 7.2.

A type of education similar to private school without incurring the expense of private fees

Lowden (1988) commented that seven of the thirty parents who responded to his questionnaire had considered using 'an independent school' for the children involved. The cost of providing tutors for different subjects was cheaper than the fees of a private school. Blacker also noted that five families from her sample of sixteen:

Had considered private schools as an acceptable alternative to state schooling As a result of either financial constraints or the development of a compelling rationale ... the choice ultimately fell on home education.

(1981, p39)

However, neither Lowden nor Blacker compared their samples of home educating parents with parents whose children attend school; the views of home educating parents with respect to private schooling could reflect

the views of parents in general. Bendell (1987) does not mention equivalency of private schooling as a factor.

During the interviews, private schooling was only once mentioned; there was an examination at eleven years old to select children for grammar schools at secondary level in the LEA concerned. The LEA officials stated during the interview that there was 'a considerable number' of home educators who were employing tutors so that the children could gain access to grammar schools or scholarships to private schools in the area.

4.3.2 The apparent decline of state education

It is inevitable that an investigation into LEA provision for monitoring home education relates to the subject of education in general and state education in particular. Rae believed that education became more child centred in the 1960s:

It was the prevailing mood of liberalisation in the 1960s that provided the platform for child-centred education to take off in Britain.

(1989, p27)

The liberalisation of education undoubtedly led to a more individualistic way of thinking. A greater proportion of parents may now be better able to express the needs they feel their children to have and may also be in a stronger position to compensate for any deficiencies that they

believe their own or their children's education to have had.

With regard to state schooling, the media have also played a part in the analysis, being pessimistic about topics such as teacher strikes, truancy, bullying and the perceived poor levels of achievement of some children in school. The quantity of administrative work for all teaching staff is said to have risen significantly since the introduction of the National Curriculum, pupil testing and the GCSE examinations. These problems are discussed in detail in both the educational and the general press. All these factors influence the perception the potential home educator has of the care and efficiency of the education which the state provides.

Rae pointed out that, after the Conservatives were elected in 1979, there was increasing public criticism of standards in state schools:

It was popular and spontaneous and fanned by the media. All of a sudden - it seemed - no one had a good word to say for the state sector of education. Teacher bashing became a popular sport. Public criticism increased when teachers' unions and the left wing in education were too complacent or stupid to recognise that the popular dissatisfaction was real, not a creation of the Tory press. Left-wing local education authorities played into Tory hands by their provocative obsession with anti-racist policies. The teachers' unions made a similar mistake, alienating public sympathy by disrupting schools in support of pay claims.

(1989, p37)

Rae stated that the criticism of state education was 'all of a sudden': however, similar criticism has been the pattern for nearly three decades; for example, discussion had surfaced on the inadequacy of education which 'necessitated' the introduction of comprehensive education, and on the negative aspects of the 'eleven plus' examination.

The DES also expressed concern about the quality of education provided in state schools and about the difficulty of ensuring that education was suited to the individual child. The DES reiterated similar concerns to those shown by parents who practise home education, when discussing educational practice in good schools:

Much will also depend on the quality of the advice and encouragement that individual pupils are given by members of the staff who have close knowledge of them and enjoy their respect and confidence. Pupils should be helped to understand their individual situations and to develop the personal resources for dealing with them. A precondition of active and purposeful study is the development of a caring atmosphere and of correspondingly good personal relationships. As schools have grown, and organisation has become more complex, the opportunities for teachers to know each pupil will have decreased.

(1977a, p139)

The 1988-89 'Standards in Education' report also demonstrated concern felt by the Inspectorate:

It is particularly troubling that in schools some 30% ... of what HMI saw was judged as poor or very poor.

(DES, 1990, p1)

The report, although specifying that the majority of schools were well-equipped and resourced, stated that a

substantial minority were not and it might be the less-able child who would be more likely to have 'the poor and shoddy' experiences.

Power et al. (1969) undertook research into the negative effects of schooling on children, in a long-term study on juveniles before the courts in an area of Tower Hamlets, London. They concluded that there was a direct relationship between the school which a child attended and the frequency of first offenders who were convicted in the juvenile courts; the parts of Tower Hamlets in which the children were living did not reflect a similar relationship with the frequency of first offenders.

Two particular concerns of home educators are:

- the reduction of negative peer influences; and
- the treatment of school refusers/school phobics.

These are further discussed below.

The reduction or elimination of negative peer influences

One of the frequently mentioned negative effects of school is the incidence of recorded bullying. Tattum and Lane (1989) believed that it was widely practised in the schools and that some teachers did very little to stop it. In Autumn 1991, the problems associated with bullying were widely discussed in the media.

Bendell mentioned negative peer pressure as an important factor when considering home education:

Children in school do learn positive things from each other but they also learn how to be mean-spirited, competitive, how to form into gangs and exclude others, how to bully and be bullied, how to put up defensive shields against possible mockery - and more.

(1987, p93)

Bendell continued that the peer group which the child has in school is a false one:

Surely, a child's peer group is not just confined to the thirty or so children who, by virtue of date of birth, happen to have been put together at school ... children need each other to play with and talk to, to be children with. They do not need the particular relationship that schools allow them.

Some home educating families are also glad to reduce the impact of the consumer society that is prevalent in schools. For example, there is a basic assumption that television is necessary; a recent article described families which did not have a television, and one of the children:

Aged 10, felt the lack of television at least partly to blame for the problems she had fitting into the school pop culture. Aspiring to join a group of girls who were all "Brossettes" (fans of the pop duo Bros), she was teased because she lacked the required grasp, both of the songs, but more importantly the fashion nuances. [One parent] recounts that very occasionally small friends of her younger children have refused to come to tea after they have discovered there was no TV.

(TES, 5.1.90, p35)

Such attitudes would demonstrate a pressure on children to conform to what is considered normal; the article also displayed a lack of tolerance by children for others with

different lifestyles. Some would argue that the pressures to conform are part of growing up in a society, and that to home educate is, as one LEA official stated, to produce hot house plants who find difficulty in surviving when the protective greenhouse of the home is removed.

Some home educating parents are worried that being accustomed to conformity with the peer group can more easily lead to drug taking and problems such as glue sniffing. Bendell, when talking about home educated children expressed the view that:

Not being constantly subjected to group opinion allows them to develop their own views and values and to stick to them in the face of opposition.
(1987, p67)

This aspect of home education would not seem to produce direct conflict, but could affect the basic attitudes of LEA officials when meeting home educators.

Provision for children who have experienced school refusal/school phobia or truancy

The reasons for school refusal and/or school phobia are many and varied; they range from the root cause being in the home, to the school being to blame. Kahn and Nursten, for example, believed that the only remedy for school refusal was to decrease the influence of the family. It is quite reasonable to suppose that some LEA officials, with positions of responsibility, agree with Kahn and

Nursten's concept of school phobia/school refusal and believe that the solution is to return the child immediately to school:

The child who refuses to go to school is being self-destructive. Contacts outside the family are avoided, the career is jeopardised, and the future is cut off, in a way that could be described as social suicide. Sometimes, awareness of these problems cannot be tolerated and the patient has to be moved some distance away - the suicidal patient to a mental hospital, the school phobic child to a boarding school.

...

We are upset by those who 'contract out' and apparently refuse to take what is being offered to them. They are becoming a new sort of deviate.

...

The child with school phobia may want to go to school, but finds that he cannot. He is suffering from an emotional problem, based on acute anxiety at the thought of leaving home ... the source of which is the tie between parent and child and its ensuing conflicts.

(1964, pp4-5)

Later Kahn and Nursten assumed that it was the relationship with the mother which was at fault (ibid, p21). For these reasons, Kahn and Nursten, and anyone who agrees with their theories, would find it extremely difficult to allow any child, in the situation of refusing to attend school, to be educated at home. This attitude towards children with school refusal/school phobia was confirmed by Emilia Dowling (1985), head of the Tavistock Clinic, London, who regularly treats children with school related psychological problems; she confirmed in a telephone interview that it would be incorrect to permit a child suffering from school refusal or school phobia to be home educated, but that such a

request had never to her knowledge been made at the Tavistock Clinic.

Carroll, who published research 13 years after Kahn and Nursten, concluded that schools could cause truancy:

Certain features of the schools themselves - their size, their levels of corporal punishment, their rule norms and their internal organisation - appear actually to be causing pupil problems such as truancy. In this approach, truancy is seen as a rational response to the children's schools. A further development of this sociological perspective indicates that the internal management structures that different schools use are closely associated with different levels of pupil truancy.

(1977, p66)

Two paragraphs later, Carroll included the possibility that other student problems might also be accounted for by the management structures of schools:

When faced with the need to explain pupil problems such as truancy, researchers have sought their causal explanation in the nature of the pupil's home and neighbourhood culture, but rarely in the nature of their schools, so that discussion of truants is rarely based on any examination of the institutions from which truants are absent.

(Ibid, p66)

Apter, writing five years later than Carroll, went one step further, suggesting that the schools could be seen as one of the causes of pupil problems:

The ecological perspective ... views emotional disturbance as a 'failure-to-match' in the interaction between the child and the system that surrounds him or her.

(1982, preface, px)

The personal environment of the child includes parents, the wider group of relatives and family friends, the

peers, the school and the people who work within it, and the parts of society with whom the child comes into contact. In the implications and conclusions, Apter stated that:

First of all, we must at the very least learn to prevent the kinds of emotional disturbances that are created and exacerbated by life in schools.
(Ibid, p228)

And later on same page:

We must modify our school settings in an effort to prevent the kinds of severe negative emotional impact which schools, as we have come to know them, have on great numbers of children.

We must begin focusing our efforts on the development of positive growth-inducing school environments. We need to understand better - more precisely, more completely - the effects schools have on children.

Knox, a trained teacher, who had met school phobia at her work, subsequently had a school phobic child herself. She was able to assess the situation both as an employee of an LEA and as a parent. Knox's concept of school refusal/school phobia reflected those of home educators who had experienced this problem: she had extended contact with home educators for many years and was thus aware of conflict between home educators and LEAs. Knox's argument hinged upon whether school could be considered a 'normal' environment. She believed that it was not: at no other time in life is a person expected to work daily and yearly, with others of exactly the same age, irrespective of interests and abilities. From the research she undertook, Knox concluded that:

Between 60% and 70% of the [school phobic] children forced back to school ... grow up to be adults prone to mental illness. This is however, considered to be success because, in the intervening time, the children have attended school.

(1988, p3)

Knox also believed truancy and school refusal to be linked:

The groups differ in their reaction towards suffering. The one set of children runs away, and the other set of children internalise their sufferings. Internalisation of suffering has grave results, i.e. suicidal behaviour, mental breakdown and psychosomatic illness.

(Ibid, p4)

The definition of a phobia is: an excessive and irrational fear of a perfectly normal situation. A school is hardly a normal or natural situation. It is a highly unnatural collection of individuals of the same age in an institution, unlike society and the family where people of all ages talk and do things together. It is considered by all the powers that be that such an institution is the most efficient means of imparting knowledge.

(Ibid, p5)

A notable proportion of the problems connected with home education which reach the Department of Education and Science are connected with school phobia/school refusal/truancy (ref: interview with officials of the DES, 1989). Knox has undertaken a long term study to evaluate the success of home educated school phobic children, in an attempt to establish home education as a valuable alternative for these children. Her second book also dealt with LEA officials and their handling of school refusers/school phobics (Knox, 1989).

If a child is unhappy or unsuccessful at school, there is a tendency for the parent to blame the school and the LEA; if the child becomes a school refuser/school phobic, there is a tendency for the educational psychologists to blame the parents. There can thus be a conflict of aims of both parties concerned, both believing that differing expertise in child care dictates a course of action which is incompatible with the views of the other party.

4.3.3 Respect for the child as an individual

The evolution of children's rights has been slow in the United Kingdom. The approach of a child being an empty vessel to be filled still persists; there is also an attitude that a child is inherently naughty and given the chance will be so. A broad discussion of the rights of children has surfaced more recently with the abolition of caning, the introduction of the children's helpline and the passing of the Children Act 1989. 'Childline' was begun in 1986 (TES, 9.3.90, p6) and is a freephone line for children who are experiencing mental or physical abuse. Today there is discussion on the right of the child not to be smacked by anyone, including parents. In some countries this is illegal, e.g. in Sweden for nearly two decades. A good comparative account is given by Newell (1989).

In the United Kingdom, people such as those working with Childline believe there to be a lack of respect for children as human beings. It is my perception that children are seldom encouraged to participate in other than peer group discussions; they are often told what to do, rather than asked to do something. They can be addressed in a manner which no adult would tolerate. The negative aspects of some children's experiences of school, such as bullying, school refusal, copious homework, bad teacher-child relationships can be seen by some parents, who are considering home education, from the child's point of view.

There is also the importance of seeing the child as an individual. In Education Otherwise, a member of EO explained that on a recent visit to a 'good infant school', she found it:

Difficult to express the feeling of emptiness that I could sense coming from those children - particularly the youngest ones (4-6 years). They were all clamouring for attention and they needed to be accepted and appreciated. The teachers were lovely people - but with all the will in the world could not give enough love and personal attention to all of those 25 children.

(August 1989, p23)

Personal attention to each child and a respect for the child as a maturing individual is important to many parents. When home educating, there is the possibility of increased contact time with the child.

4.3.4 Fundamental religious and moral education

Bendell (1987, pp71-72) expressed the view that, for her children, the teaching of religion was an understanding of all religions, so that her children could establish their own thoughts and come to their own conclusions about religion. From some of the letters in Education Otherwise, it was apparent that this concept of religion was not held by all home educators (Newsletters 1987): there was a prolonged, heated discussion in the letters pages between those people who were strong Christian believers and those who held similar views to Bendell's. The discussion affects all strongly motivated religious minorities in the United Kingdom, such as Jehovah's Witness, Seventh Day Adventists, Plymouth Brethren and Muslims.

During my research, at the first interview with an LEA official, concern was expressed about a Muslim girl who was being educated at home, while her brothers were sent to school. It was felt that the child was being academically well catered for, but a wider education about society in Britain was lacking. This was later mentioned by another LEA as a problem, as it was felt that the parents lacked confidence in the understanding that LEA officials would have of the needs of the girl involved; in this instance, the LEA official felt that this was a challenge for the provision of education for

all children within the LEA. The parents educated the child at home for a while and then she was gradually introduced for certain lessons to a school where there was a good understanding of the Muslim religion by the staff.

At the sixth interview, religiously motivated groups were again mentioned as being important, but were a minority of the home educators in this LEA. At the seventh interview in southern England, a much wider membership of religious organisations was confirmed, believed to be approximately 80% of a considerable total of home educated children. The religion mainly involved in this instance was Jehovah's Witness. The advisory head involved in monitoring home education had encouraged the setting up of a small school by this group of people, so that the education could be more easily monitored and some financial support could be given to the parents. They had not been sufficiently responsive to this idea and continued to home educate.

In another LEA in central England, religious motivation was seen to be important in more than 50% of the instances of home education, the home educators being mainly Jehovah's Witnesses or fundamentalist Christians. Some of the families received religiously based correspondence courses from the United States, which conformed to the parents' concepts of education. During

all but one of the interviews held during the initial phase of the research, religious motivation was given as an important factor for home educators known to the LEA. LEA officials who were interviewed also stressed that these home educators were more likely to have a formal approach to learning, often using correspondence courses or employing external tutors for certain subjects. The children involved also more frequently 'sat down' to lessons during the day.

In September 1988, during an informal telephone conversation with the Andersons who ran an information resources centre, 'Hometaught' (Appendix 2), the question of religious motivation for home educators was raised. The Andersons were founder members of EO and CHEA (Appendix 2) and, through the resources centre, they were in touch with home educators who were not necessarily members of either EO or CHEA. Mr Anderson stated that he believed at least 50% of the total number of home educated children were from religiously motivated families.

Religiously motivated home educators could number as great a proportion as 50% of the total, as the Andersons suggested. It is most unlikely that it is as low as the 10% as that expressed in Lowden's sample or 15% as in Webb's reporting of the EO questionnaire. However, as mentioned previously it is extremely difficult to obtain

a good initial sample of home educators for research purposes, to allow an accurate figure of religiously motivated home educators to be obtained. As such home educators seem to depend on more subject-oriented, formal approach to learning, the conflict with the LEA, in most instances, is likely to be minimal. A few LEA officials, however, are concerned that some of the children can be given values which differ from those generally accepted in society.

4.3.5 Geographical mobility

Some sections of society are more voluntarily mobile today than ever before. This is particularly true of some middle class families where the breadwinner may have an occupation, in which a willingness to be mobile will improve promotion prospects. Two families of my acquaintance are home educating for this reason. During the interviews with LEA officials, however, this was found not to be an issue.

Far more important, is the number of traveller and fairground people who are often highly mobile. The LEA officials interviewed had never considered traveller children as home educated. The concept was more that these children were not receiving an education unless they were attending school. This was discussed with one

of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), responsible for traveller children, who had considered the possibility, but only with respect to traveller children taking work from a school with them on their travels. It is not inconceivable that these parents offer their children a form of home education.

In private correspondence from the West Midland Education Authorities Education Service for Travelling Children it was stated:

It is believed that for every gypsy on the road there are ten or more in houses. The size of the community is predicted as anything from 30000 to 80000, but no accurate data exists to support definite statements.

This would then mean that there could be 3000 - 8000 travellers who are mobile for a part or for all of the year. The West Midlands Education Authorities Education Service for Travelling Children also stated that there were four traveller families arranging for home education:

Where families are isolated/insular or where they have not been received with respect and a welcome, they tend to turn their backs on [state] education altogether, or in a small minority of cases, opt for home schooling 'for the basics, reading and writing'.

An HMI discussion paper, titled 'The Education of Traveller Children' stated:

It is estimated that there are between 12,000 and 15,000 traveller children of school age in England, and that probably only a minority attend school, many of them sporadically.

(DES, 1983, p1)

and

As few as 10% to 15% of secondary age pupils are thought to be registered at school.

(Ibid, p7)

Families from the traveller (gypsy) population often do not make their presence known to the LEA (private correspondence with the West Midland Education Service for Traveller Children). Although many traveller families are settled for part of the year or permanently, it is difficult to establish how many traveller children are being taught on the move by their parents. In an EEC document, Liegeois agreed with the DES estimated total of 12000 - 15000 traveller children in the United Kingdom, but of these he believed that only 4000 - 5000 were attending school (1987, p78).

As a result of my enquiries, it was considered feasible that a number of these children could be perceived as being home educated. If this were the case, it would enlarge the numbers of home educators considerably and pose many different questions for LEAs. In an attempt to confirm the results of the initial interviews, that LEAS did not include travelling children within those considered home educated, a question was included in the questionnaire and traveller children are also considered in the proposals in Chapter seven. As already noted in section 3.4, there can be conflict between LEA officials and traveller families who express the intention to home educate.

4.3.6 Alternative lifestyles

In the United States, 'New Age' home educators are described as those parents who reject a materialistic life in favour of a more idealistic, sometimes itinerant life. Mayberry recognised that these were often the parents who did not declare themselves to the authorities, fearing that they might be misunderstood and rejected. She also stated that:

New Age parents believe that public schools are ill-equipped to provide cultural beliefs and values that are consistent with the New Age philosophy. They desire instruction that emphasises the interrelatedness of all life, presents a global view, and nurtures a spirituality that emphasises peaceful coexistence with others.

(1988, p38)

The interviews with LEA officials confirmed the existence of people who home educate in order to have family unity within a different lifestyle. They may fall into Blacker's classification of 'Rebels'. As 'New Age' parents are more likely to be those who do not notify the LEA, there is an incomplete picture of how many parents home educate for this reason.

In the interviews, one LEA official expressed concern about how he could assess that an education was being provided for children of parents wishing to lead an alternative lifestyle and practise a form of autonomous

learning. A 'New Age' family in his area kept no records of the children's education; the children of school age helped on the family small holding and were capable of looking after a small baby; there was apparently no academic provision for each individual child. The LEA official concluded that there was a thin dividing line between child labour and this form of education; he was considering issuing the parents with attendance orders so that the court could decide whether the children were in fact receiving an efficient, full-time education.

It is a fair assumption that LEA officials monitoring home educators in the main conform with the norms of society. Hence, those home educators who have intellectually rejected these norms may be seen, on the one hand, to be not giving their children a fair chance to succeed in society, and on the other, as threatening basic assumptions made by the LEA official concerned. The basic tenets of the family may be entirely different from those of the LEA official, thus making meaningful communication extremely difficult. The incidences of conflict are likely to be high.

4.4 The areas of possible conflict

The instances of home education which could cause the greatest conflict between home educators and LEA officials would seem to be:

- when the child experiences difficulties with schooling, for example truancy or school refusal/school phobia (section 4.3.2);
- where the family wishes to practice a different type of education to that usually practised in state schools (section 4.3.1);
- where the family has, or wishes to have a different lifestyle to that widely accepted in society, such as travelling families (section 4.3.5) and those adopting 'New Age' lifestyles (section 4.3.6);
- where the child does not seem to be average or above average at the more academic school-like tasks (4.3.1).

When conflict arises in these instances it would seem to be due to lack of meaningful communication between the home educators and LEA officials, or a difference in the perceived definitions of the aims of education for the particular child.

The compilation of the questionnaire attempted to further explore LEA officials' views of why parents choose to home educate a child. The results are given and discussed

in Chapters five and six. Recommendations for reducing the level of conflict are made in Chapter seven.

CHAPTER 5: A survey of LEA practices and attitudes in the United Kingdom: (1) Practices

The construction and the results of a questionnaire, which was distributed to LEAs in the United Kingdom are given in this chapter and in Chapter six. This chapter presents the data which describe the existing situation of the monitoring of home education in the responding LEAs, for example, the numbers of home educated children recognised by LEAs, the frequency of visits to the home in order to monitor the education provided and the instances of legal action taken by LEAs involving parents intending to home educate. Chapter six illustrates the attitudes and opinions of the LEA official who responded to the questionnaire.

5.1 Construction and distribution of the questionnaire

It was decided, on the advice of the LEA officials interviewed (section 3.4), to send two copies of the questionnaire to each LEA, one for primary and the other for secondary aged children. It was frequently stated that different LEA officials monitored home educated children of different ages and it was also believed that the responses to some of the questions could differ, for example, there could be more legal cases or perceived

problems when monitoring older children at secondary level. Copies of the primary and secondary questionnaires are given in Appendix 3. They are identical apart from the colour and the title page.

The questionnaire was devised:

- to determine the number of home educators known to the authorities (Q.1,2,3);
- to determine which official within the authority was monitoring home educators (Q.6);
- to investigate the procedures used by LEA officials and the criteria used in the monitoring of the provision of home education (Q.4,5,6,9);
- to determine the LEA official's knowledge of the law (Q.7,8);
- to attempt to discover the attitudes of these LEA officials towards the parents, the home and the variety of education provided by the parents (Q.9,12,13);
- to ascertain the LEA official's view of the reasons home educators choose to educate a child at home (Q.10);
- to estimate the level of conflict already experienced by LEA officials and their view of the reasons for this conflict (Q.11,14,15).

A covering letter was individually produced and enclosed with the questionnaires to each Chief Education Officer. A copy is given in Appendix 10. One hundred and twenty two sets of questionnaire were sent out during the third week of March 1988. They were sent to those authorities in England and Wales which are listed in the Addresses of Local Education Authorities (DES, 1987); they were also sent to addresses of authorities supplied directly to me by the Scottish Education Department and the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

5.2 Questionnaire returns

During the following three months, thirty-six LEAs returned both primary and secondary questionnaires, two LEAs returned only the primary questionnaire, and three LEAs only the secondary questionnaire. In addition two LEAs replied by letter; one of these authorities cited 'rate capping' and the other 'understaffing' as reasons for non completion of the questionnaire. Ten other LEAs, although not completing the questionnaire, also replied by letter and included general information on home educators in their authorities. This indicated that sixty-seven LEAs had not responded.

It was surprising that returns were not received from two LEAs, in which officials had previously been interviewed

and were interested in the research. Further contact revealed that the LEA officials concerned had not received the questionnaire. It was then decided that when contacting all non-responding LEAs by telephone, whenever possible the official responsible for home education should be personally contacted. Although a telephone follow-up had been planned, a far greater effort was required because of the difficulty in establishing the identity of the official who was responsible for monitoring home education in certain LEAs. A maximum of three telephone calls was made to each non-responding LEA.

As a result, duplicate copies of the questionnaire were sent to forty LEAs. By the end of 1988, a further twenty-one LEAs had returned both primary and secondary copies of the questionnaire, and three had returned copies of only the secondary questionnaire. Explanatory letters had been received from or details given in telephone interviews with a further six LEAs.

In all, eighty-three (69%) LEAs responded in some manner. From the total of 122 LEAs contacted,

- 57 returned both primary and secondary questionnaires;
- 2 returned only the primary questionnaire;
- 6 returned only the secondary questionnaire;

- 16 replied by letter or telephone interview, giving information about home educating procedures and numbers of home educators;
- 2 replied by letter, declaring non-cooperation due to 'rate capping' and 'understaffing';

Table 5.1 shows the number of responses to the questionnaire from each type of authority.

It had been difficult to obtain the support of the Metropolitan Boroughs when planning interviews. This reticence was mirrored in the response to the questionnaire, although the response was greater than originally expected. The reasons for non-response which were given in the telephone follow-up were stated as being:

- the lack of time due to understaffing,
- the introduction of the GCSE examinations, and
- the discussions taking place on the National Curriculum.

The impression was gained that in some Metropolitan Boroughs, it was difficult to ascertain who, in the department, was responsible for monitoring home education. Many LEAs, however, welcomed the research and fully cooperated.

The high percentage return of the questionnaires could have been in part due to the concern of the LEA officials for home educators and the problems that occur when

Table 5.1: Returns to the questionnaire

	Number of responding LEAs				Percentage of responding LEAs			
	Question-naire returned	Facts supplied by phone or letter	Total response	Total LEAs in area	Question-naire returned	Facts supplied by phone or letter	Total response	Total LEAs in area
Northern Ireland	3	0	3	5	60	0	60	100
Scotland	8	2	10	12	67	17	84	100
Wales	5	0	5	8	63	0	63	100
County LEAs	25	1	26	39	64	2	66	100
Metropolitan LEAs	14	11	25	36	38	31	69	100
London Boroughs	11	3	14	20	55	15	70	100
Total	66	17	83	120	55	14	69	100

monitoring the children's educational progress. In an accompanying letter, one Chief Education Officer stated that he was:

Sure that this is an area that would benefit from more attention and your survey seems to be a good start.

This was echoed by other LEA officials, during the telephone follow-up, who wanted to discuss details of the law as it applied to home education and who also expressed feelings of isolation when problems with home educators arose.

Interest in all the results of the questions posed in the questionnaire has been expressed by both the state sector and others interested in home education. This is perhaps due to the fact that there has previously been no extensive assessment of the relationship between home educators and LEAs. Although all the questions posed relate indirectly to the conflict situation, those results which demonstrate the existence and dimensions of the conflict and its causes are to be found in sections 5.6, 6.2, 6.4, and 6.5. Where necessary, for further clarification, discussion has been added to the results.

5.3 The number of home educated children in the United Kingdom

According to the returns, in 81 LEAs, there were 1693 children reported as being home educated in the academic year 1987 - 1988. This number was subdivided into 823 (49%) primary age students, 582 (34%) secondary age students and 288 (17%) children who were not distinguished as being of primary or secondary age, but who were being educated at home, giving a total of 1693 (100%). Table 5.2 shows the breakdown of the home educated population by primary and secondary age groups.

Table 5.2: The number of children reported by LEAs as being home educated in 1988

	Number of children reported as being educated at home	
Children of primary school age	823	
Children of secondary school age	582	
Age not specified	288	
Total being educated at home	<u>1693</u>	(in 81 (69% of all) LEAs)

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show respectively the distribution of primary and secondary home educated children among the

Figure 5.1: Distribution of home educated primary age children among responding LEAs

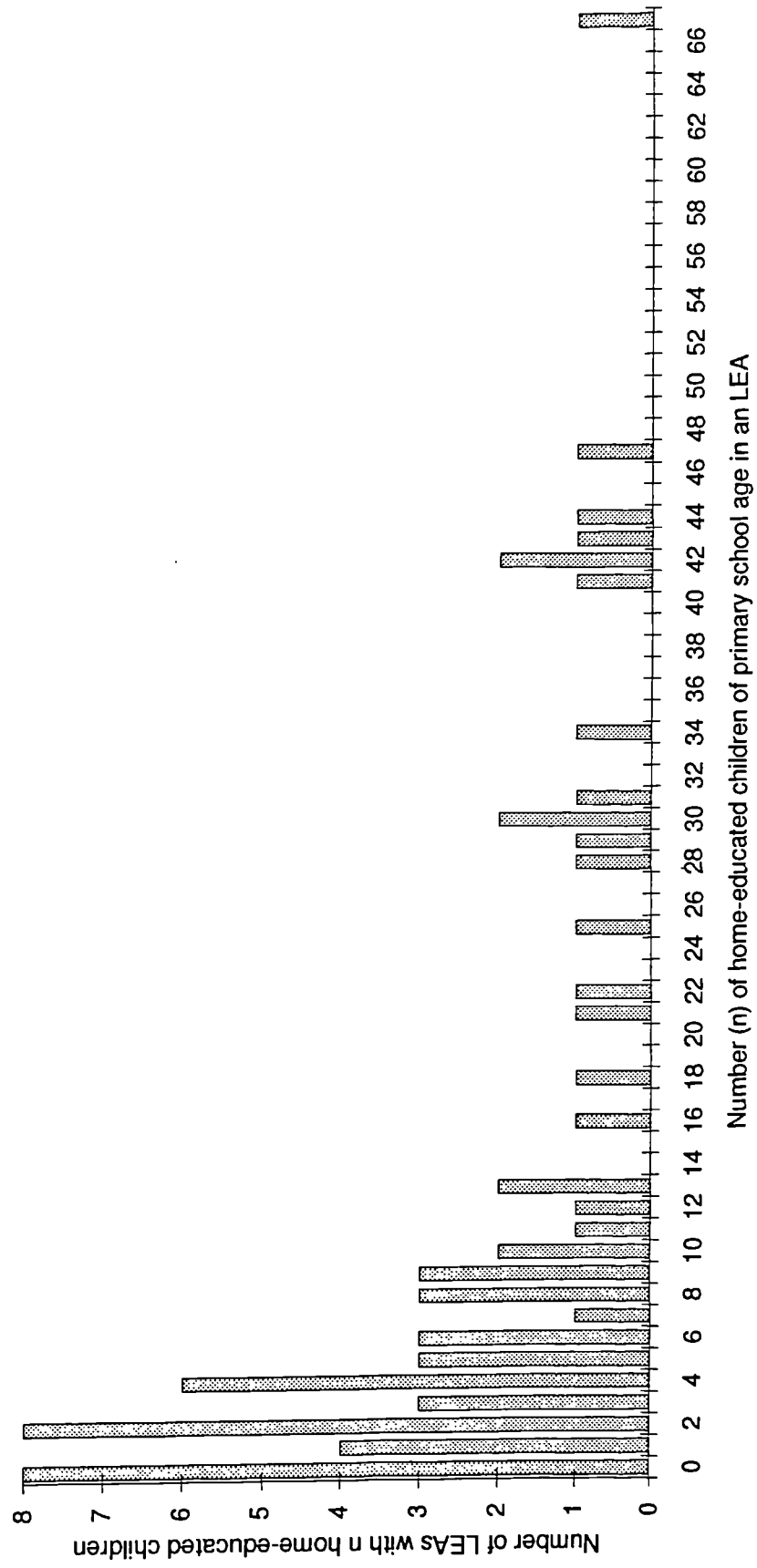
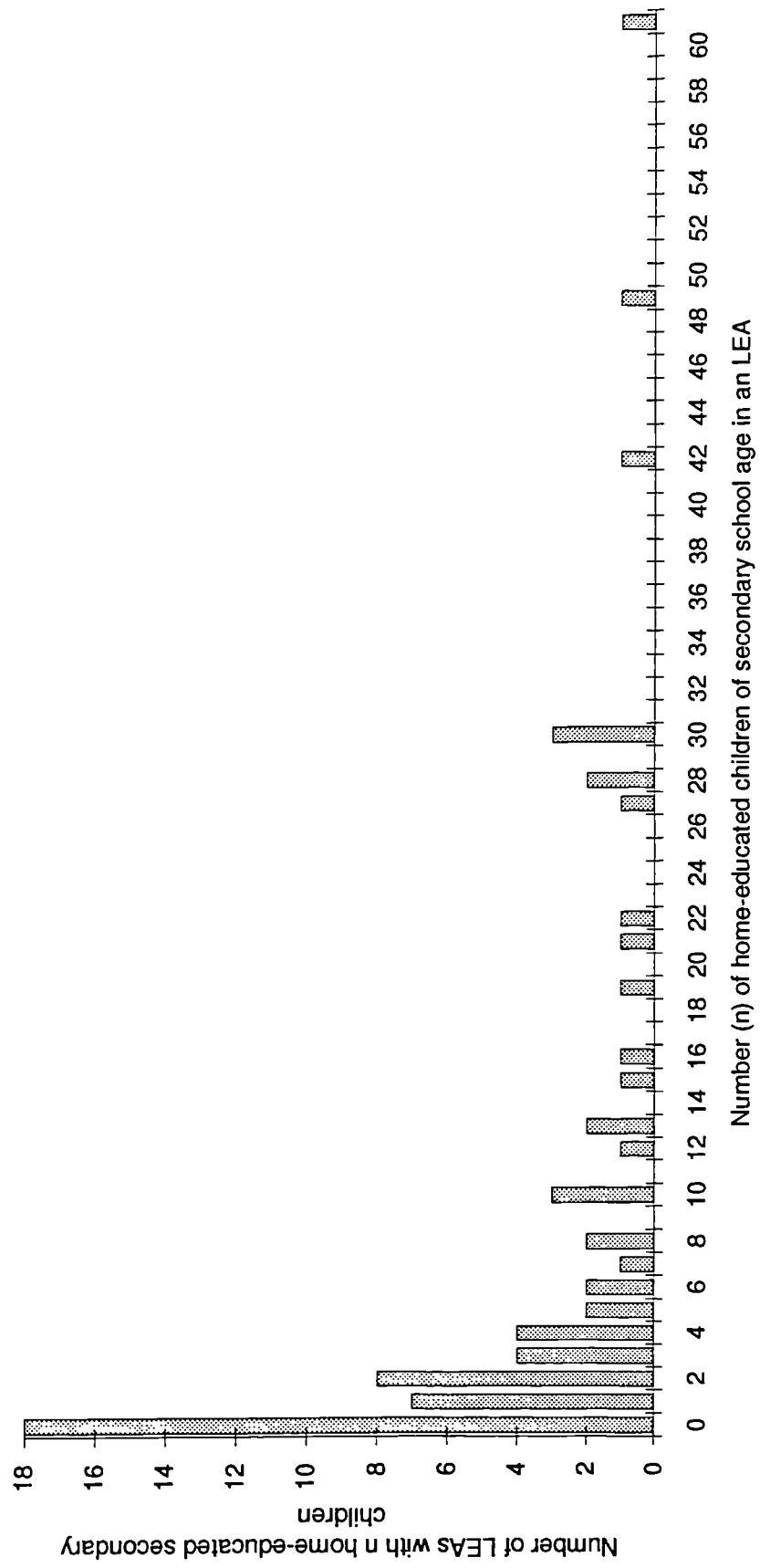


Figure 5.2: Distribution of home-educated secondary age children among responding LEAs



responding LEAs. Table 5.3 shows the grouped frequency distribution of primary aged home educated children among the responding LEAs. As can be seen, the majority (63%) of LEAs report that they recognise fewer than 10 home educated children; the number of LEAs recognising fewer than ten was even greater (71%) at secondary level (Table 5.4). Figure 5.3 shows the distribution of all home educated children recognised by each responding LEA (including those children not distinguished as being of either primary or secondary age). Sixty-six per cent of the responding LEAs recognised fewer than 19 home educated children (Table 5.5) and 47% recognised nine or fewer than nine children in total who were recognised as being educated at home. The total number of home educated children within each LEA ranged from 0 to 145, the high mean deviation of 22.5 reflects this large range.

Figure 5.4 shows the distribution per LEA of the number of home educated children as a percentage of those children who are educated at state schools (state school figures supplied by DENI, DES and SED). This distribution was positively skewed, the mean being 0.03%, the median being 0.02%, and the mode being 0.01%. Figure 5.4 also shows that there were five LEAs which had a proportionately larger number of home educated children than other responding LEAs; these were four of the county LEAs in the south of England and one in Wales. In three of these LEAs, home educated children comprised

Table 5.3: Grouped frequency distribution for home educated children of primary school age

Number of children of primary school age reported as being home educated	Number of responding LEAs	Percentage of responding LEAs
0 to 9	42	63
10 to 19	8	12
20 to 29	5	7
30 to 39	5	7
40 to 49	6	9
50 to 59	0	0
60 to 69	1	1
Total respondents	67	100

Table 5.4: Grouped frequency distribution for home educated children of secondary school age

Number of children of secondary school age reported as being home educated	Number of responding LEAs	Percentage of responding LEAs
0 to 9	48	71
10 to 19	9	13
20 to 29	5	7
30 to 39	3	4
40 to 49	2	3
50 to 59	0	0
60 to 69	1	1
Total respondents	68	100

Figure 5.3: Distribution of home educated children (total) among responding LEAs

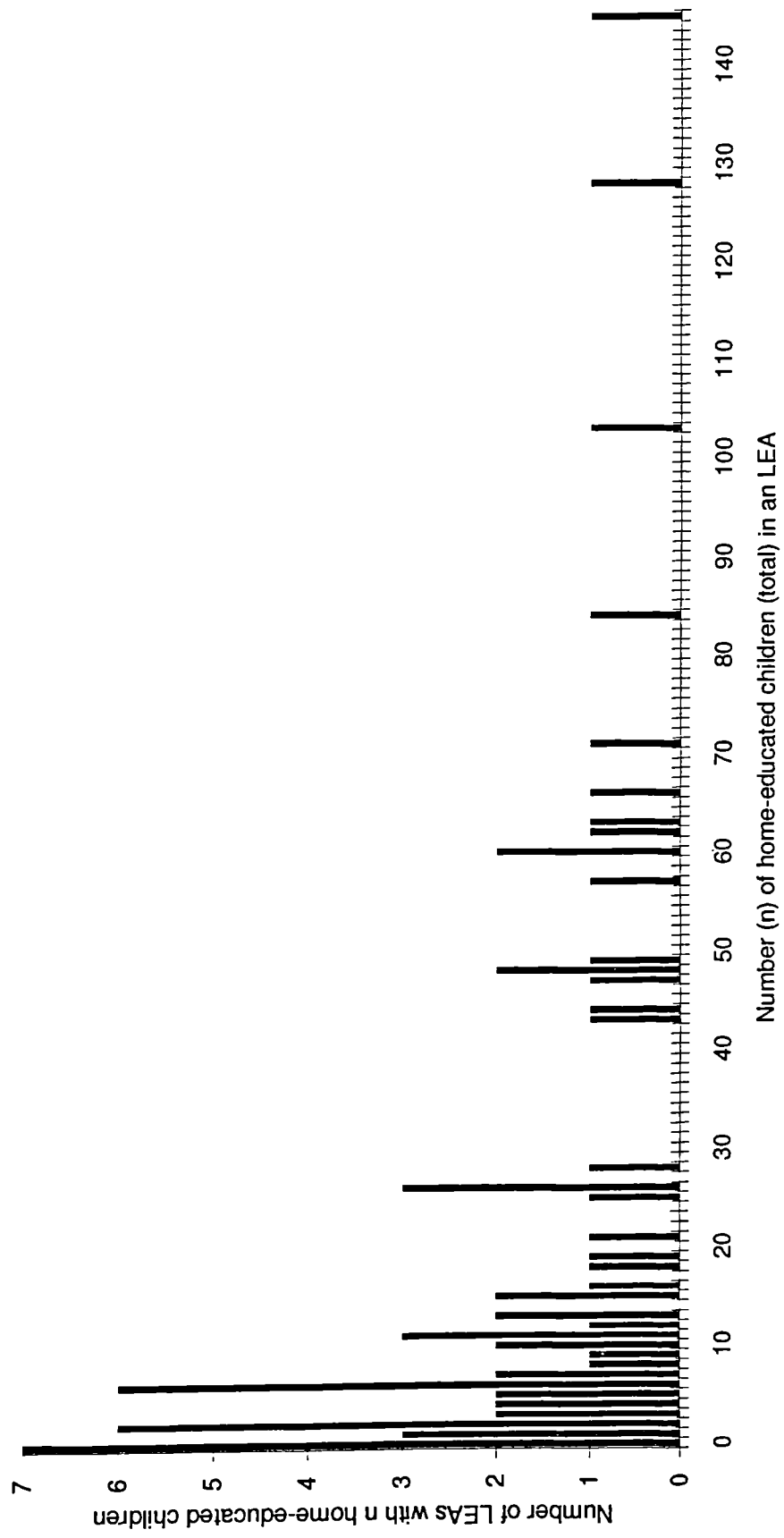
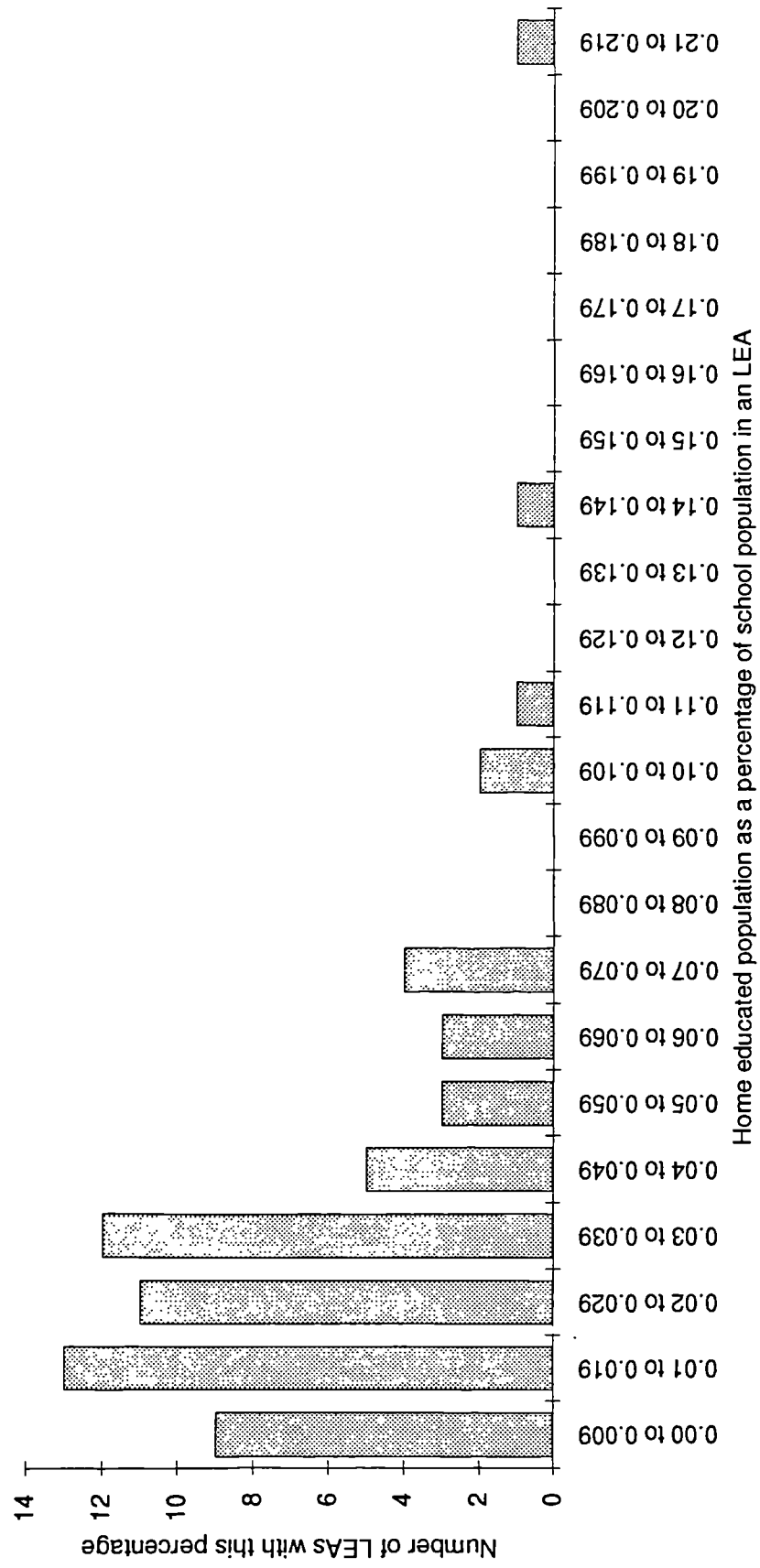


Figure 5.4. : Children reported as being educated at home as a percentage of the school population



approximately 0.1% of the total school population, in the fourth LEA, 0.14% and in the fifth 0.21%. This last was a large rural LEA. The range of the percentage distribution for all LEAs was unusually great (0 to 0.21%). This could perhaps have reflected a greater sense of satisfaction with the existing school provision within the LEA or the existence of home educators who did not make themselves known to the LEA. The level of conflict, which was revealed later in the questionnaire, did not relate to the number of home educated children in each authority.

Table 5.5: Grouped frequency distribution for the total number of home educated children (primary school age, secondary school age and unspecified)

Number of children reported as being home educated	Number of responding LEAs	Percentage of responding LEAs
0 to 9	32	47
10 to 19	13	19
20 to 29	6	9
30 to 39	0	0
40 to 49	6	9
50 to 59	1	1
60 to 69	5	7
70 to 79	1	1
80 to 89	1	1
90 to 99	0	0
100 to 109	1	1
110 to 119	0	0
120 to 129	1	1
130 to 139	0	0
140 to 149	1	1
Total respondents	68	100

1693 was the total number of children who were recognised as being educated at home by 69% of the LEAs in the United Kingdom. Taking into account that the children of school age in those LEAs responding to the questionnaire comprised only 58% of the total school population, the total for the United Kingdom was calculated to be approximately 2900.

It is possible that the numbers of home educated children, given by the respondents to the questionnaire, was smaller than would be revealed by a complete census. In the first place, there are children who are educated at home about whom the LEA knows nothing. Lowden (1988, p31) gave examples of two LEAs where there were more home educated children than the officials believed. In addition, I knew of two other LEAs in which there were home educated children but these authorities returned the questionnaire or a letter saying that there were no home educators known to them. The now famous case of Ruth Lawrence was a further example: the LEA official had no records of her existence and only knew that she had been home educated when she was accepted for Oxford University and it was publicised in the press (ref: telephone interview with the adviser responsible for home education in the LEA where she lived).

Members of the group Education Otherwise are divided on this issue; some insist on their legal right not to

inform the LEA of an intention to home educate. A parent is acting within the law not to inform the local authority about children who are home educated when the child:

- has never been to the local school
- changes to secondary school, or
- moves from one LEA area to another LEA area.

Bendell, a member and at one time area coordinator for Education Otherwise, recognised that there are people who do not inform the LEA that they are home educating.

However she believed:

That a good relationship with the local authority is worth fostering from the start. There may be neighbours who will 'shop' you, or callers like Health Visitors who may see it as their duty to report cases where children are obviously not attending school. This could get you off to the wrong sort of start.

(1987, p108)

One LEA official working in a rural area, when questioned on this aspect, thought that it was impossible for home educators to go unrecognised, while two LEA officials from metropolitan areas thought it likely there were other home educated children who were not known to the LEA.

In the literature on home education, during the last ten years, there has been great variation in the figures of children who are educated at home (Table 5.6). It is not always specified whether these figures include data for

Scotland and Northern Ireland. In 1980, Barton and Meighan stated that:

Nationally there appear to be between 100 and 200 families; precise figures being difficult to establish, not least because some families feel it necessary to operate in a clandestine manner.
(p133)

Table 5.6 : Estimates of numbers of home educated children in the United Kingdom

Estimate	Date of estimate + page reference	Estimated number of home educated children
Barton and Meighan	1980 (p. 133)	between 100 and 200 families
Blacker	1981 (p. 15)	between 100 and 150 families
Meighan	1984b (p. 165)	400-500 children
Deutsch and Wolf	1986 (p.1)	5000-20000 children
Webb	1987 (p. 78)	622 primary, 362 secondary children
Bendell	1987 (pp106-107)	1000 families
Lowden	1988 (p. 25)	4000 children
Present research	1988	at least 2900 children (*)

* estimate based only on LEA returns and therefore does not include those not recognised by LEAs as being home educated.

Blacker (1981, p15) stated that there were between 100 and 150 families home educating in 1980. It would seem that Meighan believed the number of home educating

families had increased from 200 in 1980, to 400 or 500 in 1981:

In the period 1977 - 1981 the number of known families involved [in home education] had increased from a few dozen to four or five hundred.

(1984b, p165)

Writing in 1986, Deutsch and Wolf believed that:

Children currently being educated otherwise than at school is still comparatively tiny - estimates range from 5000 to over 20000.

(p1)

Webb (1988, p78), however, estimated the number to be 622 children of primary school age and 362 of secondary school age. Lowden (1988, p25) stated that the total could be 4000.

Bendell suggested that, based on Education Otherwise figures, there were approximately 1000 families 'with school age children learning at home', although she believed this could be an underestimate as there were '8000 children not accounted for in state or private schools or in institutions' (1987, pp 106-107). Bendell's figure may be based on the DES figures for children 'not in school'; in January 1986, this was 8151 children in England and Wales (ref: private correspondence, DES). These annual figures, however, include children who are not in school for a variety of reasons: for example, the numbers include children who are excluded from school and others who are long-stay patients in hospital. The DES figures do not identify children who are home educated as

do the figures issued annually by the SED. This is further discussed in section 5.4.

The discrepancy in the various numbers of home educated children could in part be due to the high number of traveller children in the United Kingdom. The National Gypsy Council in its 1987-88 annual report stressed the need for a true assessment of the total gypsy population as a 'positive reasoned count' had never been undertaken. It urged the Department of the Environment to undertake the count and not rely on LEAs (p17). If this were undertaken and the results presented to LEAs, it could alter the LEA perspective of home education in Great Britain.

It may thus be assumed that the figure of 2900 home educated children, established by this study, is a minimum estimate. If traveller children (and children from other minority groups, such as fairground and barge children) who are educated other than in school are included in the total number of home educated children, the number of home educated children could be considerably higher.

The literature on home education demonstrated that some LEAs are more helpful and tolerant than others; a home educator will be more discreet, preferring not to make contact with the LEA, if the policy of that LEA is

assertive and non-cooperative. As has been shown by the accounts of interviews with LEA officials (given in section 3.4), ill-feeling can be created between the home educating family and those who 'find out' and subsequently monitor the child's education.

Table 5.7: The recent trend in the number of home educated children

Question 2: Do you feel that over the past five years, the number of home educated children has:	Number of responding LEAs		Percentage of responding LEAs	
	Primary school age	Secondary school age	Primary school age	Secondary school age
Increased	39	27	61.9	45
Remained the same	21	31	33.3	51.7
Decreased	3	2	4.8	3.4
Total respondents	63	60	100	100

5.4 Trends in the numbers of home educated children

Almost 62% of the LEA officials who responded to the questionnaire at primary level thought that the number of home educated children had increased during the last five years (Table 5.7). At secondary level, the figure was considerably lower, 45% of the respondents believing the

number to have increased. Ninety-five per cent of primary and 97% of secondary respondents believed that it had increased or remained the same. Only three LEAs at primary level and 2 LEAs at secondary level believed the number to have decreased.

For approximately half of the responding LEAs, it was evident from this response that the time taken to monitor home educators had probably increased during the last five years. The problems facing LEA officials, including the lack of time for monitoring home education, were voiced in the answers to questions 11, 13, 14 and 15 which are reported in sections 5.6, 6.6, 6.5 and 6.4 respectively.

In Scotland the number of home educators the SED recognised, which is compiled annually from figures sent by local authorities, had decreased from 149 in 1987 to 134 in 1989 (figures supplied by the SED); this fall of 10% is not accounted for by the fall in the school population over the same period. All Scottish respondents to question 3 of the questionnaire enquiring whether the number of home educators would increase in the future (as from Spring 1988) had felt that the numbers of home educators would 'remain the same'. Taken as a region, this response varied from the responses given by other regions of the United Kingdom.

When considering the United Kingdom as a whole, 50.0% of respondents to Question 3 at primary level believed that the number of home educated children would subsequently increase (Table 5.8). At secondary level, 51.7% of the respondents believed there would be an increase in the numbers of home educated children. Only four of the total number of 120 respondents (3.5%) believed that the number would decrease.

Table 5.8: LEA officials' predictions about future trends in the number of home educated children

Question 3: Do you anticipate that, in the future, numbers may:	Number of responding LEAs		Percentage of responding LEAs	
	Primary school age	Secondary school age	Primary school age	Secondary school age
Increase	31	30	50.0	51.7
Remain the same	28	27	45.2	46.6
Decrease	3	1	4.8	1.7
Total respondents	<u>62</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

The anticipated increase in the number of home educated children by the majority of respondents would not necessarily lead to increased conflict. As discussed in Chapter three, the level of conflict could increase, either in proportion to the number of home educated

children or due to the increase in the workload of the officials, who could then become more assertive. With the financial cutbacks (in real terms) in some areas of education (Statham et al., 1991, p123), it could lead to resentment that these few children are taking up a disproportionate amount of time, compared with those children in school. Three LEA officials believed that they were not being financed for monitoring home educators, while two others thought the financial aspect irrelevant as the children involved were from within the local area. This situation was investigated within both the DES and the SED and is further clarified in section 7.5.

Alternatively, the level of conflict could decrease or remain the same, despite the increase in the number of home educated children; there could be increased legal awareness of LEA officials, there could be increased communication and education of both LEA officials and home educators or LEAs could, with greater experience of home education, establish 'objective criteria' and 'universalistic standards' which are particularly suitable to the monitoring of home education (Chapter three). In this way, effective LEA guidelines for monitoring home education could be drawn up. Such guidelines are further discussed in section 6.5.

5.5 The procedures adopted by the LEAs

5.5.1 The initial procedures

Respondents were asked in question 4 to indicate how home educating families usually came to the notice of the LEA. It was anticipated that the respondents would answer each part of the question; however, as can be seen from Table 5.9, some respondents replied to some sections and not others. Direct communication by the home educating parents involved was by far the most common way that home educators came to the notice of the LEA. A far smaller proportion of home educators came to the notice of LEAs through the schools or from an EWO.

The reasons for the differences between the primary and secondary responses can only be speculative. It could be that the higher figures for 'direct communication from parents' at primary level might have reflected those parents who had never sent their children to school. The higher figures at secondary level where the EWOs and the schools themselves were involved, might indicate either a greater dissatisfaction with the existing school provision or a greater number of children who reject schooling, such as school refusers or school phobics. (The feeling of dissatisfaction with the available school provision expressed by some home educators was noted in the responses to question 10.) Home educating children

Table 5.9: How families on record have usually come to the notice of the LEA

A: Children of primary school age														
Question 4:		Number of responding LEAs					Percentage of responding LEAs							
How have families on record come to your notice		usually		occasionally		never		usually		occasionally		never		total
		usually	occasionally	usually	occasionally	usually	occasionally	usually	occasionally	usually	occasionally			
Direct communication from parent		55	6	1	62	88.7	9.7	1.6	100					
Through social services/ health visitor		0	10	22	32	0.0	31.3	68.8	100					
Through the schools		7	29	4	40	17.5	72.5	10.0	100					
Education Welfare Officer		6	33	4	43	14.0	76.7	9.3	100					
Concerned neighbours of families		0	11	22	33	0.0	33.3	66.7	100					
Area health records		0	1	30	31	0.0	3.1	96.8	100					

Table 5.9 (continued): How families on record have usually come to the notice of the LEA

B: Children of secondary school age Question 4: How have families on record come to your notice	Number of responding LEAs			Percentage of responding LEAs				
	usually	occasionally	never	total	usually	occasionally	never	total
Direct communication from parent	43	8	1	52	82.7	15.4	1.9	100
Through social services/ health visitor	0	11	19	30	0.0	36.7	63.3	100
Through the schools	11	21	7	39	28.2	53.9	18.0	100
Education Welfare Officer	11	30	3	44	25.0	68.2	6.8	100
Concerned neighbours of families	0	8	23	31	0.0	25.8	74.2	100
Area health records	1	2	27	30	3.3	6.7	90.0	100

only occasionally came to the notice of the LEAs through the social services and area health records and almost never from concerned neighbours of home educating families. This had not been expected; it had been believed before the questionnaire was distributed that a number of home educators would be 'discovered' to be home educating, which could lead to initial communication problems with the LEA (as expressed by LEA officials in section 3.4). This perhaps merits further research as these families probably exist, unrecognised and not monitored by LEAs.

Table 5.10 gives the responses to question 2 regarding the initial procedures adopted by the LEAs when monitoring home educators. These results showed that there was very little difference between primary and secondary initial procedures. At both primary and secondary levels, over 90% of LEA officials who responded to this question stated that home visits were usually made (primary 92.3%, secondary 93.1%). In one LEA, the initial visit was made by the parents to the education offices; this could be a more cost effective way of establishing the factors affecting the child and the type of education the parents are to provide.

Parents intending to home educate three children, wrote to the Chief Education Officer in the LEA concerned, indicating their intention to home educate, subsequently,

no assessment visit was made and no official spoke to the children in an attempt to establish how well or by what

Table 5.10: Initial procedures adopted by LEA officials when monitoring home education

Question 2: Please indicate which of the follow- ing procedures you currently apply once a home educating family has been identified (please tick more than one if necessary)	Number of res- ponding LEAs		Percentage of responding LEAs	
	Primary school age	Second- ary school age	Primary school age	Second- ary school age
i). A standard letter to the parent	1	2	1.5	3.5
ii).An individual letter/ telephone call to the parent	4	2	6.2	3.5
iii).A visit to the home	8	5	12.2	8.8
iv).No communication	0	0	0	0
Procedures i and iii	21	18	32.3	31.6
Procedures i and ii	0	1	0	1.8
Procedures ii and iii	22	20	33.9	35.1
Procedures i, ii and iii	9	9	13.9	15.8
Total	<u>65</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

methods they were being educated. When this same LEA stated when answering the questionnaire, that each family in the area was visited once each year, it was not easy to establish whether this family had been overlooked or

whether the response to the questionnaire revealed an intended policy rather than actual practice. It was believed that this LEA gave the monitoring of home educating families low priority. Another respondent raised the issue of a lack of adequate monitoring but questioned whether an LEA could be taken to court for inadequate monitoring by a formerly home educated child, who had lived in the area administered by the LEA.

5.5.2 The official who makes the home visit

With respect to the officials who make the visits to monitor home education (Table 5.11), and the frequency of those visits (Figures 5.5 and 5.6 and Table 5.12), at both primary and secondary levels, the results were very similar. However, at secondary level, the visits were made a little more frequently.

Advisory staff were routinely involved in monitoring 88% of the initial visits at primary level and 77% of the initial visits at secondary level. For routine visits, the percentage of advisory staff making visits to home educating families rose to 91% at both primary and secondary levels. There was a marked decrease in the use of EWOs and a slight reduction in the already limited use of educational psychologists and social workers. This

Table 5.11: LEA officials who make home visits

Question 6: If the home is visited, who makes the visits? (Please tick more than one if necessary)	Number of responding LEAs				Percentage of responding LEAs			
	Initial visits		Routine visits		Initial visits		Routine visits	
	Primary school age	Sec-ondary school age	Primary school age	Sec-ondary school age	Primary school age	Sec-ondary school age	Primary school age	Sec-ondary school age
Adviser	28	26	36	29	43.1	45.6	56.3	54.7
Social worker	1	2	0	0	1.5	3.5	0.0	0.0
Psychologist	2	1	2	0	3.1	1.8	3.1	0.0
LEA officer	9	10	3	5	13.8	17.5	4.7	9.4
Inspector/Advisory Head	7	5	7	7	10.8	8.8	10.9	13.2
Adviser + LEA officer	10	8	9	7	15.4	14.0	14.1	13.2
Adviser + Psychologist	4	3	3	2	6.2	5.3	4.7	3.8
Adviser+Inspector/Advisory Head	2	1	1	1	3.1	1.8	1.6	1.9
Adviser + Social worker	1	0	1	1	1.5	0.0	1.6	1.9
Adviser+Psychologist+LEA officer	1	1	1	1	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.9
Psychologist + LEA officer	0	0	1	0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0
Total	65	57	64	53	100	100	100	100

Figure 5.5: Annual number of visits by LEA officials per home educating family with children of primary school age

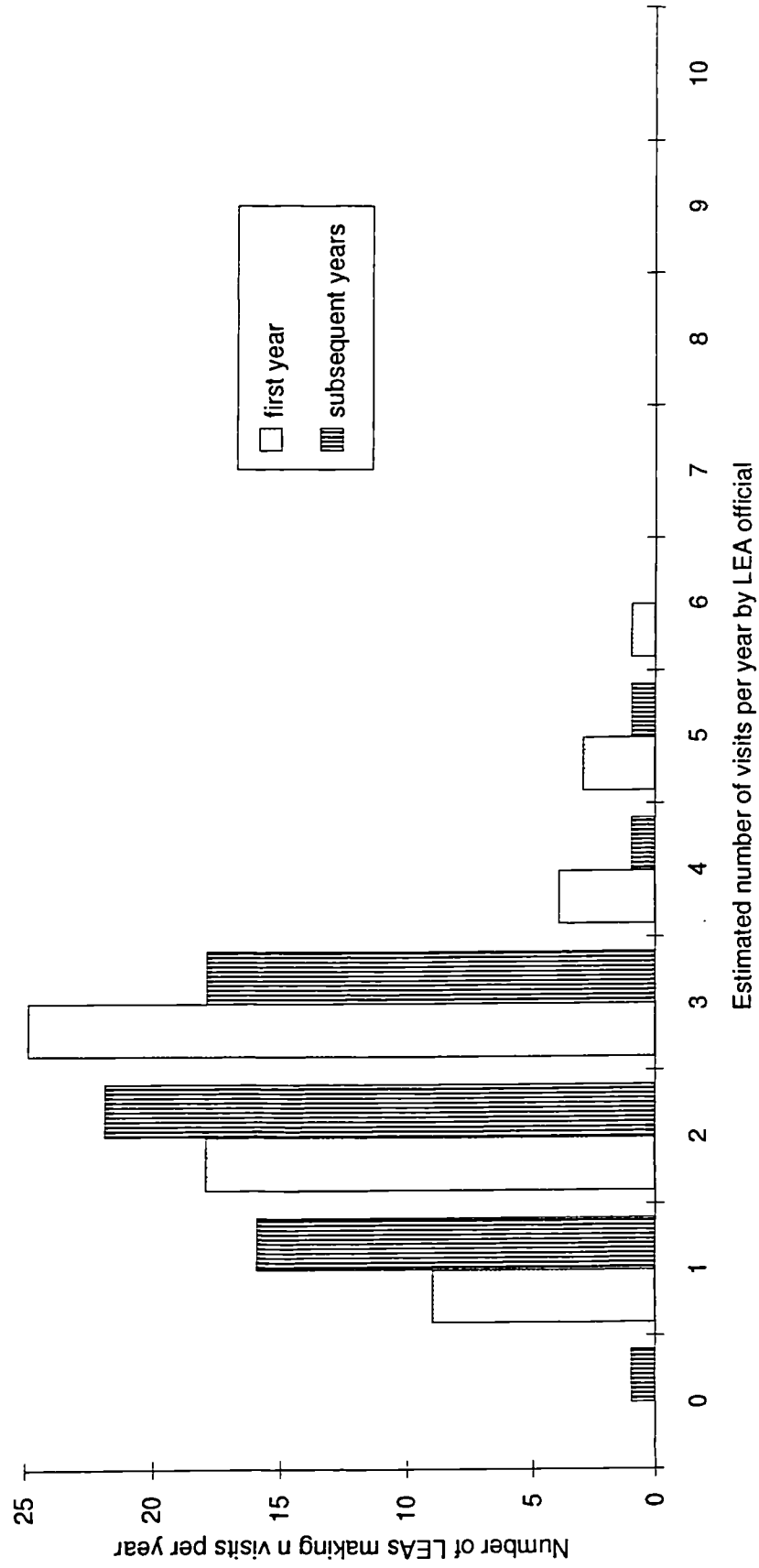


Figure 5.6: Annual number of visits by LEA officials per home educating family with children of secondary school age

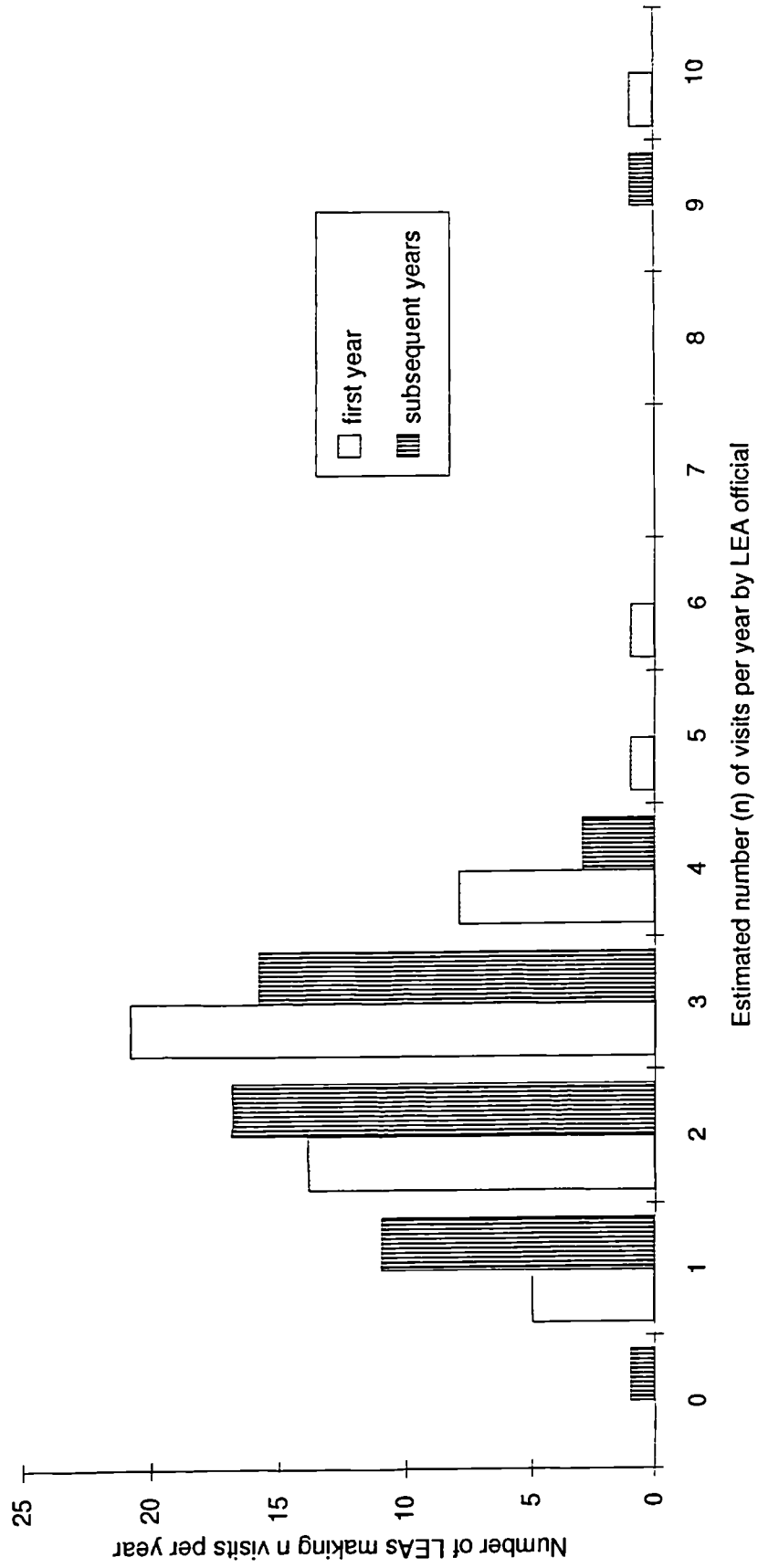


Table 5.12: Number of visits by LEA officials per home educating family per year

	Number of responding LEAs						Percentage of total respondents					
	First year visited			Subsequent years visited			First year visited			Subsequent years visited		
	Primary school age	Secondary school age	Primary school age	Secondary school age	Primary school age	Secondary school age	Primary school age	Secondary school age	Primary school age	Secondary school age	Primary school age	Secondary school age
Question 6 (part 2)												
Please estimate the average number of home visits by LEA officials per home educating family per year												
A. In the first year												
B. In subsequent years												
no visits	0	0	1	1	1	0	0.0	0.0	1.7	2.0		
one visit	9	5	16	11	11	15.0	15.0	9.8	27.1	22.4		
two visits	18	14	22	17	17	30.0	30.0	27.5	37.3	34.7		
three visits	25	21	18	16	16	41.7	41.7	41.2	30.5	32.7		
four visits	4	8	1	3	3	6.7	6.7	15.7	1.7	6.1		
five visits	3	1	1	0	0	5.0	5.0	2.0	1.7	0.0		
six visits	1	1	0	0	0	1.7	1.7	2.0	0.0	0.0		
seven, or more visits	0	1	0	1	1	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0		
Total	60	51	59	49	49	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

verifies that a high proportion of LEAs are in fact monitoring the education that home educators provide.

Some of the additional comments made by the responding officials at this stage, directly reflect difficulties that have occurred when monitoring home educators:

When requested by an adviser, an LEA officer has accompanied adviser;

Visits should not be made by a single adviser;

As numbers increase, visits are not always possible. Parents visit Area Education Office routinely;

Psychologist attends if requested by adviser;

Psychologist, if necessary;

We attempt to obtain a return to school (this authority, when answering a later question thought it was necessary that home educating parents should be qualified to teach);

The psychologist visits children with severe learning difficulties.

When home educating families were recognised by the LEA, the average number of visits made by an LEA official during the first year in order to monitor the education provided by the parents was 2.6 visits for children of primary school age and 2.9 visits for children of secondary school age. In subsequent years, the average number of visits to each home per year was 2.1 for children of primary school age and 2.3 visits for children of secondary school age. As can be seen from Table 5.12 and Figures 5.5 and 5.6, the greatest number of respondents indicated that they initially made three

visits per year to monitor children of both primary school age (42%) and secondary school age (41%). Routinely, the greatest number of respondents visited twice at primary level (37%) and at secondary level (29.3%), although only slightly fewer made three routine visits per year.

The reason for the reduction in the number of visits after the first year was not established. It might have been that the LEA official involved was satisfied with the level of education being provided by home educators. It could also be accounted for by LEA officials making more frequent visits in the first year to establish which type of education was being undertaken. Subsequent visits would be made to ensure that the proposed aims were being adhered to and that the children were making satisfactory progress.

It was interesting to note that one respondent stated that ten visits were necessary in the first year and nine in subsequent years to assess the efficiency of the children's education at secondary level. The visits in this LEA were made by an advisory head and there were thirty home educated children at secondary level; there had not been any incidence of legal action involving home educators. However, a high number of visits could either be seen as helpful or as intimidating; this would depend

on the communication skills of those involved, both home educators and LEA officials.

5.6 Legal action by the LEAs

Question 11 enquired whether the LEA had taken any legal action against home educators. From the 115 respondents, 23 (20%) had been or were currently involved in litigation with parents who had expressed the intention to home educate a child. There was an even distribution between primary and secondary respondents. Legal proceedings can be very costly in terms of time, stress and money to home educators, the LEA and the officials concerned. Different reasons were given by the respondents to question 11 for the appearances in court, but the most frequent was that the education provided by the home educating parent was not deemed suitable.

At present, the adequacy of home education is legally decided by the courts, but it has to be initially assessed by LEA officials, who must then decide whether it appears to be 'efficient'. In instances where LEA officials feel the home education provided by the parents to be unsuitable, under certain preliminary conditions, a notice of attendance can be served. Further legal details are given in Section 2.5. The various interpretations of the term 'efficient, full-time education' is one of the

principal sources of conflict as can be seen from the following comments from the respondents to question eleven:

If, in the view of the adviser, the quality/quantity of education being offered is inadequate, court action is taken (after a reasonable period of time and further visits) to have the child admitted to school;

Failure to cooperate with LEA's requirements to supply timetable, failure to respond to letter, has led to issue of Notice of Attendance. Prosecution may follow;

Section 39 non attendance where 'home tuition' was given in evidence but in fact had not taken place to the authority's satisfaction or full knowledge;

Two cases where education was considered unsatisfactory;

Parents failed to produce any programme of work for children;

Some who have claimed to be home educating but were not;

On three occasions in last two years, where it was felt that the provision was inadequate.

As the methods of education practised by home educators vary , it must on occasion be difficult for LEAs to evaluate those methods of education which are not practised within the state system. In two of the above responses, 'timetables' and 'programme of work' are specified, indicating an interpretation of education similar to schooling. However, it is also possible that the LEA officials did not feel, even after taking into account different approaches to education, that the parents had made adequate provision.

Other legal cases centred around the difficulty which can be experienced by LEA officials when trying to distinguish between some cases of truancy and home education. This has also been recognised by the DES to be a major source of conflict between LEAs and home educators (ref: meeting, DES, London).

In one or two cases parents have informed the LEA that they are 'educating otherwise', but have simply kept the children away from school. An attendance order is served;

But case not heard by magistrates - child was placed on register of 'new' school on morning of court appearance for mother. Case withdrawn;

Although it is not unknown for parents in non-attendance court cases to tell the court they have been teaching their children at home while they have been absent from school. So far all such claims have come as a surprise to the office dealing with the case because no parent said this before or after the court case and no parent produced any evidence that any teaching had been going on at home.

It would seem that, in these instances, collaborative communication did not exist between the LEA officials and home educating parents. The parents did not clearly express the intention to home educate at the outset and/or the LEA officials did not explain the legal situation with respect to home education, long before the initiation of a court case.

Table 5.13 Availability of support services to home educating families

A: Children of primary school age	Number of responding LEAs				Percentage of responding LEAs			
	often	sometimes	not possible	total	often	sometimes	not possible	total
Question 12: Are any of the following support services made available to home educators?								
Schools library service	6	16	33	55	10.9	29.1	60.0	100
Schools resources centre	4	18	33	55	7.3	32.7	60.0	100
Consultation with advisers and inspectors when specific problems arise	27	25	6	58	46.6	43.1	10.3	100
Provision of materials (text books, work books etc.)	8	17	31	56	14.3	30.4	55.4	100
Provision of science equipment	0	4	49	53	0.0	7.5	92.5	100
Tuition in music	1	4	50	55	1.8	7.3	90.9	100
Toy library (for younger or disabled children)	1	12	39	52	1.9	23.1	75.0	100
Sports tuition	0	2	51	53	0.0	3.8	96.2	100

Table 5.13 (continued) : Availability of support services to home educating families

B: Children of secondary school age	Number of responding LEAs				Percentage of responding LEAs			
	often	sometimes	not possible	total	often	sometimes	not possible	total
Question 12: Are any of the following support services made available to home educators?								
Schools library service	2	16	33	51	3.9	31.4	64.7	100
Schools resources centre	0	19	29	48	0.0	39.6	60.4	100
Consultation with advisers and inspectors when specific problems arise	22	25	7	54	40.7	46.3	13.0	100
Provision of materials (text books, work books etc.)	6	16	28	50	12.0	32.0	56.0	100
Provision of science equipment	0	7	43	50	0.0	14.0	86.0	100
Tuition in music	1	6	43	50	2.0	12.0	86.0	100
Toy library (for younger or disabled children)	1	10	34	45	2.2	22.2	75.6	100
Sports tuition	0	3	45	48	0.0	6.3	93.8	100

5.7 LEA support services available to home educators

When I was invited to undertake a consultancy with one authority, the advisers declared themselves sympathetic towards the concept of home education being suitable for some children, having met the children concerned. The administrators, however, wanted the children back into school as soon as possible. The administrators were averse to offering home educating parents some of the local, educational resources, such as the schools' library service or schools' resources centre.

The non-cooperative attitude of the administrators in this authority was not unique. Ten of the respondents to question 12 (enquiring about the support services available to home educators), replied that it was not possible to provide any such services. 'Consultation with advisers and inspectors when specific problems arise' was particularly included in this section to clarify the extent of non-cooperation. Most authorities wishing to give the impression of cooperation could have indicated that consultation with advisers was 'SOMETIMES' available, even if this were only during the termly or yearly visit.

Not many LEA support services were available to home educators; there is no legal precedent. Some LEAs, however, offered schools' library services (38%), toy

libraries (25%), provided text books or workbooks (44%) or permitted access to schools resources centres (40%). It was not very often that science equipment (11%), or tuition in music (12%) and sports tuition (5%) were available to home educators. Details of the responses to question 12 requesting information about the LEA services available to home educators, are given in Table 5.13.

Occasionally, tuition has been offered by an LEA official and refused by the home educating family. As some LEA officials said that they 'attempt to obtain a return to school' or 'usually the child returns', there may be a lack of collaborative communication on the part of some home educators. For LEAs wishing to cooperate with home educating families, further suggestions are given in Chapter seven.

5.8 Summary

It has been established in this chapter that LEAs primarily monitored the education provided by home educators: the LEA officials, usually from the advisory service, visited home educating children on average either two or three times per year. However, the number of home visits varied from one LEA to another; LEA officials made between one and ten visits during the first year of monitoring home education and between

nought and nine visits in subsequent years of home education.

In 1988, 1693 home educated children were recognised by 69% of LEAs in the United Kingdom; it is thus likely that the minimum number of home educated children throughout the United Kingdom is 2900. More than half the respondents (55%) believed that the number of home educated children had increased during the last five years, although this varied from 45% of the respondents to the secondary questionnaire to 62% of the respondents to the primary questionnaire. With the exception of the respondents from Scotland, who believed the numbers of home educated children in the future would remain the same or decrease, 50% of the respondents thought that the number of home educated children would continue to increase.

Twenty per cent of responding LEAs had been or were involved in legal action with home educators. Problems had arisen over definitions of 'efficient ... education' and instances of intentions to home educate following a record of bad attendance at school. In these reported instances, there was no apparent meaningful communication between the LEA officials and home educators concerned.

When responding to question 12, ten LEA officials demonstrated a non-cooperative attitude towards home

educators while 40% offered access to the schools library service and resources centres. As shall be further illustrated in Chapter seven, it was not only the level of LEA support services which demonstrated the variety of attitudes held by LEA officials towards home educators.

CHAPTER 6: A survey of LEA practices and attitudes in the
United Kingdom: (2) Attitudes and personal
experiences of the officials involved

The results in Chapter five gave insight into the procedures used within LEAs for the monitoring of home education. They also demonstrated the extent of legal conflict with home educating parents and the cooperation, in the form of support services, which were offered to home educators. In contrast, this chapter describes the views, opinions and problems LEA officials have when monitoring home education and the changes which some of the officials feel could be made to reduce conflict and/or increase efficiency in the monitoring situation. The responses to the open ended questions 13, 14 and 15, gave detailed information on specific attitudes and problems and are reported in sections 6.6, 6.5, and 6.4 respectively.

6.1 Attitudes of LEA officials towards the parents' right
to decide to home educate

The responses to question 7 demonstrated the initial attitudes of the LEA officials when first recognising home educators. The question was deliberately worded in order to ascertain whether, at the outset, the LEA

official automatically (regardless of initial conditions) accepted the right of parents to home educate - that is, accepted the parent's intention as legally valid. The wording of the question was meant to separate this issue from the issue of what would happen if it subsequently appeared that a suitable education were not being provided. This was obviously a difficult question to word within the confines of a questionnaire and without directing the respondent towards the answer which, as a matter of law, the respondent ought to have given. The responding official was required to read carefully, and to interpret exactly, the full wording of the question.

The legal situation in England and Wales (as explained in Chapter two) is that parents have the right to home educate until the education they are providing is proved to be inadequate. In Scotland and Northern Ireland however, there have been no legal cases to endorse this point of law. The majority of responding LEA officials demonstrated an apparent ignorance of the law in this respect.

At both primary and secondary levels, from a total of 116 respondents, only 26 (22.4%) of the LEA officials never opposed the family's intention to home educate at the outset. When excluding the responses from Scotland and Northern Ireland, where the law has not yet been clarified, the percentage of LEA officials who, as a

matter of course, accepted the intention of parents to home educate increased slightly to 24.6%.

Four LEA officials commented at this point on the legal situation:

It is their [the parents'] right to choose this option;

YES [agreeing with the intention] until a decision is made that the education provided is not satisfactory;

I explain their right to home educate - but explain the difficulties & the need to meet our expectations;

Advised of right to do so, then each case assessed on merit. Status quo appertains.

By commenting in this way, these LEA officials demonstrated their knowledge of the legal situation. It is likely that the home educator is aware of the right to home educate. In contrast, it would seem that approximately 75% of the LEA officials did not automatically agree with the parents' intention to home educate at the outset. It is possible to infer from the replies that the LEA officials may have believed that the LEA should give 'permission' before home education could take place. This was supported by another response to this question at secondary level which was from an LEA handling requests to deregister; it came from the same LEA in which the respondent at primary level had acknowledged the parents' 'right to do so':

Parents advised pupils should be in school, until decision is made, but no action taken until decision is made.

In effect, the LEA official indicated that the child should stay at school until the LEA had given 'permission' for home education to take place. It would be extremely difficult for a parent to establish that a child were efficiently educated at home if the child continued to attend school regularly.

Table 6.1: Instances of total opposition to a family's intention to home educate

Question 8: Have there been any instances when you were totally opposed to a family's intention to home educate?	Number of responding LEAs		Percentage of responding LEAs	
	Primary school age	Secondary school age	Primary school age	Secondary school age
Often	2	1	3.4	1.8
Sometimes	19	23	32.2	40.4
Rarely	24	21	40.7	36.8
Never	14	12	23.7	21.1
Total respondents	59	57	100	100

It can be seen from Table 6.1 that, at primary level, 40.7% of responding officials had rarely opposed a family's intention to home educate and 36.8% at secondary level. However, at primary level 32.2% and at secondary level 40.4% of the responding officials had sometimes totally opposed a family's intention to home educate and

two LEA officials at primary level (3.4%) and one at secondary level (1.8%) had often totally opposed the family's intention to home educate. Such attitudes are not compatible with the provisions of the 1944 Education Act and subsequent clarification in the court (section 2.5.4). These attitudes could cause conflict, especially when the parents may be embarking on a new venture and may be assertive, in anticipation of a possible incompatibility of their interests with those of the LEA officials concerned.

The awareness of the law of other LEA officials was expressed by one:

I might think it inadvisable - but always give them the opportunity to try.

However, in England and Wales, it is the parent's right to be able to home educate his/her child until it is proved to be inadequate by the LEA officials, or when necessary in a court of law.

Deregistration from school has been clarified in the courts but needs far more discussion nationally among LEAs and central departments of education. It should be determined how long a home educating family needs in order to be able to demonstrate to LEA officials that the provision of education is 'efficient'. If, as I believe, the time period in Scotland can be as little as two weeks, it needs to be investigated whether this is

satisfactory. It would seem that two weeks may be sufficiently long to establish the aims of the intended education, but that a substantially longer time is needed to demonstrate that an 'efficient education' has been, and is being, provided.

The manner in which the home educating family can demonstrate this efficiency also needs to be clarified; this would, from necessity, be less specific and more open to interpretation by all parties concerned in order to allow different concepts of education to be encompassed.

6.2 Criteria for evaluating a child's efficient education

Details of the responses to question 9, which tried to assess the criteria most often used by LEA officials when determining the efficiency of home education are given in Tables 6.2 (primary responses) and 6.3 (secondary responses). Each of the sections in question nine was answered by between 56 and 59 of the respondents at both primary and secondary levels: not all of the LEA officials who responded to this question answered each section of the question.

Table 6.2: The criteria for assessing a home educating family's educational situation (children of primary school age)

Question 9: The following are criteria which LEAs most mention as being relevant when assessing each family's educational situation. Please estimate the importance your LEA attaches to each one.	Number of responding LEAs				Percentage of responding LEAs			
	very important	quite important	not important	total	very important	quite important	not important	total
Formal qualifications of the parent	7	36	16	59	11.9	61.0	27.1	100
The child's estimated ability	13	31	15	59	22.0	52.5	25.4	100
General social background of the home	10	31	15	56	17.9	55.4	26.8	100
Estimation of the parent's ability to teach the child	45	12	0	57	78.9	21.1	0.0	100
Child's current academic attainments	9	33	16	58	15.5	56.9	27.6	100
Facilities in the home (e.g. place for quiet study)	37	22	0	59	62.7	37.3	0.0	100
Parent's ability to communicate with the official	4	40	14	58	6.9	69.0	24.1	100
Parent's ability to communicate with the child	51	6	1	58	87.9	10.3	1.7	100

Table 6.2 (continued): The criteria for assessing a home educating family's educational situation (children of primary school age)

Question 9: The following are criteria which LEAs most mention as being relevant when assessing each family's educational situation. Please estimate the importance your LEA attaches to each one.	Number of responding LEAs				Percentage of responding LEAs			
	very important	quite important	not important	total	very important	quite important	not important	total
Child's ability to communicate	31	24	3	58	53.4	41.4	5.2	100
Level of community reserves (access to libraries, museums etc.)	11	39	9	59	18.6	66.1	15.3	100
Parent's attitude to the child's integration with peers	43	16	0	59	72.9	27.1	0.0	100
Happiness of the child	50	7	0	57	87.7	12.3	0.0	100
Parent's awareness of educational materials	32	25	1	58	55.2	43.1	1.7	100
Child's involvement in out-of-home activities (clubs, church etc.)	26	31	2	59	44.1	52.5	3.4	100
Correspondence course being undertaken by child	3	14	41	58	5.2	24.1	70.7	100
Parent or child maintains a record of child's current work	49	10	0	59	83.1	16.9	0.0	100

Table 6.3: The criteria for assessing a home educating family's educational situation (children of secondary school age)

Question 9: The following are criteria which LEAs most mention as being relevant when assessing each family's educational situation. Please estimate the importance your LEA attaches to each one.	Number of responding LEAs				Percentage of responding LEAs			
	very important	quite important	not important	total	very important	quite important	not important	total
Formal qualifications of the parent	9	34	15	58	15.5	58.6	25.9	100
The child's estimated ability	12	30	16	58	20.7	51.7	27.6	100
General social background of the home	10	29	17	56	17.9	51.8	30.4	100
Estimation of the parent's ability to teach the child	47	9	0	56	83.9	16.1	0.0	100
Child's current academic attainments	11	32	14	57	19.3	56.1	24.6	100
Facilities in the home (e.g. place for quiet study)	37	20	1	58	63.8	34.5	1.7	100
Parent's ability to communicate with the official	7	33	18	58	12.1	56.9	31.0	100
Parent's ability to communicate with the child	52	6	0	58	89.7	10.3	0.0	100

Table 6.3 (continued): The criteria for assessing a home educating family's educational situation (children of secondary school age)

Question 9: The following are criteria which LEAs most mention as being relevant when assessing each family's educational situation. Please estimate the importance your LEA attaches to each one.	Number of responding LEAs				Percentage of responding LEAs			
	very important	quite important	not important	total	very important	quite important	not important	total
Child's ability to communicate	31	25	2	58	53.4	43.1	3.4	100
Level of community reserves (access to libraries, museums etc.)	14	37	7	58	24.1	63.8	12.1	100
Parent's attitude to the child's integration with peers	39	19	0	58	67.2	32.8	0.0	100
Happiness of the child	49	9	0	58	84.5	15.5	0.0	100
Parent's awareness of educational materials	33	23	1	57	57.9	40.4	1.8	100
Child's involvement in out-of-home activities (clubs, church etc.)	22	34	2	58	37.9	58.6	3.4	100
Correspondence course being undertaken by child	7	18	33	58	12.1	31.0	56.9	100
Parent or child maintains a record of child's current work	42	16	0	58	72.4	27.6	0.0	100

A majority of respondents at primary and secondary levels believed a number of criteria to be very important when monitoring home education:

- Estimation of the parent's ability to teach the child (81%);
 - Facilities in the home (e.g. place for quiet study) (63%);
 - Parent's ability to communicate with the child (89%);
 - Child's ability to communicate (53%);
 - Parent's attitude to the child's integration with peers (76%);
 - Happiness of the child (86%);
 - Parent's awareness of educational materials (57%);
- and
- Parent or child maintains a record of child's current work (78%).

All other listed criteria were believed to be quite important by the majority of respondents, with the exception of 'correspondence course being undertaken by child' which was believed to be unimportant by a majority of respondents (64%); the response at secondary level (57%) demonstrated that although correspondence courses were considered not important by the majority of respondents, they were more important than at primary level (71%).

There were some very strong measures of association. One of these was between the importance of the child's current academic attainments and the child's estimated ability (primary=0.54, secondary=0.67). Also strong (primary=0.59, secondary=0.61) was the relationship of the parent's attitude to the child's integration with peers and the involvement in out-of-home activities, reflecting the importance the respondents attached to the child having input other than the immediate family and its environment. The estimation of the parent's ability to teach the child and the formal qualifications of the parent also showed a strong relationship (primary=0.42, secondary=0.32) as did the ability of the child to communicate and the child's involvement in out-of-home activities at primary level (primary=0.47, secondary=0.24).

In the interviews, LEA officials expressed concern about the formal qualifications of the parent, socialisation, and both academic attainment and ability of the child. This concern was reflected in the responses to question 9 and they are individually addressed below.

6.2.1 Formal qualifications of the parents

Of the nine LEA officials responding that formal qualifications of home educators were very important for

efficient education at secondary level, no obvious relationship between the LEAs could be established. Six were county LEAs and three were urban but they were from different areas of the United Kingdom; five were in southern England, two in central and northern England, one was in Scotland and one in Northern Ireland.

When the primary and secondary responses were compared they were similar. However, three of the LEA officials who responded to the primary questionnaire and believed the formal qualifications of the parents (or tutors) to be important, either did not have any home educated children at secondary level or did not respond to the secondary questionnaire. In all, this made twelve LEAs in which the officials were concerned about the qualifications of the parents either at primary and/or secondary level and, of these, four were in Scotland (half of the Scottish responses).

Some of the additional responses at the end of question 9 show that a few respondents had already decided on their interpretation of the law with respect to the required educational knowledge of the home educators:

The curriculum that the parent offers and the timetable followed by the child are crucial;

Parent has prepared a programme of work covering all areas of the curriculum and aspects of development;

Very few parents have formal qualifications. Correspondence course is considered desirable, but not essential - depends on parental income;

Knowledge of current trends in education;

Parent's/Child's attitude to implications of national examinations/secondary curriculum.

It would be difficult for home educators to fulfil these requirements of LEA officials without perhaps being trained teachers, readers of education sections of the quality press, or viewers of programmes which handle education issues on television.

Ray and Wartes, when analysing data from research into the environments and methods of teaching of home educators in Washington, discovered that children having 'no contact with a certified teacher' scored highly on academic attainment tests and that 'parent education level was not a strong predictor of test scores' of the home educated child (1991, p46). To date in the United Kingdom, there has not been any research, or legal clarification on the necessity or otherwise for home educators to hold any academic qualifications: there has been a general acceptance in the courts that qualifications are not necessary. If the underlying attitude of the LEA official is to feel that more formal qualifications or curriculum are desirable, this could be an indication of one party having prior concepts that are different from those of the other party. It could thus lead to conflict.

6.2.2 Academic achievement and ability of the child

At secondary level, there were only eleven LEA officials who would agree in principle to home education for slow-learners and lower academic achievers from any social background. These were the LEA officials who responded 'not important' to the second and the fifth sections of question 9 (the child's estimated ability and child's current academic attainments) and 'not important' or 'quite important' to section three (general social background of the home). The LEAs involved, did not fall into a geographical pattern, three being counties in the south of England, one urban from the south, one central England county, four northern England metropolitan districts, one northern England county and one rural from Scotland.

In the primary questionnaires, there was also a direct connection between the responses to the child's estimated ability and the child's current academic attainments: 11 (73%) of those respondents feeling that the ability was not important also felt that neither the child's current attainments nor the social background of the home were important. These respondents, with one exception, worked for the same LEAs as those with similar responses at secondary level. This response may reflect the view given by the LEA official in Interview 2 (section 3.4) who

believed that progress should be seen to have been made throughout the year by each home educated child, irrespective of ability and the level of average academic achievement for the age of the child concerned.

There was also, however, a strong association between those respondents believing both the child's estimated ability and the child's current academic attainments to be important (primary = 0.54, secondary = 0.67). This may reflect a belief that a home educated child should reach the level of average academic attainment; this is further discussed in Chapter seven. The responses to question 9 would indicate two distinct groups of thought, those respondents believing academic attainment and ability to be important and those believing them to be unimportant.

6.2.3 Socialisation

Peer group socialisation was often mentioned as being important by LEA officials interviewed during this research. Craft et al. mentioned the 'process of socialisation' as being the period when 'the accepted roles and values are absorbed and internalised'; these were the 'adult roles and values in a particular social and cultural context' (1972, pp4-5). Burton interpreted 'socialisation' as a denial of self in social situations and as an adjustment:

To all environments, all relationships, all deprivations of self. What is required is the willingness to learn, conform and accept the 'dictates' of society and betters.

(1990, p31)

Parsons defined socialisation as the preparation of an individual for a role in society. He believed it to be:

Commitment to the implementation of the broad values of society, and commitment to the performance of a specific type of role within the structure of society.

(1959, p298)

Parsons also thought that socialisation could occur in many locations:

Within the family, informal 'peer groups', churches and sundry voluntary organisations.

(Ibid, p299)

but the main 'socializing agency' was seen to be the school. Craft et al. also distinguished between the home and the school:

As two agencies of socialisation, the former being essentially small-scale and domestic in character, and the latter, larger and more overtly 'educational'.

(1972, p5)

They do not assess, however, the relative socialisation value of clubs and societies that are neither part of the home nor the school environment. Parsons (1955) pointed out that peer groups are important because of their voluntary nature; belonging to family and school is seen as non-voluntary. Lambert (1976) found that in the secondary school peer group, selected for the research, the social grouping depended upon:

- the junior school which the children had attended;

- the social class of the family;
- subject groups selected by the children;
- academic achievement.

Sutherland and Strivens both pointed to a cultural belief in the beneficial effects of the peer group and in the desirability of the uniformity of experience and that neither of these beliefs had been validated. There is an 'unexamined assumption that all must pass through the same learning experiences' (Sutherland, 1988, p66) and a:

Deeply rooted belief within British culture that the experiences of school should play a central part in the character formation of the young person.

(Strivens, 1985, p196)

Jackson believed the relationships at school to be very different from those at home, and school to be a preparation for the transition from home to the workplace:

The dominant relationship in the classroom is quite impersonal when compared with that which goes on in the home.

(1968, p29)

Students must learn to take orders from adults who do not know them very well and whom they do not themselves know intimately. For the first time in the child's life, power, that has personal consequences for the child himself is wielded by a relative stranger.

(Ibid, p32)

The belief that it is good for children of the same age to be together in a formal setting was endorsed by the responses to parts 11 and 14 of question 9.

Table 6.4 which illustrates that many of the respondents considered socialisation to be important, is compiled from the data given in Tables 6.2 and 6.3, the sections 'parents' attitude to the child's integration with peers' and 'child's involvement in out-of-home activities'. The respondents who answered that integration and involvement were regarded as being either important or very important placed great emphasis (100%) on the child mixing with children of his/her own age - the peer group, in organised activities.

Research undertaken in the United States, by Bliss (1989), Ray and Wartes (1991) and Taylor (1986) has questioned whether socialisation, this preparation for constructive human relationships in adult society, need take place in school. Taylor has indicated that home educated children are as 'sociable' as children who go to school:

Insofar as self-concept is a reflector of socialisation, it would appear that few home-schooling children are socially deprived. Critics of the home school should not urge self-concept and socialisation rationales. These factors apparently favor home schoolers over the conventionally schooled population.

(1986, p187)

Ray and Wartes also believed home educated children to be socially adept:

The home-schooled also appear to be at no great risk with respect to socialization. The research indicates that their self-concept is high; they are socially/emotionally well-adjusted; they are involved in many activities that are predictors of adult leadership; they are consistently

Table 6.4: The importance of socialisation as a criterion for assessing a home educating family's educational situation

	Number of responding LEAs		Percentage of responding LEAs	
	LEA officials indicating 'very important' or 'quite important'	LEA officials indicating 'not important'	total	LEA officials indicating 'very important' or 'quite important'
<u>A: Children of primary school age</u>				
Involvement in out-of-home activities	57	2	59	96.6
Attitude to integration with peers	59	0	59	100
<u>B: Children of secondary school age</u>				
Involvement in out-of-home activities	56	2	58	96.6
Attitude to integration with peers	58	0	58	100

engaged in social activities with peers and adults.

(1991, p57)

Some home educators would argue, however, that it is not peer socialisation which is needed for true socialisation to take place: an integration of the child with many age groups, forming a more natural extension of the family into society is required:

We gradually realised that the sort of socialization that you get at school sets you up for school and not much else. In life you meet a number of different people in a variety of relationships. When a child does not have to adapt to the thirty children and one adult relationship of the classroom she is better able to cope with those multiplicity of relationships. It is not often in life that we as adults have to deal with people or situations as a member of a squad of thirty - unless we join the armed forces. Also, a child can be more open with adults if she has not had to learn the peculiarities of the child-teacher relationship. This belief in the socialization aspect of schooling - held by so many people to be one of its indisputable benefits - is one of its greatest delusions. We only need the socialization that schooling brings because we have schools.

(Bendell, 1987, pp42-43)

Bliss, working in the United States, stated that:

There are two types of socialization: positive and negative. Positive socialization helps a child to grow and develop to his full potential in life. When a child's personality develops in a warm atmosphere of love and acceptance, he will usually socialize well with all age groups, including his own. Negative socialization, on the other hand, separates a child from his parents and restricts a child's socializing primarily to his age-mates. This can have a detrimental and longterm effect on a child's potential sociability among a wide age disbursement.

(1989, p21)

The important fundamental difference in attitudes of home educators and LEA officials towards the 'socialisation'

of home educated children deserves further research, as it has in the United States. There is much discussion, but no United Kingdom data, although Lowden (1988, p74) believed socialisation to be a priority among home educating parents and Webb (1989, p130) noted the positive social abilities of home educated people in adult life.

6.2.4 Criteria suggested as important by LEA officials

Other criteria than those listed in question 9 (for an efficient education) which were mentioned by the respondents, centred on the responsibilities that the parent has to fulfil and the feeling that the parent cannot achieve an efficient education without the support of others. Specific responses included:

Ability of the parent to listen/accept advice;

The parent's serious intention to educate;

Parents' ability to find qualified teachers from a recognised pool;

Extended family/friend support. Parent's attitude towards adviser involvement;

Parent's perceptions of what the learning process involves;

Access to support (groups or trained teacher) if parents have no formal knowledge/training for teaching;

Whether parent has genuine reasons or is just trying to keep the child at home for dubious psychological reasons;

Access to groups such as Education Otherwise;

Parent's understanding of the expectations of the authority.

These comments showed thought and concern for the children involved. One of them did, however, imply that qualified teachers need to be found, which is not within the current application of the law. Taking this stance with a parent who is aware of the law is embarking on a path towards conflict. All the additional criteria listed by the respondents are given in Appendix 11.

Bliss agreed that the abilities of the parent were extremely important and that home education was not suitable for:

1. Parents who are not willing or able to maintain a proper attitude;

2. Parents who are not interested in or able to be faithful to a continued commitment;

3. Parents who are not willing or able to properly equip themselves for the task.

(1989, p44)

She later commented:

To believe that everyone can undertake the task is naive.

(Ibid, p114)

The respondents to the questionnaire would seem to agree with Bliss in that the parent must have a positive attitude, a commitment and well organised resources, in order to provide a suitable education at home.

6.3 LEA officials' views of why people home educate

Question 10 attempted to establish the LEA official's perception of why people decide to home educate. There were fewer responses to question 10 at secondary level, perhaps indicating the lack of importance that these officials placed on establishing the motives of home educators at this level. It is, however, clear that the obligation placed on LEAs is only to ascertain whether an efficient full-time education is taking place. Only 49 (85%) of the respondents at primary level, from a total of 58, attempted to establish the reasons why parents wish to home educate. At secondary level, only 44 (83%) of the respondents, from a total of 53 assessed the reasons why a parent wishes to home educate. However, some of those respondents who indicated that they did not assess the reasons why parents wish to home educate, completed other sections of question 10.

Table 6.5 gives details of the responses to question 10. At both primary and secondary levels, the four major reasons why a child is home educated were perceived by the respondents to be:

- the parent is dissatisfied with the existing school provision;
- the parent claims to be a better provider of education than the schools;
- the parent holds strong religious convictions;

Table 6.5 Assessment by LEA officials of the reasons why a parent wishes to home educate

A: Children of primary school age	Number of responding LEAs indicating:										total
	Does the authority assess the reasons why a parent wishes to home educate?. If 'YES' which of the following are most frequent in your authority					Percentage of responding LEAs					
Question 10:	often	sometimes	rarely	never	total	often	sometimes	rarely	never	total	
Home is remote from nearest school	1	3	17	21	42	2.4	7.1	40.5	50.0	100	
Parent's wish to lead an isolated lifestyle	2	18	10	13	43	4.7	41.9	23.3	30.2	100	
Parent's dissatisfaction with existing school provision	16	28	3	1	48	33.3	58.3	6.3	2.1	100	
Claim that the child is intellectually gifted	5	17	15	6	43	11.6	39.5	34.9	14.0	100	
The child has psychological problems	0	12	21	12	45	0.0	26.7	46.7	26.7	100	
Based on religious grounds	18	15	9	5	47	38.3	31.9	19.1	10.6	100	
Based on ideological (but non-religious grounds)	5	25	9	8	47	10.6	53.2	19.1	17.0	100	
Claim that the child has special educational needs (e.g. physical handicap)	1	8	22	14	45	2.2	17.8	48.9	31.1	100	
Claim that the parent would be a 'better' provider of education than the schools	21	23	6	0	50	42.0	46.0	12.0	0.0	100	
Claim that the family is geographically mobile	0	6	14	24	44	0.0	13.6	31.8	54.5	100	

Table 6.5 (continued): Assessment by LEA officials of the reasons why a parent wishes to home educate

B: Children of secondary school age	Number of responding LEAs indicating:										Percentage of responding LEAs			
	often	sometimes	rarely	never	total	often	sometimes	rarely	never	total				
Question 10: Does the authority assess the reasons why a parent wishes to home educate?. If 'YES' which of the following are most frequent in your authority														
Home is remote from nearest school	2	3	14	24	43	4.7	7.0	32.6	55.8	100				
Parent's wish to lead an isolated lifestyle	4	18	13	9	44	9.1	40.9	29.5	20.5	100				
Parent's dissatisfaction with existing school provision	17	26	5	0	48	35.4	54.2	10.4	0.0	100				
Claim that the child is intellectually gifted	4	19	16	5	44	9.1	43.2	36.4	11.4	100				
The child has psychological problems	1	17	18	8	44	2.3	38.6	40.9	18.2	100				
Based on religious grounds	16	18	9	3	46	34.8	39.1	19.6	6.5	100				
Based on ideological (but non-religious grounds)	9	22	7	8	46	19.6	47.8	15.2	17.4	100				
Claim that the child has special educational needs (e.g. physical handicap)	3	8	26	7	44	6.8	18.2	59.1	15.9	100				
Claim that the parent would be a 'better' provider of education than the schools	21	27	1	1	50	42.0	54.0	2.0	2.0	100				
Claim that the family is geographically mobile geographically mobile	2	6	13	22	43	4.7	14.0	30.2	51.2	100				

- the parent has strong ideological (non-religious) grounds.

91.6% of the responses to question 10 at primary level (89.6% at secondary level) indicated that home educators were often or sometimes dissatisfied with the existing provision. It was not possible, in a questionnaire of necessarily limited size which investigated many facets of home education, to explore the roots of the dissatisfaction: further detailed research needs to be undertaken.

Forty five (51%) of the 87 respondents at both primary and secondary levels stated that parents 'often' or 'sometimes' claimed that the child was intellectually gifted. Although the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) has been in existence for many years, the provision by LEAs for gifted children is, in many instances, inadequate, when compared with the scale of provision for remedial and statemented children (section 4.3). One adviser from the Midlands thought that the provision for gifted children in the schools was not as good as it should be. An Assistant Chief Education Officer in one LEA denied the existence of gifted children, believing them to be temporarily accelerated by parental pressure.

Home education for children with psychological problems was only seen by a few respondents to be 'sometimes' a

reason and mostly 'rarely' or 'never'. This is at odds with Knox's view (1988, 1989). The borderline between school phobia or a refusal to attend school can be confused with truancy, especially when the child has a history of non-attendance (section 4.3). A parent declaring a wish to home educate a child, having a history of truancy/non-attendance, can find it difficult to establish that the intention is genuine. This lack of apparent delineation between truancy/non-attendance/home education had been experienced by the following LEA official who felt that it was necessary to have:

A closer scrutiny at the reasons for opting out and whether some parents see this as a means of avoiding legal action for truancy.

Another LEA official expressed concern over:

Non-school attendance pupils who opt for education otherwise in their final years of schooling.

Although this was rarely mentioned by LEA officials and must consequently only affect a small group of parents who express the intention to home educate, it can lead to a poor relationship between the LEA official and the family concerned. If unresolved, there can also be legal action taken for reasons of non-attendance. This needs further research and clarification, following the introduction of the Children Act 1989. Suggestions have been made in section 7.2 for eliminating some of the problems when establishing the validity of a parent's intention to home educate.

The remoteness of the home, geographical mobility and children with special educational needs were not reasons given frequently by home educators to the respondents. In the returns, the claim that a family was geographically mobile was only 'sometimes' made and never 'often'. 73 (84%) of the respondents at both primary and secondary levels believed mobility to be 'rarely' or 'never' a factor. When preparing the questionnaire, it had been anticipated that traveller children and fairground children would not be considered as home educated. With more than five thousand of such children not attending school (section 4.3.5), it was interesting that only two respondents referred to 'itinerants' or 'traveller children' in the context of a questionnaire on home education. It was evident during interview two (section 3.4) that an official felt home education not to be a choice for a traveller family due to the conditions in which they were living.

The issue of educational provision for gypsy/travelling/fairground people is in itself a complex issue, but with the many approaches to education which are encompassed by home education, a gypsy-culture centred education could be included and accommodated within home education.

In an edition of Education Otherwise, one member from London commented that:

The EO membership is almost entirely white in my experience Why are there so few black people in EO? Personally, I have not met one single black EO family in the three years I have been a member and I find this a serious deficiency.

(Education Otherwise, April 1989, p40)

The legal adviser of Education Otherwise expressed in a telephone interview that many of the legal problems occurred when the home educating parents were not middle class or academic; cultural minority groups were either unaware that they could home educate or were apparently discouraged from doing so.

Additional reasons to those specified in the text of the questionnaire for parents choosing the option to home educate (as perceived by LEA officials) were:

Sometimes the child has a special talent e.g. ice-skating, gymnastics and these have to be coached at particular times of the day;

Pressure from 'Education Otherwise';

Child unable to cope with peer group pressure in school. 'Good life' syndrome;

Child has been truant or in other disciplinary trouble at school, particularly late in school career;

Claim that child needs a different e.g. non-authoritarian education.

The responses to question 10 demonstrated that LEA officials believed home educators to often be people with strong convictions, such as religious and ideological lifestyles, and/or who felt that they could provide a 'better' education.

6.4 Instances of home education which have presented special difficulties to LEA officials

Question 15 enquired about the instances of special difficulty which LEA officials had encountered when monitoring home education. At primary level 31 respondents (55.4%), and at secondary level 26 respondents (48.1%), had experienced problems; they divided into eight categories:

- Definition of efficient education;
- Home education and truancy;
- Family difficulties;
- The ability of parents to home educate;
- The cost to the authority;
- Lack of parent cooperation;
- Provision for examinations and qualifications;
- Continuity of monitoring when families move.

These are further discussed below.

6.4.1 Definition of efficient education

The difficulties involved in the definition of 'an efficient full-time education' have already been addressed in sections 1.1 and 2.5.1. They would seem to centre on each individual's interpretation of the phrase, whether home educator or LEA official. When home

educators follow a similar educational approach to that generally practised in schools, few problems arise in the monitoring situation. However, problems sometimes occur when home educators believe that autonomous learning is best for the child concerned.

It is my perception that there is a thin dividing line between being a good parent and some forms of autonomous learning. An interested parent, whether the child attends school or not, will take the child to events in the area and include extra curricular events in the weekly schedule; there would also be time put aside for communication between all members of the family. An autonomous approach to home education would involve similar activities, but it would be important to have great variety of experiences with reflection upon them. In this way, over a number of years, these separate, varied experiences would be intertwined, leading to a development of the ability of the child to communicate with and comprehend the world around. It is the quantity of new experiences when combined with reflection upon them, followed by discussion, understanding and assimilation which creates the educational situation.

The following comments by two LEA officials demonstrated difficulties that can arise when monitoring autonomous learning:

A parent who believed erroneously that children should not be helped to learn to read and write until they asked. The seven year old is only now being helped by an adviser;

Family's view was that education 'on the land' (i.e. looking after plants, animals, home baking etc.) was sufficient for their children - saw no point in most school subjects. This view clashed with the Education Department's view of what was best for the children. Situation resolved by family leaving area.

In these examples, it was difficult to establish whether the education was unacceptable to the LEA official because it was more unconventional, whether there was no educative reflection upon the activities which the children experienced or whether there was too limited a range of experiences suitable for the ages of the children involved.

6.4.2 Home education and truancy

Another problem which LEA officials experienced was when the intention to home educate was expressed by parents of a child who had already had a bad attendance record at school. This has already been discussed in sections 2.5.4, 4.3.2 and 5.6, but further relevant comments were made in response to question 15:

Avoidance of legal proceedings re irregular attendance at school;

Non-school attendance pupils who opt for education otherwise in their final years of schooling;

The problem of the occasional conflict of opinions, within the Authority, as to how to

handle the issue of a school refuser. Should home education be allowed, or should school attendance be enforced?

This is a difficult issue to resolve and needs further research and discussion, following the implementation of the Children Act 1989. Some solutions have been suggested in Chapter seven.

6.4.3 Family difficulties

In all areas of education there are sometimes children who experience family difficulties, such as divorce or child abuse; these family difficulties are endemic in society and can affect the level of education the child is capable of receiving. When children from such families attend school, there is temporary relief from the family environment; when a child is home educated, this is not the case. One LEA official mentioned a home educating family where there was suspected child abuse and the children were taken into care. Another LEA official recorded an instance 'where sexual abuse was alleged'. These comments emphasised the need for regular monitoring of children educated at home. Education Otherwise have recently recognised this to be an issue (Education Otherwise, 1991, April, pp 2-3 and June, p 13). The names and telephone numbers of Childline and Kidscape, two organisations which support the rights of children, are now given in each copy of Education Otherwise.

Other doubts about the family, which were expressed by LEA officials, centred on the mental climate within the family:

Parents using child to fulfil parent's own needs;

Concern when parents keep children at home to meet parental needs, rather than through any commitment to the child's educational needs;

Where a child is thought to be in a totally inadequate home or in moral danger;

Where the LEA adviser and EWO thought that the children in the family were at risk of emotional abuse and their development was therefore impaired;

Major difficulties have arisen where the family itself cannot agree on home education. Particularly difficult if parents are separated;

In cases where agreement has been given for 'home education' and a financial crisis arises within the family and it is found that tutors are not now being used.

Each instance of home education should address the educational needs of the child concerned. However, the Director of Education in the Perry case (1985) set a precedent when specifying that the court was to consider the efficiency of education and in so doing was to reject the reports of the family doctor and a psychologist who believed that enforced attendance at school would impair the development and education of the child concerned.

It is my view that, in instances of home education, it is principally the education which should be monitored, but when the emotional, physical or mental health of a home

educated child is in danger, the situation should be monitored by psychologists and EWOs when necessary, as with children who attend school and have such needs. Clarification of this aspect of the monitoring of home education may arise in court cases connected with education supervision, in the Children Act 1989.

6.4.4 The ability of parents to home educate

The type and level of education which can be provided in and around the home depends largely upon the parent or tutor who is in close contact with the child. If the type of education expected by the LEA is academic, highly structured and similar to that at school, academic qualifications of the educators can be considered important. This has no standing in the law relating to home education, where a necessity for the parent to hold academic qualifications in order to provide home education has not been established (section 6.2.1).

Woods and Barrow have given a broad definition of a teacher, which could be applicable to all educational situations. They believe that it should be someone who can broaden the experiences of a child. It is the duty of:

The teacher to enlarge the horizons of the child and to initiate him into experiences that he

would never have come across if education were confined to an exploration of his experience.

(1975, p120)

LEA officials have considered problems to arise when:

Parents who are clearly not capable of educating their children at home (This authority thought that qualifications were very important in response to question 9);

There is increasing concern about encouragement given by 'Education Otherwise' to some parents to educate their children at home when there would seem very little prospect they can offer the conditions, resources and long term commitment needed;

Children with deep-seated learning difficulties. Can the parents provide appropriate education?.

The conflict that may arise between home educators and LEA officials can be rooted in the definition of 'suitable educator' for a home educated child.

6.4.5 The cost to the LEA of monitoring home education

In both the interviews and the questionnaire, the cost to the LEA of monitoring home education was raised. It was felt that, especially with the introduction of the National Curriculum and testing and the recently introduced GCSE examinations, the resources of the advisory staff were already overstretched (section 3.3.2). One LEA official commented:

The requirement to satisfy the authority that education is being carried out effectively 'otherwise than at school' means that valuable adviser time is spent on children who are to all intents and purposes not the concern of the authority. Per pupil, they receive far more

attention than the average child in school of the authority's support services!

When first contacting both the DES and the SED, it was apparent that there was no fixed policy on this matter. After demonstrating that the financial aspect was causing some resistance towards the monitoring of home education, both the SED and the DES clarified the situation. They have both agreed that if home educated children are included by each LEA in the country's educational statistics which are compiled each year, then money will be received by the LEA per capita. When comparing the numbers of home educated children known to the LEAs responding to the questionnaire, with those listed in both the DES and SED returns for the academic year 1988, it was quite apparent that there was a discrepancy and that not all numbers of home educated children were being sent to the SED and the DES. The DES has recently specified that (ref: private correspondence, Appendix 5):

It is unlikely that any LEA would, except inadvertently, exclude home educated children from its return to the Department, as it would lose out financially thereby. Revenue Support Grant includes an element for children educated otherwise than at school. This element is calculated on the basis of LEAs' returns of all such children although, as you have already noted, the returns do not distinguish among those educated at home, in hospital, and in social service department establishments.

If those LEAs which have not previously included home educated children in the returns to the DES and the SED now do so, in theory, more money should be available for the monitoring of home education.

6.4.6 Lack of parent cooperation

It would probably help both home educators and LEA officials if there were better guidelines for monitoring children who are home educated. At present, parents can seem to be 'harassed' by LEA officials (section 1.2), when there is not common ground for deciding on the efficiency of the education provided. On the other hand, LEA officials can be hindered by uncooperative parents; such parents may want to limit contact with the LEA officials to a bare minimum and thus it is difficult to make an assessment of the home education the child receives.

The following responses demonstrated some of these problems:

Parents unwilling to be monitored;

Particular cases of non-cooperation by parents e.g. refusal to discuss child's work with LEA representative, refusal to show examples of work or even satisfy the authority that any provision at all is being made;

There have been occasions where parents have not been cooperative in allowing assessment of the child's education to take place It is difficult to assess whether the education provided is suitable if access is not allowed. In the case of one family, they come on a regular basis to the offices.

Some suggestions for monitoring home education are given in Chapter seven.

6.4.7 Provision for examinations and qualifications

Parents and LEA officials are concerned about the lack of provision of recognised examinations for home educated children. Since the introduction of the GCSE examinations, which in part consist of coursework, the choice of subjects available to home educated children has become more limited each year. When my local Member of Parliament contacted the Department of Education and Science, enquiring into the provision of GCSEs for external candidates, it was stated (letter dated August 1989):

It is true that from 1991 all GCSE syllabuses will be required to include a coursework element. This will be reinforced by the implementation of the National Curriculum whereby teacher assessment will contribute to the overall assessment of pupil performance. The Examining Groups and the Schools Examinations and Assessment Council will, however, be considering what provision to make for pupils who, for whatever reasons, are not attending school.

In a later letter (September, 1989), from the Education and Social Services Section, Research Division of the House of Commons Library, again in response to a letter from my local Member of Parliament, it was stated that:

All external candidates will need to come to some arrangement about the assessment of coursework.

and:

It is the individual examination boards which are currently considering how assessment procedures for external candidates will work. Where children being educated at home are concerned there will be a need for an external assessor. It is

possible that a local school could fulfill this function, or an approved teacher.

Bentley of Learning Link (Appendix 2) believed that by 1992 there would be few possibilities for external candidates, but he monitors the changing provision by each of the examining groups and makes the information available to home educators.

6.4.8 Continuity of monitoring when families move

Only one LEA official specifically mentioned the problem of the continuity of monitoring the home education of a child who moves from one LEA area to another. A family which is not considered by the courts or the LEA to be home educating in an efficient way can quite legally continue to home educate. This is effected by moving the residence of the child to another educational area. A great deal of time, work and stress is thus rendered futile, except that the particular family is no longer the responsibility of the LEA concerned. It does not improve the level of efficient education for the child. Families which move for this reason rarely leave forwarding addresses for the LEA.

In some other countries, home educators are required by law to register with the local education office. It would be difficult and perhaps inadvisable to introduce and enforce this in the United Kingdom until all LEAs respond

positively to home education and demonstrate a full knowledge of the law.

6.5 The adequacy of the laws relating to home education.

Fifty-six (52.3%) of the 107 respondents to question 14, believed the laws relating to home education to be adequate. The other respondents thought that there were improvements to be made. Some of the suggestions centred on the dividing lines between the responsibilities and rights of both the parents and those of the LEA:

I think this depends on your point of view as to whether the parent or society is responsible for educating children. If the former YES [law adequate], if the latter, NO;

The whole area is unclear, particularly in regard to the LEA's responsibilities and 'rights';

Responsibility to fall on parents to demonstrate satisfactory arrangements and a clarification and guidance on what these are likely to be;

It needs to be more precise. Parents and LEAs are vulnerable, since they are left to interpret the legislation which is very imprecise, e.g. discrepancy between children registered at school and subsequently withdrawn as opposed to children never registered at school;

It would perhaps be in the best interest of ensuring that adequate provision is being made if local education authorities were given a right, rather than a duty, to assess parental arrangements. This would assist in cases of non-cooperation by parents believed to be making inadequate arrangements.

Comments by other LEA officials reflected the differences in the interpretation of the terms 'education' and 'standards':

Definition of 'efficient full-time education' requires clarification;

A legal obligation for parents to reach and maintain standards. HMI inspection and approval?;

I should like to see a firmer control of the organisation of the child's work. Children need to develop 'work habits' and the authority has no grounds for insisting on any 'rigour'. Parents are not significantly accountable;

Parents should be subject to the National Curriculum and Testing conditions in arrangements for their offspring's education with possibly other standard tests;

Standards of parental expertise, knowledge, experience, training and qualifications should be set;

Legislation focusing on:

1. Level of tuition/qualifications of tutor/parent;
2. Use of correspondence courses;
3. Implementing criteria associated with testing at 7 yrs, 11 yrs and 14 yrs as proposed by the government;
4. Providing suitable lists of books/resource material;

It should be easier for an LEA and a parent to decide whether the education being provided is suitable to a child's 'age, ability and aptitude'. Clearer guidelines needed;

Some definition of what is deemed to be 'efficient' education.

It is unclear at present who should keep a record of the child's work. Many home educators now realise that it is relevant (and interesting) to maintain a record of the child's educational experiences. If notes are made by the parents, it is much easier for LEA officials to assess

the type of education being provided. There were, however, respondents who had experienced problems:

Regular reports should be mandatory. Access to inspect arrangements should be mandatory in terms of immediacy rather than by appointment only;

It would help to have more straightforward legislation e.g. direct obligation on parent to cooperate with LEA in provision of information etc. Under present law, there is inbuilt bias towards arrangements less than satisfactory as 'least of possible evils'.

Problems LEA officials experienced with home educators also extended to the manner in which the efficiency of the home education provided can be assessed. At present, effective monitoring relies heavily on both the LEA officials and the parents collaborating; this collaboration can be too dependent on the personalities of the parties involved. Some respondents would prefer LEAs not to take part in the decision making, but to be involved in a more advisory capacity:

The responsibility of licensing education at home should be given to a tribunal of some sort, composed of independent but qualified persons advised by public officials (e.g. LEA advisers). Only such a body could have the status which allowed refusal of applications by parents. An LEA inspector/adviser is too exposed to media criticism to be able to apply properly rigorous standards in the interests of the children concerned;

... a right of appeal by parents to an Independent Committee similar to that existing in relation to school admissions under the 1980 & 1981 Education Acts may be a worthwhile change.

Greater clarity introduced to remove the apparent conflict between prosecution of non-attenders at school and the acceptance of home education;

It was evident that these LEA officials felt a need for mediation, a form of transactional resolution, before recourse to judicial decision. These respondents wished to formalise the monitoring of home education by involving tribunals or independent committees. There was a wish to avoid conflict, problems and inequality of treatment. Other respondents urged clearer guidelines to be set by either the central departments of education (DES, DENI, SED) or the courts:

Better guidelines from the DES, possibly in the form of a circular, would be helpful to the authority, in particular on how the authority should satisfy itself that the education being provided is satisfactory;

National guidelines so that all applications are considered on the same basis i.e. all authorities.

At a meeting held at the Department of Education and Science in April 1989, these feelings were conveyed to those present. The representatives of the DES felt that the different forms of education which home education encompasses did not permit hard and fast rules for monitoring; it would be difficult to set guidelines as this would reduce the number of educational options available to home educators. More recently (ref: letter May 1990, Appendix 5), they have stated:

It would however be difficult to provide formal guidance and still preserve the wide latitude currently permitted to parents in the preparation of schemes.

The view held by the DES that guidelines are too limiting was also that of Blau and Meyer:

Detailed rules, even if they improve performance,
prevent adaption to changing situations.
(1971, p59)

Thomas also agreed with the DES and Blau and Meyer, when
stating that:

Rules promote black-white thinking, which
encourages win-lose situations.
(1976, p923)

However, Thomas later encouraged the provision of very
general guidelines (ibid, p924).

The DES and the SED should ensure that LEAs are better
informed about home education, particularly with respect
to the law and the definition of 'education' given in the
courts, which applies to home education. The Acts of
Parliament and the court cases have to be more widely
discussed in order to reduce misconceptions.

6.6 The changes LEA officials would like to make

When indicating which changes they would like to make in
the procedures and provision for home education
(question 13), some respondents felt that an increase in
support services would be a desirable trend, but blamed
the lack of funding for the inability to effect change.
Among the changes which the officials would have liked
were:

A rich county which believed in allowing parents
to educate at home should provide resources to
support them in doing this. We can attempt no
more than the minimum inspection the law expects

and we grudge the time this takes up from the very limited support available to schools;

More resources for gifted children in e.g. Art. There is nowhere a child can be taught out of school or have the opportunity to develop artistically;

Better support for parents, including access to equipment;

More provision of resources which are subject specific for children choosing options for which experience equipment is not available e.g. Physics/CDT;

Opportunities for home and school/educational services links. Ideally I think it would be helpful if we could provide more support in terms of specialist resources, although I realise that this could mean these children getting a disproportionate amount of time;

Provision of Home Teaching Packs for use in home education.

Many more respondents were concerned that the level of monitoring was not adequate and that more money was necessary for increasing staff levels to make frequent, regular visits:

More regular contact between Adviser & Psychologist and child/parents. If there were to be a noticeable increase in parents educating their children at home we would have difficulties providing a service because we are not resourced to cope with other than very small numbers of home education cases;

More time available for monitoring and support;

Small size of problem can be dealt with on an ad-hoc individualised basis if authority and parent prepared to cooperate. More visits to see pupils in the home and setting of the immediate environment;

A teacher on a part-time contract would have time to visit the children monthly;

There would be all-round advantage if more frequent adviser visits could be made - perhaps

once in a term - but other priority demands on their time rule this out;

More regular review and possibly extra tuition in exam subjects;

It would help if one person had a specific responsibility for visiting families. At present advisers have to fit this in when they can.

Some of these suggestions are included in the proposals given in Chapter seven; there are those that would incur little additional expense to the authority, while others require funding.

6.7 Summary

The responses to the questionnaire highlighted many of the attitudes of LEA officials and the problems faced by them when monitoring home education. They also demonstrated that LEA officials hold a variety of attitudes, for example, some wished to give further support to home educated children while others did not wish to support them or spend time monitoring them.

This variety of response was also illustrated by the initial opposition of some LEA officials to parents' intentions to begin home educating children; some LEA officials implied that 'permission' had to be sought from the LEA while others were well aware of the law and monitored the education that the parents provided.

LEA officials responding to the questionnaire attached importance both to parents' abilities and to facilities in the home, such as a quiet place for study. For some LEA officials, the achievement and academic ability of the child were important, while for others, this was not so. There was a consensus of opinion among the respondents on the importance of socialisation. Evidence from research in the United States suggests that socialisation can occur in many locations, including the home and that home educated children are as 'socialised' as those who attend school.

There is little data on the assessment of families who choose home education in the United Kingdom. In the United States, not only has research into the socialisation of home educated children been carried out, but also a great deal of research has been undertaken into other aspects of home education, establishing for example the numbers of home educated children (Lines, 1987, 1991) and that children who are taught at home by unqualified parents perform academically as well as those from families where one parent is a teacher.

Due to the lack of a need for home educated children to be registered with the LEA, the full cooperation of both LEAs and home educating support groups would be needed for a representative sample to be found in the United Kingdom. Data could then be collected on home educated

children and those involved in educating them, the number of hours spent in social activities outside the home, whether the parents have decided to home educate for one reason or a combination of factors and what these might be.

The respondents to the questionnaire believed that the largest proportion of home educators had chosen to home educate a child because they were dissatisfied with the existing school provision and believed they could provide a better education. There were also those who were home educating for religious and ideological reasons.

Approximately 50% of the respondents had experienced special difficulties when monitoring home educators. These involved the definitions of 'education' and 'educator' and the difficulties of differentiating between some instances of home education and truancy. The respondents were also concerned about social factors, such as the mental and physical welfare of a few children who are home educated. In addition, practical difficulties had been experienced, such as the costs to the LEA of monitoring, the provision for examinations and qualifications of home educated children and the continuity of monitoring when a home educating family moves from one LEA area to another.

Some of the problems could be eliminated if more information, such as details of court cases involving home educators were disseminated to the LEA officials concerned. To aid this dissemination of information, workshops or a conference could be held. At such workshops, definitions of terms, such as 'education' and 'educator' could be discussed and informal guidelines could be formulated for the monitoring of home educators, so that both LEA officials and home educators could be made aware of the legal framework and the roles and rights of the LEA, the parents and the child.

CHAPTER 7: Ways forward - proposals and recommendations

7.1 The Reduction of Conflict

There can be no doubt that conflict has arisen between some LEA officials and some home educators. Home education literature (section 1.2) and the results of the questionnaire demonstrated that conflict existed, but that it did not occur in all LEAs. Twenty per cent of the respondents to the questionnaire had experienced 'legal difficulties' with home educators (section 5.6), and approximately 50% of the respondents had experienced 'instances ... of special difficulty' (section 6.4). Some LEA officials found that few problems arise and others were appreciative of what some home educators achieved (section 3.4). An example of an appreciative adviser's report on a home educated child is given in Appendix 8.

In Chapter one of this thesis, it was established that conflict can arise when:

- each party has a negative prior concept of the other;
- meaningful communication is absent or not sufficient to increase the the parties' understanding of both the situation and each other;
- there is ignorance of the framework within which both parties are working;

- the terms used by both parties are ill-defined, such as 'education' or 'satisfy the local authority'.

Chapters two, three and four clarified some of these definitions. Chapter two delineated the legal framework within which home educators and LEA officials have to work. Chapter three explained the role of the LEA and defined the tasks and some of the problems of LEA officials. Chapter four attempted to define the motives of home educators, by looking at the available literature on home education and modifying these findings in the light of interviews with LEA officials; these findings were endorsed by the responses to question 10 of the questionnaire (given in section 6.3).

It was also established in Chapter one, that conflict could be reduced or resolved by:

- increasing the level of information about home educators, LEAs and their officials and thus the understanding each party can have of the other; and by increasing meaningful communication between each party;
- clarifying terms and procedures and establishing an informal contract of procedures which is acceptable to both parties;
- effective mediation, when necessary;
- encouraging positive outcomes.

Employing these methods of conflict resolution, the recommendations and suggestions given in this chapter are intended to reduce and/or 'prevent' conflict (Burton and Dukes, 1991), in a constructive and practical way. They fall into four groups:

- suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of LEA officials working in the field of home education who monitor the education home educators provide and for increasing their awareness of the law relating to home education, thus promoting greater understanding of each party by the other (section 7.2);
- recommendations for effective ways of monitoring the provision of education at home, by suggesting procedures and guidelines and thus an informal contract between the parties concerned (section 7.3);
- suggestions for those LEA officials wishing to create collaborative relationships with home educators and further encourage positive outcomes. The cost of providing educational services to home educated children need not incur additional cost to the LEA (section 7.4).

It was also an aim of the thesis to not only make recommendations and suggestions to LEA officials to reduce conflict, but also for the implementation of long

term solutions for the prevention of conflict. Reduction of conflict and its prevention are related, for example with the establishment of legally acceptable procedures and increased understanding of each party by the other (7.2); however the management of minority groups such as traveller children, children in hospital or excluded from school is also discussed (section 7.5).

Suggestions for further research, which needs to be undertaken in the area of home education, are given in section 7.6.

7.2 Suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of LEA officials monitoring home education

In Chapter one, it was established that the 'education and contact' approach to conflict resolution was likely to produce a positive solution and had a low level of stress, with a relatively high level of satisfaction; it also, however, depended on the personalities and communication skills of those involved.

A home educator's knowledge of an LEA and LEA officials can be enhanced by:

- making general enquiries at the LEA offices about procedures for monitoring home education;

- requesting information from the LEA official making home visits;
- requesting information from the Chief Education Officer;
- requesting information from the Chairperson of the education committee.

If a home educator is not satisfied with the response given by the Chairperson of the education committee, or does not receive a reply after a 'reasonable' time period, clarification of a particular issue can be requested from a mediator:

- the Ombudsman if it appears that there has been an incidence of maladministration; or
- the Minister of Education at the central department of education for the region of the United Kingdom where the home educator resides.

LEA officials' knowledge of home educators could be enhanced by:

1. Reading the material produced by home educators themselves which can increase the awareness of home educators and the types of educational provision that they may wish to provide. Such literature can encompass legal information, such as in Deutsch and Wolf (1986) or the experiences of a home educator as expressed in Baker (1964), Bendell (1988), Guterson (1990), Mullarney (1985), Pagnoni (1984), Wilding (pseudonym of Baker,

1961) and others. Guterson, for example, is a teacher in a state school in Washington and he and his wife teach their children at home; he explains his motives for choosing home education as an alternative to that provided by the state. A list of home education literature is given in Appendix 12. Three articles about home educators are reproduced in Appendix 13.

2. Subscribing to publications of the home educating support groups, Children's Home-Based Education Association and Education Otherwise (Appendix 2). Newsletters provide insight not only into the views of the membership, but also into the activities that take place and the resources which are available to home educators. A few LEAs already subscribe (ref: telephone interviews with legal advisers of EO and CHEA).

3. Being aware of the alternative of home education to school. If a child has experienced difficulties in school, with truancy, school refusal or school phobia, parents may express a wish to home educate (section 4.3.2). In this instance, the legal situation is that unless it can be shown to be harmful to the child, the parents cannot be refused the alternative of attempting home education. Both Knox (1988, 1989) and the Children's Home-Based Education Association (ref: telephone interview) express the stronger view that, in this

situation, parents ought to be informed of the right to home educate.

It was evident from the research that home educators had access to mediators if they believed that LEA officials were not fulfilling their legal duty in the correct way. LEA officials, however, have no such recourse to mediation; if it is felt that parents are not fulfilling their legal duties to educate a child, the LEA official only has recourse to judicial decision, which augments the level of conflict considerably. The 'education and contact' approach to conflict resolution is therefore of importance to LEA officials wishing to reduce or to prevent future conflict with home educators.

7.3 Recommended approach to effective monitoring of home education in England and Wales

The following recommendations stem from the research of the current laws which apply to home education and their subsequent interpretation in the courts which are given in Chapter two. Although the court cases are only relevant to LEAs in England and Wales, it could also be a guide for education authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Following initial notification by parents of the intention to home educate a child, a first meeting, of the parents and the LEA officials concerned, could take place in the education offices of the LEA concerned, in order to minimise costs to the LEA. It is important to ascertain the aims of the education the parents wish to provide. These aims should be established at the first meeting, in order to avoid possible subsequent misunderstandings over the interpretation of the words 'efficient ... education'. In order to be able to assess an 'efficient ... education', it is important that the LEA official involved be knowledgeable about education per se, in addition to the school system itself. Alternatively, written information could be obtained from parents; a suggested draft letter issued by CHEA is given in Appendix 14.

If the LEA official and the parents can come to an agreement on the aims of the home education to be provided, the monitoring could then more easily assess whether these aims had subsequently been achieved. An agreement between the LEA and the parents on the definition of 'efficient ... education' for the particular child involved, could be the first step towards an informal contract between the two parties.

At this first meeting, the parents could be requested to keep a regular written record of all educational

experiences of the home educated child. If the parents refuse to keep a written record (as is their legal right), it should then be ascertained at the beginning, how the parents would demonstrate on the date of assessment, that the child had been receiving an 'efficient ... education'. A period of between three and six months could then be given for establishing the education to be provided at home. The date and location of the assessment could be agreed at the initial meeting. In this way, at the initial meeting, definitions, dates and methods of monitoring could be decided upon and this would then form the basis of an informal contract for the monitoring of each child.

When the home education provided by the parents is later monitored, if it is seen to be unsatisfactory, the defects should be pointed out to the parents in writing. A further but shorter period of home education should be arranged to enable the parents to improve the standard of home education provided. When the education provided is thought to be satisfactory, (if applicable) the child's name should be removed from the school register. If, however, the education is still not considered to be adequate after the second assessment, the parents ought then to be advised why the education was thought to be inadequate and also advised that the child should attend school. If the parents wish to continue with home education, the matter should be decided in a court of

law. This would be a legally appropriate course of action and could minimise misunderstandings. Some misunderstandings which can hinder the establishment of an effective contract are discussed below.

There is an apparent need of some LEA officials to perceive an 'average academic attainment' in a home educated child. Within the school environment, it is recognised that not all children fulfil their abilities; it is sometimes the child of average or above average intelligence, who is not inspired to learn for some reason. Encouragement is given by the school to fulfil the child's potential, but is not always successful: the lack of achievement can be attributed to the home, the peer group, dominant interests and hobbies, such as sport, etc. In the environment of the home, however, if the child is underachieving for some reason, it is usually the effectiveness of the teaching or motivation which is found to be at fault and the conclusion is sometimes reached that the education provided in the home is unsuitable.

There would thus sometimes seem to be dual standards when monitoring education in school and education at home. As one LEA official stated in interview, it is perhaps better to monitor progress which has been made from one home visit to the next, rather than having a perceived ability of the child which may not be realised. More

research needs to be undertaken to clarify the definition of 'efficient ... education' with respect to home education, perhaps relating the efficiency to progress, rather than the level of current achievement in relation to perceived ability.

Some LEA officials seem to assess parents and their ability to home educate, for example when parents have no formal qualifications, or little money for the purchase of books and materials (sections 2.5.4, 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.4.4). Rather than assessing the home or the apparent ability of the parent to provide education, a three to six month period during which a parent could prove the ability to educate the child would be a better alternative. This would help to eliminate possible social and racial prejudices and assist with the evaluation of efficient home education.

It is possible that EWOs who monitor home education have received no education training (section 3.3.3); it could seem that the priority of the LEA is to monitor the social or the psychological aspects of the home educating family, rather than the level of education received by the child concerned. With the introduction of the Children Act 1989 and the impending appointment of educational supervisors, it has become imperative that LEA officials who are to monitor the education of children who are not in school must have qualifications

which enable them to monitor primarily education and in addition, possible social and psychological problems of either the child or the family. It can then be established whether it is necessary for each LEA official concerned to receive additional training e.g. on the legal aspects of home education, the different interpretations of 'an efficient full-time education' and the monitoring of the education of children who are not in school.

In the responses to the questionnaire, two officials mentioned that there had been cases of suspected child abuse (section 6.4.3). In instances where the home environment does not seem to be sound, the additional involvement of education welfare officers and/or educational psychologists, as is the case for children attending school, would be necessary.

Thus, depending on the opinion of the LEA official(s) as to the efficiency of the education at the initial visit, it is proposed that there be:

- subsequent yearly assessment with deregistration if applicable;

or

- a written assessment, stating how the home education should/would be improved to comply with the LEA view of 'efficient full-time education, according to age, ability and aptitude'. This should be followed by a

further shorter period of home education, to enable the parent to comply with the recommendations for improving the child's education;

or, following an unsatisfactory subsequent visit,

- a quick appeal to a regional coordinator for home education or a legal adviser; and a recommended return to school, reasons given in writing, with a copy to the parent, and a time period for the parent to find a suitable school;

or

- a court case if necessary, where the magistrate or judge could:

- a. decide whether the education which had been provided by the parent was suitable for the child; or
- b. rule that the child should attend school; or
- c. appoint an education supervisor for a one year period, to assess the type of educational provision which would best suit the child, the parents and the LEA.

7.4 Suggestions for LEA officials wishing to provide services to children educated at home

There are various ways in which the LEA can encourage positive outcomes when monitoring home educators, some without incurring extra costs, and others involving only minimal extra expense to the LEA. They are listed below.

1. Many Local Authorities have a central buying point or agency and home educators could be permitted access to cheaper educational materials. This already happens in a number of authorities.

2. Some LEAs offer schools' library facilities to home educating families. The benefit to the home educating families can be great. When using these resources, home educating parents could more easily find material to supplement the resources they provide. Parents can also establish which subject areas are covered in schools and compare and better assess the education they provide in and around the home.

3. Home educating parents could be given the opportunity to attend in-service training courses for LEA employees, perhaps at a reduced fee. This could be particularly applicable for parents with children who appear to be late readers or are believed to be suffering from learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. The number of such parents would naturally be small.

Sometimes what home education has to offer can be complementary to that provided by the schools. When children have special needs and the parents are already aware or are prepared to become aware of the different methods of fulfilling the child's ability, to enhance the

capacity of willing parents as teachers, rather than send the child to school could be beneficial to the child in the long term. This form of collaboration was encouraged by some local districts in the USA:

Rather than impeding home instruction, local districts are now searching for ways to train parents to teach their children at home. This is motivated, in part, by the public educators' growing recognition that most home schooled youngsters will ultimately return to the public schools, and that therefore it is in the schools' best interests to support these students' early education.

(Roach, 1988, p14)

At the time of writing, Roach was a project director at the National Association of State Boards of Education. She also recommended part-time attendance at school.

This concept of even greater flexibility of education between home and school has been explored by Meighan. The term 'flexischooling' emerged during his conversations with John Holt (Meighan, 1988, p2) and an account of how the concept can be put into practice is well documented in the various editions of Education Now, edited by Meighan, Meighan and Toogood. It implies the joint responsibility for a child's education, shared between parents and the state system, where a child can learn in school, in the community or in the home and move naturally from one learning base to another. It is further defined in detail by Meighan (1988, pp2-3).

4. For secondary age children who are educated at home, perhaps as young as twelve in some instances, it could be possible to establish access to Colleges of Further Education, normally used by school leavers or adults. This would give some formal education in a more informal setting than school and offer the child an alternative to being taught at home for part of his or her education. As the GCSE examinations involve continuous assessment, the availability of college courses could be extremely relevant to the home educated child's future life. Access to further education courses could also be of importance in vocational training, increasing not only the educational experiences of the child but also the contact that the child has with more formal work environments.

Deutsch and Wolf believed that access to Colleges of Further Education depends on the decisions taken by the administrators of the institution concerned (and consequently on the policy of the CEO and the Education Committee of the LEA concerned):

It is at the discretion of Colleges of Further Education and similar institutions normally catering for pupils above compulsory school age, to allow a child of compulsory school age to attend their courses, provided that this does not interfere with the education of the other pupils.
(1991, pp8-9)

The cost to the LEA of access for home educated children to this type of college could be little greater than for other students: there is the initial administrative cost involved in establishing that these children would be

able to attend such colleges and in addition, the possible extra cost of adequate insurance for these younger children. In LEAs where access to higher and adult education centres for home educated children is already established, the benefits have been seen to outweigh the disadvantages. However, one LEA official pointed out that places at Colleges of Further Education are scarce and such places are filled by children who have a 'proven school record'.

5. Within the school system, children sometimes attend a second school for some subjects, particularly in rural areas. This concept could be extended to home educating children in all areas, who would then have access to the local school for certain lessons, such as science, design and technology, sport, art or music, or the school library. There have been experiments in different states within the USA on access to schools for home educated children. It has been proven in Washington:

That it is administratively possible to offer individual classes to home-schooled students.
(Roach, 1988, p14)

It was found in one area of California, however, that the uptake by parents of school lessons was disappointing (ref. private correspondence).

In the United Kingdom, with the growing number of locally managed schools, it should be investigated whether access to schools for home educated children could be

financially beneficial. Lowden noted that there was a desire by some home educating families to join in some schooling activities (1988, p71). In the legal case of Osbourne v Martin (Appendix 4), it was demonstrated that attendance at school was intended to be for the whole of the period of schooling. Exceptions to full attendance at lessons in school in order to receive education in another location are at the discretion of the head of the school. However, were a head to permit learning to take place during school hours both at home and at school, the question of insurance, for children not registered at the school full-time would need to be assessed.

7.5 Recommendations and suggestions for LEA administrators

In order to receive funding for children educated at home by their parents, in England and Wales, it is necessary to include these children in the numbers of children 'not in school' which are submitted to the DES each January. In Scotland, in order to receive funding, it is necessary to forward the numbers of home educated children to the SED each September. (Details are given in Section 6.4.5.) DENI has not clarified the funding of the monitoring of home educated children as it was thought that the number of such children was too small (ref. telephone interview).

The following suggestions affect long term planning for the monitoring of home educated children and other children not in school. They combine some of the services already offered by different departments within LEAs:

1. It is not usually recognised that there are two clearly definable groups of school-aged children, those who attend school regularly and those who do not, either permanently or temporarily. This second group includes children who are:

- home educated,
- from traveller, (fairground or barge) families,
- hospitalised or long term convalescing,
- excluded from school.

Although not in school for a variety of reasons, children in the above four categories have a great deal in common. They need a form of education which is not necessarily similar to that provided in the school (DES, 1989b). They also need a different system of monitoring from those in school. At present, this is often done by different officials within one authority. The monitoring of education which these children receive could be done by the same group of LEA officials, who would be aware of alternative methods and provision of education for such children. The parents of children who had been in hospital, for example, could be encouraged to make

educational provision at home during periods of convalescence.

Home education could play a much larger role in the provision of education for traveller children who move frequently and do not appear to receive schooling. For children who reject the education that the state provides and are consequently themselves rejected, by being excluded from school, the responsibility for their education could be directed with guidance and monitoring towards themselves and the family (or an educational supervisor). A combination of home education, tutoring and small group education could be a better alternative than school for some of these children, when they have to assume some of the responsibility for educating themselves.

2. Once it is recognised that there is a substantial number of children who are not in school, there can be a reorganisation of the provision of existing services for monitoring the education provided for these children. One LEA administrator could coordinate different LEA officials who interface with the children concerned. The main work of the administrator would be to inform the LEA officials concerned about the rights of LEAs, the different types of children involved and their parents, heightening awareness of the law and the provision of education which already exists for some of the groups.

Perhaps economies could be made, or funds better used, by one LEA official monitoring the education of the different kinds of children 'not in school' within a smaller area, which would ensure that there would be less travelling time between contacts. By working in a group, there could be more informal discussion between LEA officials when difficulties arise.

3. If the two previous suggestions were adopted, a further step would be the establishment of coordination between LEAs to provide optional correspondence courses for some children who are 'not in school'. Different materials could be created for a range of abilities and backgrounds. This has already been achieved in Alaska, USA, where many different courses have been created for a wide range of abilities and purposes and also in Scotland with the Gaelic language (reference: interview) and in a variety of subjects in the San Diego School District, California (Knowles et al. 1990b, p14). It is believed that the Alaskan students, from different ethnic backgrounds, on average score higher in achievement tests than those who attend school. Further details are given in Appendix 15.

Such correspondence courses could later be extended to the provision of materials for children who attend schools, but need some form of specialist educational provision, such as gifted or remedial children in small

schools. This would increase the daily provision of suitable education for such children, while reducing the need for specialist teachers on site. Such children could correspond with tutors in the regional office, as has been done in Scotland and Alaska. It would seem that the Open School (Appendix 2) has seen the demand for such courses and the lack of current provision.

7.6 Suggestions for future research

As has been stated, a great deal of research on home education and home educators has already been undertaken in the United States, but in the United Kingdom there has been little detailed research. This is in part due to the lack of a need for home educated children to register with the LEA which would give an objective research sample. It is also, however, due to the lack of funding in many areas of educational research, both by the state and by private organisations, including the home education support groups. It is expedient that further research be carried out; some suggestions are listed below:

1. Legal cases are particularly unpleasant for both the families and for LEA officials concerned, in addition to being extremely costly and time consuming. Some cases define the type of home education which is provided and

others follow instances of severe conflict, resulting in attendance orders being served (section 2.5). Within a number of target LEAs, in each instance of conflict, an analysis of each parties' view of the conflict needs to be made, leading to a better understanding of the origins of conflict between an individual (or family) and a public formal organisation, which could in turn help to reduce the number of cases brought to court.

2. To avoid the extensive use of the expensive court system, an investigation could be made into the use of independent tribunals as a form of mediation. They would need to be acceptable to both home educators and the LEAs, with recourse to the courts if the decisions of the tribunal were contested. Marshall (1986, pp119-124) explored the variety of existing tribunals; he felt that they could effectively reduce conflict:

Apart from specialisation in specific subjects, which is an advantage of all tribunals, many of the positive qualities - speed, cheapness and informality - are associated with the less legalistically orientated. This also applies to the possession of sufficient flexibility to take a wider view than the presenting legal problem and to deal more constructively with the real underlying issues.

(Ibid, p120)

In Maine, USA, a home educating parent sits on the board which reviews appeals to the Commissioner by home educators (Kilgore et al., 1987, p16). The relevance of such experiences in mediation in the United States to

instances of conflict between home educators and LEAs in the United Kingdom could also be investigated.

Tribunals are likely to be cheaper than court cases and at the same time provide fora for the expression of differing opinions and the resolution of conflict.

3. A study needs to be undertaken to establish the length of time that a family needs in order to establish the efficiency of the education it provides, once an intention to home educate has been declared (section 2.5.4).

4. The average cost to the LEA of each home educating family should be established. (Such research could also be undertaken for other children who are 'not in school'). At present some LEAs do not count the cost, believing it to be part of the service that is offered to children within the area; the cost of monitoring home educated children is hidden in the general costs of LEA supervision of children. Other LEA officials, however, are less contented to devote resources to home educators, believing it to be a drain on the resources offered to other children within the school system.

5. A pilot study should be undertaken to establish whether it is practical and/or desirable to increase the level of support services to home educators. In

particular, the state provision of correspondence courses should be investigated, as in Alaska (Appendix 15) or in Australia (Education Department of Western Australia, 1979). Such correspondence courses vary widely in content. The Alaskan scheme is based on the needs of each child as perceived by parent, tutor and child; the Australian scheme is 'school at a distance' with all children of certain ages undertaking similar work. The parents' role is to ensure that the child sits down to study and to return the child's work packages to the central learning base.

Correspondence courses could benefit a great number of home based children and adults who wish to increase the level of education they already have, without attending institutions on a regular basis. Such courses could also, in the long term, benefit children who attend school; a correspondence course could be undertaken by a pupil when there is a teacher shortage in a particular subject or a subject is not available at an individual school.

6. The practicality of flexischooling (Meighan, 1988) also needs to be investigated by LEAs and the respective education departments. There is no doubt that, for some children and parents, a flexible form of education, which takes place in the home, in the community and/or in school is a desirable alternative and is already practised in a limited way (Education Now). At present,

it is difficult for schools involved in flexischooling to receive LEA or central funding (ref. meeting DES). It is necessary to find out whether it should be categorised as a form of private schooling, or whether it should, as Meighan believes, be more readily available in the state sector.

7. Following a request from one adviser, I looked into the provision of GCSE examinations for home educated children. I established that the Joint Council for GCSE comprised only those whose interests lay with schooling (private correspondence). The head of Mercers College (a private correspondence college) was also invited to the meetings in order to represent those people not attending school. Children who were not undertaking correspondence courses and who were not in school had no direct representation on the committee: very few of such children would be undertaking private correspondence courses, the cost being variable, but always expensive, especially when many subjects are to be studied. However, if all children 'not in school' were monitored as a group, as previously suggested, the problems with state examinations that these children face could be more readily voiced and would be more likely to be heard. Meanwhile, access to the examination system, for all children who are not in school, needs to be investigated in each area of the United Kingdom.

8. In response to the section on socialisation in the questionnaire, all the respondents believed peer group 'socialisation' to be important or very important (section 6.2.3). Some home educators believe that peer group socialisation is not relevant. Research has been undertaken in the United States on whether children educated at home are adequately 'socialised', however, the relevance of this research to home education in the United Kingdom needs to be clarified.

9. If a genuinely random and fully representative sample of home educators could be found it would be desirable to establish:

- why home educators choose their course of action;
- whether home educators consist mainly of white middle-class families and whether other groups express the intention to home educate, but are discouraged at the outset;
- why the visits of an LEA official are welcomed by some home educators and not by others.

10. Much has been written about the relevance of records of achievement and pupil profiles to children in school (Brennan 1988, Broadfoot 1986, DES 1989a, Hall 1989).

Pupil profiles are:

A form of evaluation designed to give more detailed information about a pupil than an examination result. It may include academic grades, but also such things as internal school

assessments, material selected by the pupil and teachers' comments.

(Statham et al, 1989, p185)

Broadfoot gave a list of issues which should be covered by a student's records of achievement; these included knowledge, understanding, an ability to analyse and synthesise, aesthetic appreciation, cross-curricular and learning skills, personal and social skills, and the student's activities and experiences.

These skills cannot be seen in isolation, but need to be seen within the context of learning tasks which would themselves be seen within the various environmental contexts of the classroom, workshop activity centre or, if appropriate, the pupil's home.

(Broadfoot, 1988, p17)

As the assessment of home educated children at present seems to be very individual, it could be established whether some form of record of achievement would be applicable to all children 'not in school', providing a more objective assessment procedure.

A software company specialising in pupil assessment (Software solutions, Moreton Hall, Warwickshire College of Agriculture, CV32 7HN) was approached to establish whether computer programs such as 'Rocket' which is used in records of achievement and pupil profiles could be adapted to home education; the marketing director, Brian Gill, believed that there would be few problems. Research needs to be undertaken to establish a more objective form of assessment for children who do not regularly attend school.

11. The history of home education and the contribution it has made to state education could be investigated: home education was more widespread from 1800 - 1950 than is currently believed (section 2.1). The research that I undertook on the history of home education, revealed a large quantity of very interesting material.

7.7 Conclusions

The major aims of the research covered by this thesis were to:

- explore major conflicts between the LEAs and home educators;
- investigate the procedures used by LEA officials;
- ascertain the attitudes of the officials towards the parents as home educators, the home and the variety of education provided by the parents;
- explore the difficulties that the officials of the LEAs experience when monitoring home educators;
- investigate why people home educate and whether this could be a cause of conflict;
- suggest ways of reducing conflict.

Initially, it was hoped to cover all areas of the United Kingdom. In the event it was not possible to cover Northern Ireland in detail, although it was included in

the survey as far as possible. The relationship between LEA officials and home educators in England, Scotland and Wales was investigated in detail. The research was helped considerably by the very great cooperation I received from the central departments of education and from officials in many LEAs. The 69% return to the questionnaire mirrored the interest and concern shown in face to face and telephone interviews. There were few regional differences in the procedures and attitudes of LEA officials in the United Kingdom, with the exception that in four areas of Scotland, home education at secondary level was acknowledged as undesirable. Bearing in mind the difficulties in assessing the situation in Northern Ireland, I believe that the aims of the research were achieved.

There is no doubt that in some parts of the United Kingdom, LEA officials who monitor home education are working in a positive way, demonstrating a good knowledge of the law and showing concern for the children involved; the officials are therefore only experiencing conflict with a very small minority of parents who demonstrate a lack of commitment. In other areas, officials are experiencing a number of problems. Twenty per cent of the respondents to the questionnaire had experienced legal difficulties and fifty percent had experienced other problems when monitoring home education.

The problems which were encountered centred on the definitions of an 'efficient full-time education', 'educator' and 'home education/truancy' and the unwillingness to promote positive outcomes on the part of some uncooperative home educators. A few of these problems will have been inevitable, due to the concepts of home education held by some home educators, but a number of LEAs seemed unaware of the limitations of the law relating to home education.

It is imperative for the DES and the SED to make provision for the dissemination of information, particularly relating to home education and the law, to LEAs. In contrast, the DES has been active in the provision of courses for the monitoring of the education of traveller and fairground children: in the ten years between 1973 and 1983, seven DES courses were arranged, having a total of 500 participants; in addition, at least two conferences were held, one for LEA officials in the north and another for LEA officials in the south of England (DES, 1983, pp3-5).

There have not been any such conferences or courses on the subject of home education. In response to the section in the questionnaire which referred to the provision of a workshop/conference, at primary and secondary levels, 78% (83/106) thought there would be general interest in a conference on home education and 70% (85/122) showed

interest in attending. For the prevention of conflict, it is apparent that a positive policy must be adopted for the dissemination of information to LEAs, perhaps in the form of a conference (or workshop); such dissemination of information could also reduce the level of existing conflict which relates to home education.

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APPENDIX 1: SECTIONS OF THE ACTS OF PARLIAMENT WHICH
RELATE TO HOME EDUCATION IN THE UNITED
KINGDOM

ENGLAND AND WALES

The Elementary Education Act 1870 33 and 344 Vict. c. 75
Section 74 relates to the exemption or partial exemption
of children from school.

Section 74

Any of the following reasons shall be a reasonable
excuse; namely,

- (i) That the child is under efficient
instruction in some other manner;

This act was repealed.

The Education Act 1918 8 and 9 Geo.5 Ch.39E

Section 3

The obligation to attend continuation schools under
this Act shall not apply to any young person -

- (i) who is shown to the satisfaction of the
local education authority to be under full-time
instruction in a school recognised by the Board
of Education as efficient or to be under
suitable and efficient full-time instruction
in some other manner;

This act was repealed

The Education Act 1944. 7 and 8 Geo.6 c.31

Section 36

It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of
compulsory school age to cause him to receive
efficient full-time education suitable to his age,
ability and aptitude [Amended 1981 add: and to any
special educational needs he may have] either by
regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 76

In the exercise and performance of all powers and
duties conferred and imposed upon them ... local
education authorities shall have regard to the
general principle that, so far as is compatible with
the provision of efficient instruction and training
and the avoidance of unreasonable public
expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance
with the wishes of their parents.

Section 99

If the Minister is satisfied, either upon
complaint by any person interested or otherwise,
that any local education authority ... have
failed to discharge any duty imposed upon them by
or for the purposes of this Act, the Minister may

make an order declaring the authority ... to be in default in respect of that duty, and giving such directions for the purpose of enforcing the execution thereof as appear to the Minister to be expedient; and any such directions shall be enforceable, on an application made on behalf of the Minister, by mandamus.

The Pupils' Registration Regulations 1956 SI 1956/357

Section 4

Deletions from Admission Register. The following grounds are hereby prescribed as those on which the name of a pupil is to be deleted from the Admission Register, that is to say

(a) if the pupil is of compulsory school age, any of the following grounds:

(i) where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a School Attendance Order, that another school is substituted for that named in the Order or the Order is revoked on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school;

(ii) in a case ... that he has been registered as a pupil of another school;

(iii) in a case ... that he has ceased to attend the school at which he is registered and his parent has satisfied the Authority that he is receiving efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than by attendance at a school;

Education Act 1981

Section 17

In Section 36 of the principal Act (duty of parents to secure the education of their children) after the word 'aptitude' there are inserted the words 'and to any special educational needs he may have.'

Education Reform Act 1988 c.40

Section 17

The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that provisions of the National Curriculum, or such of those provisions as may be specified in the regulations -

(a) shall not apply; or

(b) shall apply with such modifications as may be so specified in such cases or circumstances as may be so specified.

Children Act 1989 c.41

Section 1

In any proceedings in which any question with respect to the upbringing of a child arises, the court shall have regard to the general principle that any delay in determining the question is likely to prejudice the welfare of the child.

Section 12

(1) Where an education supervision order is in force with respect to a child, it shall be the duty of the supervisor:

(a) to advise, assist and befriend, and give directions to:

- (i) the supervised child; and
- (ii) his parents,

in such a way as will, in the opinion of the supervisor, secure that he is properly educated;

...

(2) Before giving any directions ... the supervisor shall, as far as is reasonably practicable, ascertain the wishes and feelings of:

- (a) the child; and
- (b) his parents,

including, in particular, their wishes as to the place at which the child should be educated.

(3) When settling the terms of any such directions, the supervisor shall give due consideration -

- (a) having regard to the child's age and understanding, to such wishes and feelings of his as the supervision has been able to ascertain; and
- (b) to such wishes and feelings of the child's parents as he has been able to ascertain.

Section 13(2)

(b) while the education supervision order remains in force, the following provisions shall not apply with respect to the child -

- (i) Section 37 [of the 1944 Act];
- (ii) Section 76 of that Act (pupils to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents);

Section 16(1)

An education supervision order may require the child-

...

- (b) to allow the supervisor to visit him at the place where he is living.

Section 16(2)

A person who is the parent of a child with respect to whom an education supervision order has been made shall -

...

(b) if he is living with the child, allow the supervisor reasonable contact with the child.

NORTHERN IRELAND

1947 Education (Northern Ireland) Act

Section 34

It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability, and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 35

(1) If it appears to a local education authority that the parent of any child of compulsory school age in their area is failing to perform the duty imposed on him by the last foregoing section, it shall be the duty of the authority to serve upon the parent a notice requiring him, within such time as may be specified in the notice not being less than fourteen days from the service thereof, to satisfy the authority that the child is receiving efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability, and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 71

In the exercise and performance of all powers and duties conferred and imposed on them by this Act the Ministry and local education authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.

This act was repealed.

S.I. 1972/1263 (Northern Ireland 12)

Section 34

In the exercise and performance of all powers and duties conferred or imposed upon them by this Order, the Ministry and boards shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils shall be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.

Section 35

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time

education suitable to his age, ability, and aptitude either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Education and Libraries Northern Ireland Order 1986 SI 1986/594 (N.I.3)

Section 45

1. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schedule 13 Enforcement of duty imposed by article 45

Part 1

1(1) Where it appears to a board that a parent of a child of compulsory school age in its area is failing to perform the duty imposed on him by article 45(1), the board shall serve on the parent a notice requiring him, within such period not being less than fourteen days from the service of the notice as is specified in the notice, to satisfy the board that the child is, by regular attendance at school or otherwise, receiving efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have.

2(1) Where, at any time whilst a school attendance order is in force with respect to a child, the parent of the child makes an application to the board by whom the order was made requesting ... that the order be revoked on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive otherwise than at school efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, the board shall amend or revoke the order in compliance with the request unless it is of the opinion that -

...

(d) no satisfactory arrangements have been made for the education of the child otherwise than at school.

SCOTLAND

1872 35 + 36 Vict. 5. c.62

Section 69

duty of every parent to provide elementary education in reading, writing and arithmetic for his children between 5 and 15 years of age.

Section 70

parent is to be prosecuted and fined if he does not attend to the child's education.

1918 8 + 9 Geo 5. s c.48

Section 14

The duty of every parent to provide efficient education for his children shall continue in respect of each child until that child has attained the age of fifteen years and exemption from attendance at school shall not be granted to any child who has not attained the age of thirteen years.

Section 69 of the 1872 Act was not repealed. These acts were later superseded by the 1945 Education (Scotland) Act.

1945 8 + 9 Geo 6. c 37

Section 20

In the exercise and performance of their powers and duties under the Education Acts the Secretary of State and education authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of suitable instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.

Section 22

It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of school age to provide efficient education for him suitable to his age, ability and aptitude either by causing him to attend a public school regularly or by other means.

Section 25(1)

Where a child of school age who has attended a public school on one or more occasions fails without reasonable excuse to attend regularly at the said school, then, unless the education authority have consented to the withdrawal of the child from the school (which consent shall not be unreasonably

withheld), his parent shall be guilty of an offense against this section.

Section 26

Where a child of school age has not attended a school under the management of the education authority of the area which his parent is residing, or has attended such a school and has been withdrawn therefrom with the consent of the authority, then if the education authority are not satisfied that the parent is providing efficient education for him suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, it shall be the duty of the education authority to serve notice on the parent ...

These sections of the Act have been superseded by the 1962 Education (Scotland) Act and later, the 1980 (Education) Scotland Act.

1962 Education (Scotland) Act (10 + 11 Eliz. 2c. 47)
1980 Education (Scotland) Act (28 Eliz. c.44)

The relevant parts of both these acts are identical:

Section 37

(1) Where a child of school age has not attended a public school in the area in which his parent is residing, or has attended such a school and has been withdrawn therefrom with the consent of, or excluded by, the education authority, then, if the authority are not satisfied that the parent is providing efficient education for him suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, it shall be the duty of the authority to serve a notice on the parent requiring him within such time as may be specified in the notice (not being less than seven or more than fourteen days from the service thereof) either

(a) to appear (with or without the child) before the authority and give such information as the authority may require regarding the means, if any, he has adopted for providing education, or

(b) in the option of the parent, to give such information to the authority in writing.

(2) If a parent on whom notice has been served ... fails to satisfy the authority that he is providing efficient education for the child suitable to his age, ability and aptitude or that there is reasonable excuse for his failure to do so, the authority shall make an attendance order in respect of the child ...

Section 70

If the Secretary of State is satisfied, either on complaint by any person interested or otherwise, that an education authority ... [has] failed to discharge any duty imposed upon them ... the Secretary of State may make an order declaring them to be in default in respect of that duty and requiring them before a date stated in the order to discharge that duty.

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF HOME EDUCATION AND OTHER SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Childrens' Home-Based Education Association
14 Basil Avenue
Armthorpe
Doncaster
S Yorks DN3 2AT.
Tel: 0302 833596

This organisation has a newsletter, which includes resources for home-based educators and publishes under 'Apronstrings Education'. Publications include:

'Up to ten choices in your child's education: what they are and how to choose'
'The teacher and school phobia'
'Satisfying your education authority'
'The external candidate and GCSE'
'Don't Panic'

Education Otherwise
General enquiries to:
36, Kinross Road
Leamington Spa
CV32 7EF

Publications available from:
Fearnmore by Shildaig
Strathcarron
Wester Ross
IV54 8XX

This organisation has a newsletter and also publishes. Publications include:

'School is not compulsory'
'Early years'
'Later years'

Further details of this organisation are given by Webb (1988, pp 82-83) and Brown (1978, pp 96-101)

Hometaught
Andy and Diane Anderson
8, Nessing Grove
Wistaston
Crewe CW2 8EL.
Tel: 0270 664060

This is a non-profit making organisation which advises parents on resources which are available.

Learning Link

Paul and Elizabeth Bailey
83 Manor Park,
London SE13 5RA.
Tel: 081 852 1563

Learning resource and information service for
parents and children learning at home, specialising
in educational computer hardware, software and books
and the GCSE post 1992.

Mercer's College

Ware
Hertfordshire.

Correspondence courses.

National Extension College

18 Brooklands Avenue
Cambridge
CB2 2HN

Correspondence courses.

Open School

Foxhole
Dartington
Devon TQ9 6EB
Tel: 0803 866542/866676

Open School aims to adapt Open University open
learning methods for use by school-age students.

Worldwide Education Service

Strode House
45-50 Osnaburgh Street,
London NW1 3NN.

Correspondence courses for children up to thirteen
years of age.

APPENDIX 3: COPIES OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE, DISTRIBUTED
THROUGHOUT THE UNITED KINGDOM

Primary

Survey of Home Education in the United Kingdom

The children covered by this survey are only those who are home educated by parental preference. It does not include those receiving home tuition.

Please return the completed questionnaire to:

Amanda Petrie
Room 303
Department of Education
University of Liverpool
19, Abercromby Square
P.O. Box 147
Liverpool L69 3BX.

Please tick ✓ the appropriate box or fill in the answers on the dotted line.

1. How many children are educated at home by parents in your authority?

If the figures are not readily available, how many children would you estimate are currently being taught at home?

2. Do you feel that, over the past five years, the number of home educated children has

Increased	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remained the same	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decreased	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many children were educated at home in 1983?

If the figures are not readily available, how many children would you estimate were educated at home in 1983?

3. Do you anticipate that in the future, numbers may

Increase	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remain the same	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decrease	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How have the families on record come to your notice?

	USUALLY	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
Direct communication from parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through social services/health visitors etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Through the schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education Welfare Officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerned neighbours of families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Area Health Records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Others (please specify)

.....

.....

5. Please indicate which of the following procedures you currently apply once a home educating family has been identified. (Please tick more than one if necessary)

- A standard letter to the parent
- An individual letter/telephone call to the parent
- A visit to the home
- No communication

6. If the home is visited, who makes the visits? (Please tick more than one if necessary)

- | | INITIALLY | | ROUTINELY |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Adviser | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adviser | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Social worker | <input type="checkbox"/> | Social worker | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychologist | <input type="checkbox"/> | Psychologist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| L.E.A. officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | L.E.A. officer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Inspector/Advisory Head | <input type="checkbox"/> | Inspector/Advisory Head | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (please specify)

.....

.....

Please **estimate** the average number of home visits per family per year.

In the first year

In subsequent years

7. Do you automatically agree with a family's intention to home educate at the outset?

YES NO

8. Have there been any instances when you were totally opposed to a family's intention to home educate?

OFTEN SOMETIMES RARELY NEVER

9. The following are criteria which L.E.A.s most often mention as being relevant when assessing each family's educational situation. Please estimate the importance your L.E.A. attaches to each one.

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
Formal qualifications of the parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The child's estimated ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General social background of the home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Estimation of the parent's ability to teach the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child's current academic attainments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilities in the home (e.g. place for quiet study)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's ability to communicate with the official	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's ability to communicate with the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child's ability to communicate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of community reserves (access to libraries, museums etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's attitude to the child's integration with peers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Happiness of the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's awareness of educational materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child's involvement in out-of-home activities (clubs, church etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Correspondence course being undertaken by child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent or child maintains a record of the child's current work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there any other criteria which are not listed above, but which you feel are important?

.....

.....

10. Does the authority assess the reasons why a parent wishes to home educate?

YES NO

If 'YES' which of the following are the most frequent in **your** authority?

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
Home is remote from nearest school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's wish to lead an isolated lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's dissatisfaction with existing school provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Claim that the child is intellectually gifted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The child has psychological problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Based on religious grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Based on ideological (but non-religious) grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Claim that the child has special educational needs (eg physical handicap)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Claim that the parent would be a 'better' provider of education than the schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Claim that the family is geographically mobile	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)				
.....				
.....				

11. Has any legal action been taken by your authority against parent(s) who are home teaching?

YES NO

If 'YES' please specify, if possible

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. Are any of the following support services made available to home educators?

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NOT POSSIBLE
Schools library service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools resources centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with advisers and inspectors when specific problems arise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of materials (text books, work books, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of science equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuition in music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toy library (for younger or disabled children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports tuition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. What changes would you like to make in your procedures and provision for home education, if resources allowed?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. Do you feel that the law relating to home education is adequate? YES NO

If 'NO', what changes would you like to see?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. Do any instances of home education come to mind which have presented special difficulty for the authority?

YES NO

If 'YES', please describe the difficulties.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

16. It is intended to organise a conference to be held in the Autumn of 1988. It would cover the legal aspects of home education, the results of this questionnaire, and talks by representatives of L.E.A.s doing interesting work in this area, time for discussion and the exchange of views and information. The approximate cost would be £50 per person, depending on the number wishing to attend.

Do you feel that there would be a general interest in this conference?

YES NO

In principle, would your authority be interested in attending?

YES NO

The enclosure of any documentation, such as standard letters to home educating families, would be very much appreciated. Thank you for your co-operation in completing this questionnaire.

Please return the completed questionnaire to:

Amanda Petrie
Room 303
Department of Education
University of Liverpool
19, Abercromby Square
P.O. Box 147
Liverpool L69 3BX.

Secondary

Survey of Home Education in the United Kingdom

The children covered by this survey are only those who are home educated by parental preference. It does not include those receiving home tuition.

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Please tick ✓ the appropriate box or fill in the answers on the dotted line.

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.....

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Increased

Remained the same

Decreased

How many children were educated at home in 1983?

.....

If the figures are not readily available, how many children would you estimate were educated at home in 1983?

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Increase

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Decrease

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USUALLY OCCASIONALLY NEVER

Direct communication from parents

Through social services/health visitors etc

Through the schools

Education Welfare Officers

Concerned neighbours of families

Area Health Records

Others (please specify)

.....

.....

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- An individual letter/telephone call to the parent
- A visit to the home
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- | | INITIALLY | | ROUTINELY |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Adviser | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adviser | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Social worker | <input type="checkbox"/> | Social worker | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychologist | <input type="checkbox"/> | Psychologist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| L.E.A. officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | L.E.A. officer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Inspector/Advisory Head | <input type="checkbox"/> | Inspector/Advisory Head | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Please **estimate** the average number of home visits per family per year.

In the first year

In subsequent years

7. Do you automatically agree with a family's intention to home educate at the outset?

YES NO

8. Have there been any instances when you were totally opposed to a family's intention to home educate?

OFTEN SOMETIMES RARELY NEVER

9. The following are criteria which L.E.A.s most often mention as being relevant when assessing each family's educational situation. Please estimate the importance your L.E.A. attaches to each one.

	VERY IMPORTANT	QUITE IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
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The child's estimated ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General social background of the home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Estimation of the parent's ability to teach the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child's current academic attainments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilities in the home (e.g. place for quiet study)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's ability to communicate with the official	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's ability to communicate with the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child's ability to communicate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Parent's attitude to the child's integration with peers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Happiness of the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's awareness of educational materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child's involvement in out-of-home activities (clubs, church etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Correspondence course being undertaken by child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent or child maintains a record of the child's current work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there any other criteria which are not listed above, but which you feel are important?

.....

.....

10. Does the authority assess the reasons why a parent wishes to home educate?

YES NO

If 'YES' which of the following are the most frequent in **your** authority?

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
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Parent's wish to lead an isolated lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's dissatisfaction with existing school provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Claim that the child is intellectually gifted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The child has psychological problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Based on religious grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Based on ideological (but non-religious) grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Claim that the child has special educational needs (eg physical handicap)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Claim that the parent would be a 'better' provider of education than the schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Claim that the family is geographically mobile	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)				
.....				
.....				

11. Has any legal action been taken by your authority against parent(s) who are home teaching?

YES NO

If 'YES' please specify, if possible

.....
.....
.....
.....

12. Are any of the following support services made available to home educators?

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NOT POSSIBLE
Schools library service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools resources centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with advisers and inspectors when specific problems arise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of materials (text books, work books, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of science equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuition in music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toy library (for younger or disabled children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports tuition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. What changes would you like to make in your procedures and provision for home education, if resources allowed?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. Do you feel that the law relating to home education is adequate?

YES NO

If 'NO', what changes would you like to see?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. Do any instances of home education come to mind which have presented special difficulty for the authority?

YES NO

If 'YES', please describe the difficulties.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

16. It is intended to organise a conference to be held in the Autumn of 1988. It would cover the legal aspects of home education, the results of this questionnaire, and talks by representatives of L.E.A.s doing interesting work in this area, time for discussion and the exchange of views and information. The approximate cost would be £50 per person, depending on the number wishing to attend.

Do you feel that there would be a general interest in this conference?

YES NO

In principle, would your authority be interested in attending?

YES NO

The enclosure of any documentation, such as standard letters to home educating families, would be very much appreciated. Thank you for your co-operation in completing this questionnaire.

Please return the completed questionnaire to:

Amanda Petrie
Room 303
Department of Education
University of Liverpool
19, Abercromby Square
P.O. Box 147
Liverpool L69 3BX.

APPENDIX 4: DETAILS OF REFERENCES TO LEGAL CASES

Baker

re Baker (infants), Pennycuick J [1961] Ch 303;
[1961] 2 W.L.R 626

re Baker (infants), CA [1962] Ch 201; [1961] 3 W.L.
R 694

Bevan v Shears [1911] 2 K. B. 936; [1911] W.N 155 1294

ex. parte Dutton

Rex. v Walton and other justices ex. parte
Dutton (1911) 75 J.P.558
[1967] CRIM L. REV. 270

Enfield London Borough Council v Forsyth and Forsyth
(1986) 151 J.P. 113

The Gillick case

Gillick v West Norfolk and Wisbech
Area Health Authority and the DHSS
[1986] AC 112
[1985] 3 W L R 830
[1985] 129 S.J. 738

Harrison and Harrison v Stevenson

Ormrod + McCulloch, [1982] QB (DC) 729/81,
Worcester.

Osborne v Martin (1927) 138 LT 268 in Freeman [1980] LAG
Bull 135.

The Perry Case

R v Gwent County Council exp. Perry (1985) 129 S.J.
737: CA. (obtained from LEXIS)

Phillips v Brown

Phillips v Brown 424/78 QB (DC) [1980] (obtained
from LEXIS).

Tweedie

Reg v. Surrey Quarter Sessions Appeals Committee ex
parte Tweedie (1963) 61, LGR, 464, DC 1208 + 1209

Wood and others v. Ealing London Borough Council

Goff J. [1967] Ch 364; [1966] 3 W.L.R. 1209

APPENDIX 5: COPIES OF SECTIONS OF LETTERS FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE



Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House York Road London SE17PH

Direct Line 01-934
Switchboard 01-934 9000
GTN Number 2914

Telex 23171

Ms. A. Petrie

Your reference

Our reference

22 February 1989

Dear Ms. Petrie

I am writing further to our recent telephone conversation regarding 'education otherwise' matters.

I can confirm that the provisions of the National Curriculum do not apply to children being educated at home.

Yours sincerely

Schools Branch 1



Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House York Road London SE1 7PH

From 6 May 1990,
dial 071 for DES
01 numbers.

Direct Line
Switchboard 01-934 9000
GTN Number
Telex 23171

Ms Amanda Petrie

Your reference

Our reference

22 May 1990

Dear Ms Petrie

...

1. Your letter of 1 August 1989 and draft final chapter and thesis. We would have no objection to your including the suggestions in your thesis subject to a minor change in the second paragraph of your letter. That is that DES policy be represented in these terms:- "The Government has no plans to alter present arrangements where the advocacy of home education schemes is assessed by LEAs; they are able to maintain closer contact with the parents and children involved."
2. Letter of 20 August 1989 and draft article. We suggest deleting from "Until recently" (last sentence page 2 of the draft article) to "guidelines to local authorities", and substituting "From time to time the DES considers formal complaints by individuals against LEAs, and officials are always ready to answer queries about what the Education Acts require with regard to home education. Such approaches have become more frequent of late. It would however be difficult to provide formal guidance and still preserve the wide latitude currently permitted to parents in the preparation of schemes."
3. Letter of 27 April 1990. In reply to your first point, it is unlikely that any LEA would, except inadvertently, exclude home educated children from its return to the Department, as it would lose out financially thereby. Revenue Support Grant includes an element for children educated otherwise than at school. This element is calculated on the basis of LEAs' returns of all such children although, as you have already noted, the returns do not distinguish among those educated at home, in hospital, and in social service departments establishments.

As to the National Curriculum the Government has no plans to extend its application to children other than those registered at maintained schools.

APPENDIX 6: COPY OF A LETTER FROM THE SHADOW SECRETARY
OF EDUCATION

PLEASE QUOTE
Our ref: JS/L994/SP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

8 June 1990

Amanda J Petrie

Dear Ms Petrie

Thank you for your letter dated 7 May 1990.

We see the national curriculum as guaranteeing an entitlement to education which should be available to every child. So, in judging whether the arrangements made by parents for educating their children themselves were adequate, account would have to be taken as to whether such provision was consistent with the requirements of the national curriculum.

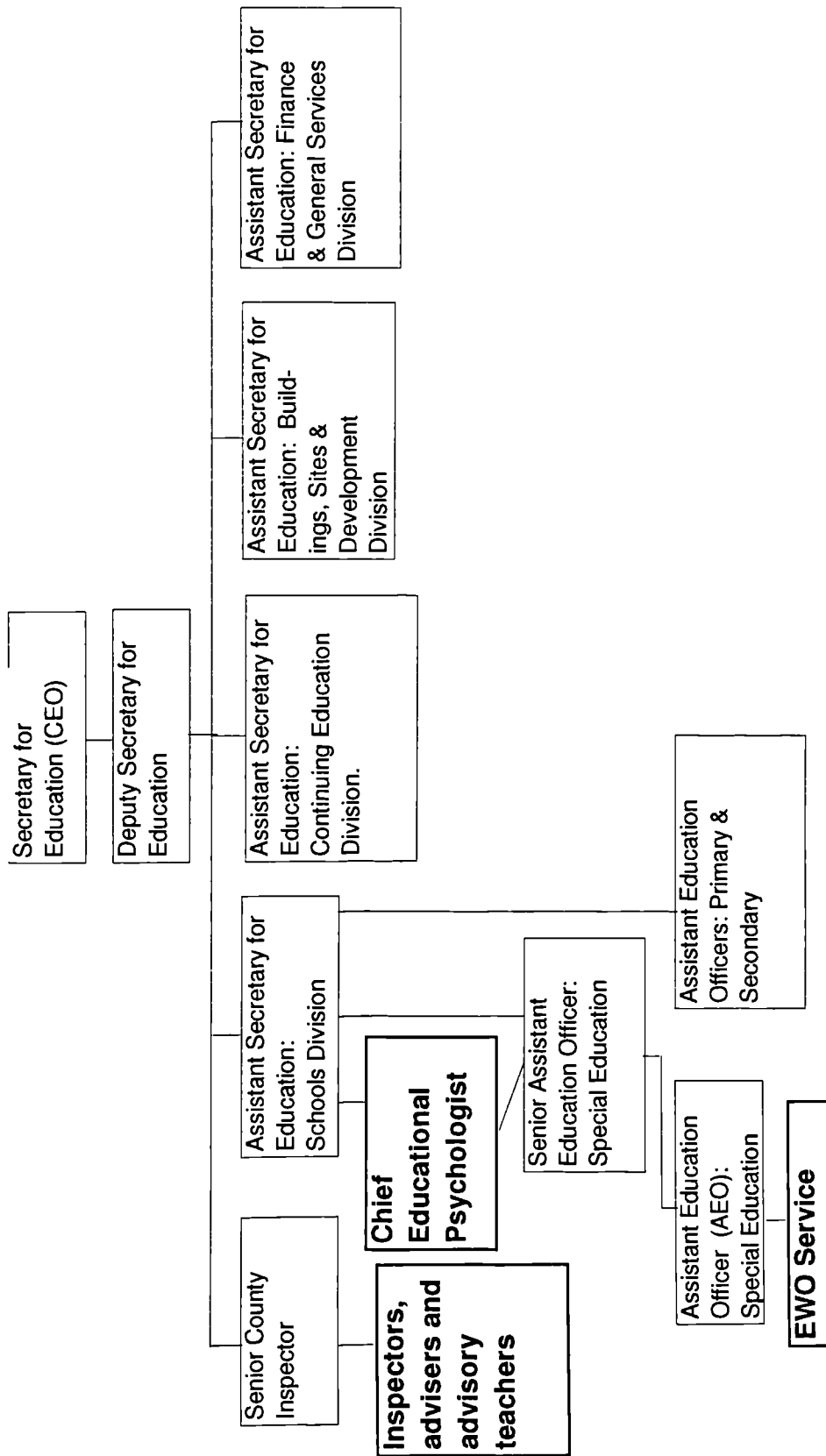
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jack Straw".

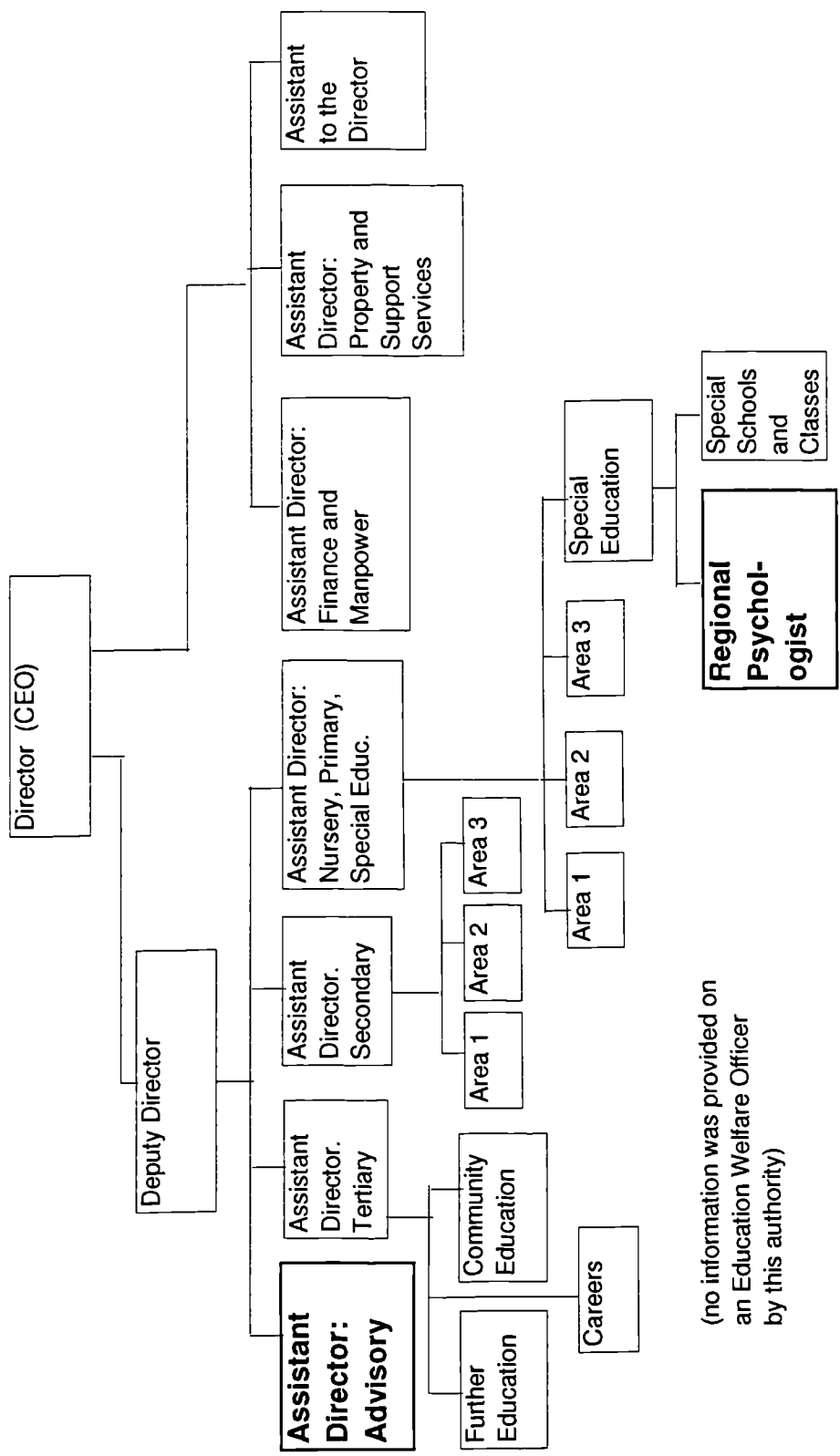
JACK STRAW MP

APPENDIX 7: SOME LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

Management Structure of Education Department - Authority 1

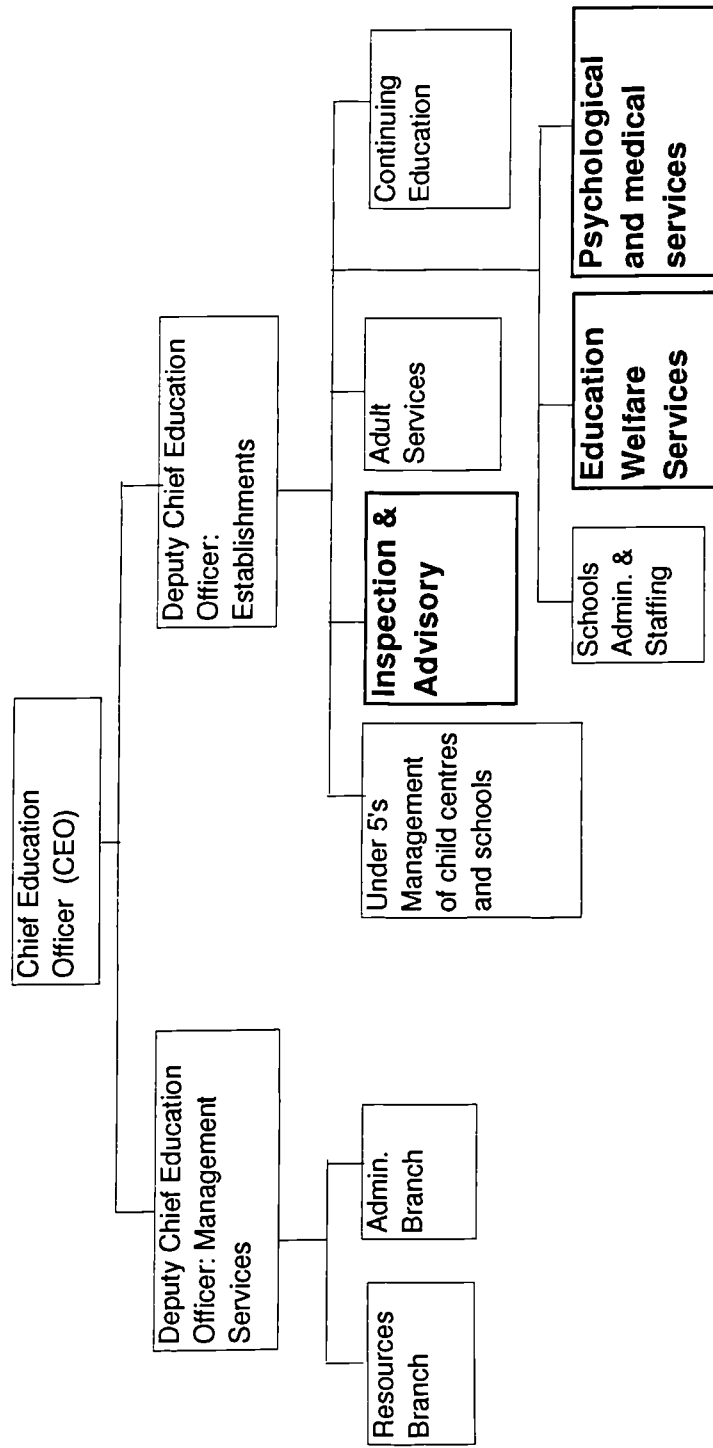


Management Structure of Education Department - Authority 2

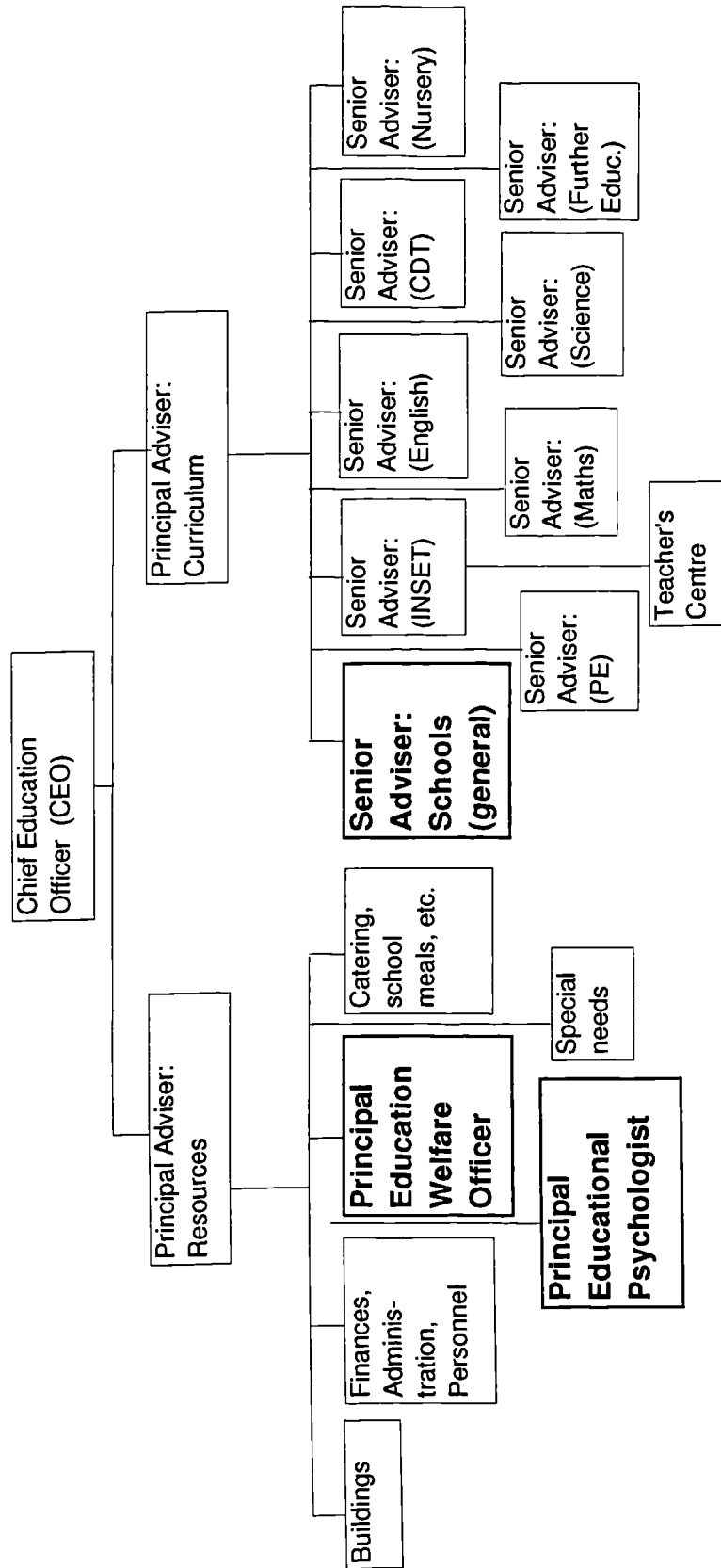


(no information was provided on an Education Welfare Officer by this authority)

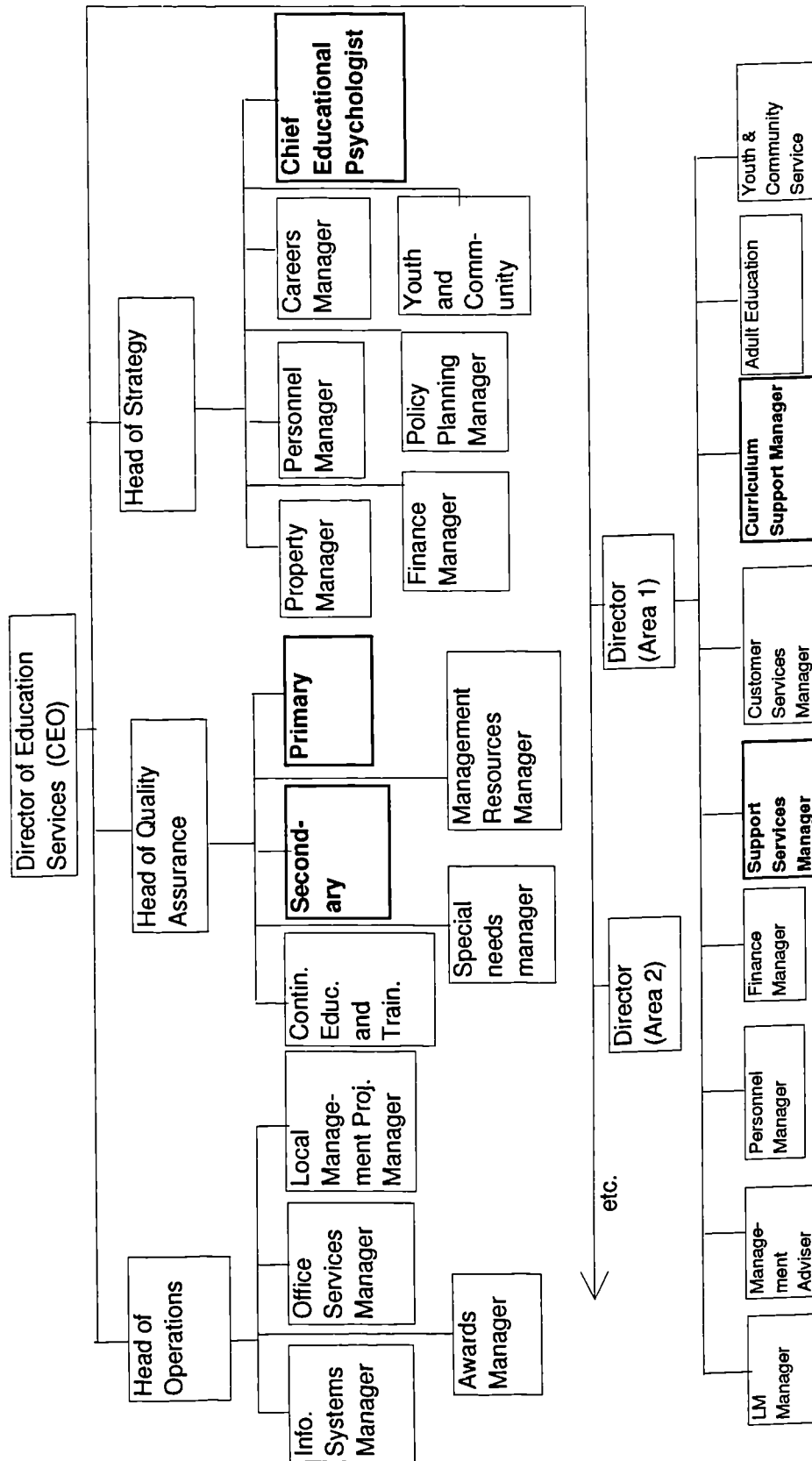
Management Structure of Education Department - Authority 3



Management Structure of Education Department - Authority 4



Management structure of Education Department - Authority 5



The Regional Advisers are within the Curriculum Support Services

The Regional Psychologists and Educational Welfare Officers are within the Support Services

APPENDIX 8: AN ADVISER'S REPORT ON A SUCCESSFULLY HOME
EDUCATED THIRTEEN YEAR OLD CHILD
in Brighouse, Tim & Bob Moon, (1990),
Managing the National Curriculum: some
critical perspectives, Longman, PP 66-67.

'The story reminded me of a report I once received from an Adviser about a youngster who was out of school. It was dated 8 June 1982 and read as follows:

"I have paid a lengthy visit to John Kingdom and his parents at Westhouney. John is fourteen next term and would normally leave school in a couple of years time.

I am happy that he is receiving education suitable to age, ability and aptitude at home, in fact, between ourselves, it is probably more appropriate and worthwhile than that which he is likely to be receiving at school - not through any fault in the local schools but because schools cannot always provide ideal circumstances for all learning and certainly cannot provide the context in which John is operating.

John is looking after a sizeable vegetable garden single handed and he plans to extend considerably on to other land owned by the family. He has numerous animals to care for, he is playing the organ in the next door church and the piano at home. He also does some composing. He reads a lot, both for pleasure and factual books about farming and natural studies. He is following a correspondence course in gardening for adults with comparative ease. His written work is average, he entered for O-level English this year and obtained a C grade.

He has a tutor, a retired teacher who visits the house for mathematics and is following a traditional and largely irrelevant course in it (such as he might be following at school) and he is learning quite sufficient about mathematics in context apart from that (shades of Cockcroft!).

His mother takes him to Farendon twice a week for tutoring in English and Roman history which he is keen on. He is studying elementary Latin for pleasure with a local friend.

There are teenage cousins in the local school and obviously there is plenty of contact and company and they seem close as a family.

He hopes to have a farm of his own as soon as possible. Two uncles own a farm in Weston, North Oxfordshire and Mrs Kingdom tells me that the family have the necessary finance to offer him a job.

Mr Kingdom is a gardener at the local school, so he and John have a common interest and work a lot

together. John learned to drive a tractor recently and can already ride a motor bike and drive a car on private land.

He attended a primary school some miles away and tried secondary schools but without a great deal of success.

In a sense John is really too busy to go to school. In my view there is no need to worry about exams. John will get what certificates he wants if and when he wants to I expect: I am only glad that there are so many more opportunities for adults who want to study later in life.

I have told them that I am satisfied that John is having a suitably full and varied programme with plenty of work experience. We all intend to continue the same sort of programme for the next couple of years and I have said I would like to call in next term and on a periodic basis until our responsibility ceases. They seemed to welcome it. Need I say more?"'

APPENDIX 9: AN EXAMPLE OF A FORM ISSUED BY AN LEA

The supply of such forms is not to be encouraged, as they define 'education' in terms of schooling. They were issued to parents for all home educated children in the area, from five to sixteen years of age and in the light of Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis are clearly not suitable.

INFORMATION ON A PUPIL BEING EDUCATED AT HOME

NAME OF PUPIL _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____ / ____ / ____

ADDRESS _____

NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN _____

TELEPHONE CONTACT NUMBER _____

NAME OF LAST SCHOOL
ATTENDED BY PUPIL _____

DATE OF LAST REGULAR
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE _____ / ____ / ____

WHY ARE YOU MAKING
ARRANGEMENTS TO PROVIDE
EDUCATION AT HOME?

Signature of Parent _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

1. CURRICULUM

Please outline the lessons or areas of work your son/daughter will be undertaking during the next 3 months. Indicate the books and materials that are being used, and who is teaching your child.

SUBJECT	TOPICS/AREAS OF STUDY	BOOKS AND RESOURCES USED	TAUGHT BY
ENGLISH			
MATHS			
SCIENCE			
HISTORY			

SUBJECT	TOPICS/AREAS OF STUDY	BOOKS AND RESOURCES USED	TAUGHT BY
GEOGRAPHY			
MUSIC			
DESIGN/ TECHNOLOGY			
ART			
PHYSICAL EDUCATION			

SUBJECT	TOPICS/AREAS OF STUDY	BOOKS AND RESOURCES USED	TAUGHT BY
MODERN LANGUAGES			
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION			
PERSONAL SOCIAL HEALTH EDUCATION			
GENDER AND RACE EQUALITY			
ECONOMICS BUSINESS EDUCATION			

Are there any other subject areas you would like to identify?

Please enter such information below.

SUBJECT	TOPICS/AREAS OF STUDY	BOOKS AND RESOURCES USED	TAUGHT BY

Does your son/daughter have any special educational needs?

YES

NO

If YES, please give brief description:

2. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Does your son/daughter engage in any other activities, visits or experiences that you feel are of educational value. Please describe briefly, (include hobbies, youth groups etc.).

3. CURRICULUM ORGANISATION

Please outline how the subjects/topics/areas of study are organised i.e. how many hours a week are given to each area or how many periods. (If you have a regular timetable a copy could be attached).

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRID	WEEKEND
a.m.						
p.m.						
evening						

It would be useful to indicate in which of these sessions your son/daughter receives instruction or teaching and which are periods of self-directed study, and or homework. A useful code might be -

T - Teaching D - Self directed

H - Homework

4. EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

As a parent who values educational opportunities for your son/daughter could you indicate how you yourself keep abreast of educational issues. It would be useful if you could list such sources against the following -

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| (a) Newspapers | YES/NO |
| (b) D.E.S. Documents | YES/NO |
| (c) Educational Publications | YES/NO |
| (d) Meetings/Conferences | YES/NO |
| (e) Other (please specify) | _____ |
| | _____ |
| | _____ |

5. RESOURCES

What resources do you have available to assist in your son/daughter's education?

- | | |
|---|--------|
| (a) good supply of books/materials | YES/NO |
| (b) a computer | YES/NO |
| (c) access to educational programmes
on TV/radio | YES/NO |
| (d) separate room for studying | YES/NO |
| (e) other (please specify) | |

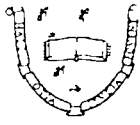
6. ANY OTHER COMMENTS

Are there any other comments you would like to add to the information that you have already provided.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Please return to:- Education Offices,

APPENDIX 10: COPY OF THE LETTER TO CHIEF EDUCATION
OFFICERS, WHICH WAS ENCLOSED WITH THE
QUESTIONNAIRE



The University of Liverpool

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: PROFESSOR WYNNE HARLEN

TEL NATIONAL 5 1 0
INTERNATIONAL + 4 1
TELEX 62 0-5 3 1 F

19 ABERCROMBY SQUARE P.O. BOX 147 LIVERPOOL L69 3BX

23 March 1988

Dear

SURVEY OF HOME EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The number of children educated at home is small, but believed to be increasing. Estimates vary between 5,000 and 20,000 in the United Kingdom. Preliminary enquiries with a number of Local Education Authorities and Education Boards indicate that authorities themselves are experiencing a growing number of problems. Procedures adopted across the country seem far from uniform, although a systematic survey has not so far been undertaken. A further consideration is the relevance of home education to the present discussions on parental involvement in education.

The enclosed questionnaire is part of a study of these problems which I am undertaking at this University. It is being sent to all local authorities in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and is an attempt to assess both the extent of home education and the procedures which apply within each authority when dealing with such families.

There are two questionnaires, one for primary, and the other for secondary aged children. I very much hope that your officials will complete and return them in order that a full appraisal can be made. They apply only to those families expressing a wish to provide the education themselves, rather than participate in formal school education.

As another part of this enquiry, I am planning to organise a conference on Home Education to be held in Autumn 1988. I would be pleased to hear from you or any member of your staff, concerned about home education, who would be interested in contributing to the conference.

Yours sincerely

Amanda J Petrie

APPENDIX 11: IMPORTANT CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF
AN EFFICIENT EDUCATION, AS LISTED BY THE
RESPONDENTS

The curriculum that the parent offers and the timetable followed by the child are crucial.

Ability of the parent to listen/accept advice.

The parents' serious intention to educate.

Contact with peers.

Parent has prepared a programme of work covering all areas of the curriculum and aspects of development.

Ability of parent to arrange for ultimate provision of secondary curriculum.

The adherence to a schedule and framework for progression.

Parents ability to find qualified teachers from recognised pool. Motivation of child.

Career expectations.

Extended family/friend support.
Parents' attitude towards adviser involvement.

Parents' perceptions of what the learning process involves.

Access to support (groups or trained teacher) if parents have no formal knowledge/training for teaching.

Very few parents have formal qualifications.
Correspondence course is considered desirable, but not essential - depends on parental income.

Knowledge of current trends in education: e.g. National Curriculum.

Parent's ability to assess the child's needs accurately to ensure correct response to them.

Whether parent has 'genuine' reasons or is just trying to keep the child at home for dubious psychological reasons.

Child's attitude to school.

Ability to offer a breadth of experiences & cope with exam board requirements if applicable.

Work is matched to the child's needs.

Parent's/child's attitude to the implications of national examinations/secondary curriculum [all items under 9 are listed as important or quite important].

Access to groups such as Education Otherwise.

Parents quite often arrange to employ a qualified teacher.

Parents' understanding of the expectations of the authority.

Whether the child is the subject of a statement of special educational needs.

At secondary level - access to other facilities for subjects such as science and CDT.

- To understand how children learn; the importance of the adult in recognising all-round achievement.

-[When referring to the last point in Question 9] I would not narrow this to a record of child's "current work". We assess the children in much broader terms i.e. academic attainment, ways in which children can use their knowledge, their attitudes and personal/social development.

General attitude of parent & child. A routine is important - pattern, order & regular work each day. They do get fresh air.

That the educational programme offered should be appropriate to the child's age, abilities and aptitudes. That a balanced curriculum should be offered.

APPENDIX 12: LIST OF LITERATURE WRITTEN BY HOME
EDUCATORS, OR BY THOSE HAVING EXPERIENCE
OF HOME EDUCATING FAMILIES

This select list is in addition to other books referenced in the bibliography:

Ballman, Ray E (1987), The how and why of home schooling, Westchester, Illinois, USA: Crossway Books.

Colfax, David & Micki Colfax (1988), Homeschooling for excellence, New York: Warner Books.

Deakin, M (1973), The children on the hill, Tunbridge Wells: Abacus.

Head, D (1974), Free Way to learning, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Hendy-Harris, Jean (1983), Putting the joy back into Egypt: an experiment in education, Auckland New Zealand: Hodder and Stoughton.

Joudry, Patricia (1975), As the children played, Montreal: Tundra Books.

Turano, Frank (1982), A need to be free: an experience in home education, Provo, Utah, USA: Modern Media Publishers.

Williamson, Darcy (1979), School at home: an alternative to the public school system, Bend, Oregon, USA: Maverick Publications.

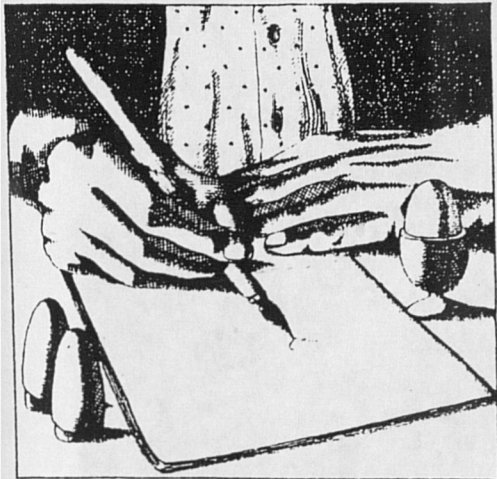
APPENDIX 13: THREE ARTICLES ON HOME EDUCATION

(these articles are reproduced with
the kind permission of New Society)

Steele, John, Educated at home, New
Society, 18 Oct. 1973, pp 153-154

Baker, Joy, Why go to school?, New
Society, 28 Feb. 1986, pp 8-9

Caudrey, Adriana, Keeping Education in
the family, New Society, 3 Oct. 1986
pp 7-8



Peter Till

Out of the way Educated at home

John Steele

The letter I had from the education officer said: "It will be helpful to know whether Melanie's education will terminate in July, when she will cease to be of compulsory school age."

Perhaps it was that commonly-held attitude—that education terminates on a certain date at a predetermined age—that made us decide, when we moved to the Cotswolds from London twelve years ago, to try educating our daughters at home.

Setting out on this relatively uncharted field, we first read the Education Act. Contrary to popular belief, it is not compulsory to send a child to an organised state (or even private) school. Section 35 of the act says: "It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability, and aptitude, either by attendance at school *or otherwise.*" Section 76 of the act also states: "Education authorities shall have regard to the general principle, that so far as is compatible with efficient instruction . . . pupils are to be educated *in accordance with the wishes of their parents.*" (My italics.)

We have never, in fact, needed to quote these sections of the act to any education officer. Once it was seen that we did indeed intend to *educate* our children, in the broad sense of that word, we were left pretty well to get on with it. From time to time we were asked to submit samples of timetable and work to the local education officer. Children who organise their own school, as ours have done, are only too delighted to comply with these requests.

Judging from sensational stories occasionally appearing in the national press, it seems that some education authorities have taken upon themselves, either knowingly or not, attitudes and powers expressly withheld from them by those who formed the 1944 act. It seems unlikely that the present government will change these provisions.

When we set up informal home schooling twelve years ago for two of our daughters, Stephanie was seven, and Melanie was four. We expressly requested the qualified, but unpaid teacher who lived with us at the time to *offer* lessons to the children, but not to force them. More lessons were rejected than accepted, and in the course of time the teacher left us for a paying job. Despite this, the children continued to learn. The elder was, and still is, an omnivorous reader, and when she wanted instruction in some particular subject, my wife or I (whichever was better qualified) would then give her some coaching.

A popular general encyclopaedia, which was published weekly, was the background for all her studies for nearly three years. Her almost obsessive interest in astronomy and science fiction caused her to read a large number of books over a period of years. Her general knowledge and wisdom, at the age of 18, appear to be at least as wide as, and perhaps of more practical use, than that of her contemporaries—even if she could not, perhaps, sit down and write examinations for her A levels in specific subjects.

Throughout this time we have encouraged interest in the live theatre, ballet, concerts. There is no television in our home. Both girls asked for, and were given, ballet lessons, piano lessons and drama/speech lessons. Both soon discovered that most of the pupils in all these specialised activities were not interested in, or actively disliked, their studies. And, of course, they soon began to discover the inevitable reaction of other children when it was found out they did not attend school. At ballet, one girl said to Stephanie: "You don't know how lucky you are not to have to go to school."

Both children also enjoyed our home theatrical productions and Stephanie was becoming increasingly drawn to the idea of a professional acting career. Meanwhile, every friend and visitor to our home was crying havoc and doom: "How will they ever get on in the world, not having to mix socially at school . . . what will happen if they want to go on for further education in some speciality?" We persisted.

Shortly before her sixteenth birthday, Stephanie auditioned for, and was accepted by, a nationally approved drama school. The director of one drama school, on hearing she had no formal schooling, said: "Splendid, that gives us less to undo." She decided she would require a skill for making a living between acting jobs and so applied to the local technical college for admission to its secretarial and business course. An admission test replaced her missing O levels, and she soon settled in the environment of an organised school. She was startled to discover, during her first few days in school, that every girl she spoke to in her class hated every subject and had very little respect for the teachers.

Stephanie, on the contrary, liked all her teachers, without exception, and was fascinated by all subjects offered. Yet we had been warned that: "She would not be able to mix with people... she would not have the qualifications to enter for what she wanted to do," and "she would be a practical and social misfit." In her year at the Stroud mid-Gloucestershire technical college, where she took her secretarial course, she came out with high marks.

Melanie, the second one, has also produced some surprises for the criers of woe. Unlike Stephanie, who had a first year in a formal classroom where she learned to read, Melanie has only ever had a few days in a schoolroom. On that occasion, when aged eleven, she was talked into attending classes by an anxious relative at a so-called progressive school, she was startled to discover that most of the children in her class knew less than she did about things which she took to be common knowledge. All showed supreme distaste for learning in general, and their teachers in particular. Reporting this at home to her mother, she burst into tears as she said: "I *can't* go back. It's the first time I've ever been *bored*." Not wishing to see that attitude develop, we allowed her to withdraw from formal lessons.

After her experience of attending classes, for a time Melanie refused her lessons. We watched with interest and permitted her to do what attracted her—mainly arts and crafts activities, and playing outdoors. Then, at twelve, Melanie decided to start a school of her own, with her younger sister Felicity, as pupil. To add interest, there were quite a number of other imaginary pupils, who turned the classroom into something resembling an old-fashioned small village school. Felicity, then aged seven, responded with enthusiasm, and learned to read. This was something she firmly declined to do under the tuition of an enthusiastic mother, and other temporary residents.

Melanie, when 14, had worked out a full timetable for herself. School started, sharp at nine o'clock for her younger sister and their imaginary friends. In her youthful wisdom, the teacher only kept the seven year old pupil at her lessons for brief periods. That way, interest was kept up and pleasure in learning continued. Melanie herself continued lessons all day. She asked me to teach her arithmetic, history and geography. Her mother took her in French (they used the BBC records), English grammar and composition. She went to an outside teacher for lessons on the guitar and has taught herself to play the recorder from a book. Now 16, Melanie has enrolled in a new free school in Montreal.

Of course, there are problems in all this. It is not perfect, and we would certainly not suggest that it is a suitable course for everyone. But in our particular circumstances, with our freedom to devote plenty of time to helping the children when asked, and living away from towns and neighbours as we have for the past twelve years, it seems to have worked, and to have worked well. We have always been open with the local education authority, and though there must have been times when there was head-shaking in the quiet of their own offices, we have never had anything but courteous and helpful relations with them.

OUT OF THE WAY

Why go to school?

JOY BAKER

Do children really benefit from attending school? One parent who successfully educated her seven children at home, argues that home teaching is far superior.

Thirty years ago the local authorities twice tried to take my children into care and I incurred legal penalties ranging from a £1 fine to two months' imprisonment, because I refused to send any of my seven children to school. Not only that, I gave them no school-type instruction—no timetables, no set lessons, no sitting at desks—in their education at home.

The legal battle was of a *Bleak House* variety. It lasted for ten years, starting in the magistrates' courts and ending in the Chancery Court and the Divisional Appeal Court. I maintained that the present system of school education was not only largely inefficient, but was often damaging to the children; that it ignored the real essentials of education—good speech, manners and behaviour; and that children need the civilising influence of home life to develop their potential, rather than being processed by the institutionalised treadmill of modern schools.

The local education authorities, justices, teachers and parents rose up in fury—particularly parents horrified at the idea of having to take full charge of, and responsibility for, their children, instead of thankfully pushing them at the earliest possible age into the nearest available school. (Their chances of doing this are now in fact diminishing, given Norfolk county council's latest plan to close some 100 rural primary schools over the next few years.)

My children, one barrister told the Chancery Court, were being brought up "like little hermits"—because they stayed at home and took part in the normal daily life and work of a small village community, instead of being shut up, all day and every day, with ill-assorted companions of their own age in school.

I claimed that true education involved developing a child's individual personality and preparing them for life in an adult world; but this shocked the local education authority. Their school attendance officer told the quarter sessions appeal court: "The greater part of education for a child consists of its being in a class." Because my children grew up in what one reporter described as "a Christopher Robin world," a barrister in the Chancery Court said they were learning "little or nothing." Because, as they grew older, they helped with the housework and gardening and all worked on neighbouring farms, they were, according to the same barrister, "being used as unpaid servants."

"If this method of upbringing continues," one judge said, dismissing my second appeal, "these children will be unable to fit themselves in with the rest of the community." He described my 13 year old eldest as "an extremely nice little boy, with very nice manners—an intelligent, sincere, clean and truthful boy." He then went on, "but we don't live on a desert island—we have to be taught to live as Englishmen and Englishwomen. What is to become of these children when they are grown up?"

A good question: my eldest son is now a journalist and broadcaster in New York; the others became, variously, builder, photographer, supermarket manager, garage proprietor, and engineer. None of them ever did go to school; they all grew up and left home, found jobs, married, and are bringing up families of their own. They are hard-working, self-disciplined, good citizens, at ease with all kinds of people, while remaining very individual in their outlook, and lucidly argumentative, when necessary. The only suffering they have experienced because of their unorthodox education has been caused by the hostility of those who opposed it.

In recent cases of appalling cruelty to small children, the authorities have stated that they only remove children from their parents as a last resort—often only after the child has been bashed, battered and bitten to death. But they did, without any preliminary inquiry, remove my four eldest children, then aged six, seven, eight and nine, from their beds, in the middle of the night, at a time when I was forced to attend a legal hearing on the other side of London and could not get back until the following day.

The children had been left in the care of a domestic worker, who was told that they were being taken into care *because they were not being sent to school*. I got them back, in a shocked and distressed state, after going to the council children's home, being physically thrown out by the matron and the officer in-charge, and spending half the night sitting

on the doorstep, until they gave me an undertaking to return them in the morning.

Seven years later my two eldest daughters, then aged 13 and 14 were summoned to appear before a juvenile court, with a view to their being taken into care—because they were not attending school.

I find it interesting, therefore, to observe the result of all this school education. Too many children leave school unable even to read or add up; and their behaviour in public is often so horrible that bus crews recently refused to carry any school children unless they were accompanied by a parent or teacher who could keep them in order.

My children, now employers themselves, have been shocked at the low standards of applicants for employment. And all those wonderful dedicated teachers, whose services I was so severely criticised for declining, seem less interested in the welfare of their pupils than in going on strike for better pay.

The present educational system has failed: it may be turning out citizens for some future computer age, but it has failed to equip young people to live happy, useful lives.

I think there should be a drastic shortening of school hours. Schools should be made places for serious instruction only—no play-time, no meals—for two or three hours a day. The children's real life and education would be where it should be, in and around their home; and parents should be made to understand that their children are their responsibility entirely and belong at home.

Of course, this would mean that women with children would have to stay at home: more jobs would therefore become available, thus lessening unemployment. Children would be properly disciplined and intelligently occupied, which would lead to a decrease in hooliganism, vandalism, and petty crime.

To criticism that this would mean a return to the position as it was before 1944, I can only say that this would be excellent. Children then were better educated, better behaved and better adjusted to life altogether, than they have been since the infliction of the present Education Act

KEEPING EDUCATION IN THE FAMILY

In Britain 1,600 families educate their children at home. The Papes are one of them.

In Mrs Pape's kitchen classroom I learned why bats can see, how dragonflies are born and that Mary Poppins had a duck head umbrella handle. In return her children learned that I wasn't a germologist - 'someone who takes away germs' - but a journalist. In a didactic moment Mrs Pape wrote the new word in orange chalk on the knee-high easel black board. Kirsty, a flaxen-haired toddler, with flushed, balloon cheeks slightly encrusted with baked beans - and a pink frock, wiped it off with a cloth and demanded the word 'Sunday' instead.

It's Mrs Pape's philosophy that 'anyone can be your teacher'. She assured me: 'If you come here for the day, we won't lay on anything special. We'll learn something from you.' The Papes are among 1,600 families in this country who are known to have opted to keep their children away from school. (The actual figure may be even higher.) Instead, Chris Pape, an ex-teacher, and her husband, John, a fireman, educate their three children - Joanne, eight, Richard, five and Kirsty, two - in their ramshackle house, almost on top of a roundabout, in Wokingham, Berkshire.

It is the parents' prerogative to do so as long as they can satisfy the local education authority that they are providing appropriate education. Berkshire's previous education authority inspector - a Mr Gibbs - was at first sceptical about the Papes' homespun education but was quickly won round and even fell in with their history enactments. One family photo shows a besuited Mr Gibbs laying his sword on the armor-clad five year old and mouthing 'arise Sir Richard'.

Much of the learning takes place in the Heath Robinson kitchen, amid a clutter of infant tables and chairs, paper mobiles, hanging binoculars, shelves of wildlife books, wall charts, tissue paper juvenilia, and two pint size blackboards, wedged between the cooker and the sink. There's even a tank of caterpillars and drink-moths on the side-board. 'Some people think we're weird for having caterpillars in the kitchen, but the kitchen is the place we live in', says Mrs Pape. A giant paper clip with the legend 'we are nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else,' holds a clue to the 'Papal' philosophy.

Mrs Pape's vision of education is like Wordsworth's: "Come forth into the light of things / Let Nature be your teacher." On fine days education is outdoors. It must be a child's dream of life without school - rather like entering the pages of Swallows and Amazons or the Narnia

books. Days are spent canoeing, pond-dipping or collecting worms. Sometimes they enact a period of history in the garden, or learn to abseil down the climbing frame.

But life isn't an unbroken holiday. The children spend some time each day with their exercise books open on the kitchen table. Kirsty, her hair in bunches, comes tottering into the kitchen demanding her sticking-in and colouring book - her academic work. Joanne and Richard do word puzzles and sums. They also have to do a few chores in the house, to give them a taste of having to do things they don't want to. The rest of their education is singularly free of that.

Mrs Pape believes in letting her children learn what they want, when they want. 'I wonder if I'm not an educator, but a facilitator,' she muses - a wisefaced woman, with elbow-length brown hair, glasses on a chain, sheepskin slippers, loose grey slacks and a black T-shirt with the words: 'The Power of God'. 'I believe the children know what they need,' she says: 'they're very responsible. If Joanne has been playing all day, she'll come in and start working. They can regulate their own work. If they're interested in one thing why shouldn't they devote themselves to it? After all children grow in spurts, why shouldn't they learn in spurts?' Her credo pours out with infectious enthusiasm, while she irons a tiny wool cardigan and watches the children playing.

She shows me a three-tier tank full of pond life and picks a discarded dragonfly case from a butterfly net. The children crowd round - Joanne: tall, fair-haired in a white frock; Richard: fair and grinning in a train patterned cardigan. 'What's this?' Mrs Pape tests them. 'It's a...it's a...dragonfly case,' rattles Joanne. Kirsty lets the crisp, weightless body fall into her palm. 'She's the one who goes round saying "lava, lava"', says Mrs Pape with pride.

'The wonderful thing about home education is that the children can keep going back to things. At school they do a topic and it's over. They've done that,' she says. In one highspeed sentence - it gives me cramp to take it down - she enthuses about what they've been doing: 'If it's a fine day, spring day, so you can almost smell it, we get the magnifying glass and a box and go and watch insects. Another day we went to Runnymede and pretended we were pages and knights and Richard was so excited that when an aeroplane passed he shouted: "look at that falcon"'.

Then there was Bat Day: 'You know how you make butterfly cakes with wings sticking up, well, everything was to do with bats that day - so these were bat cakes. We were totally batty.' Batty is precisely what some people think

that the Papes are. But what separates them from other people is that they are living according to an idiosyncratic vision. Mrs Pape decided to start educating her children at home after Joanne had already started school. She was at school all day and then going on to drama group, music lessons and Brownies. Mrs Pape felt she hardly saw her daughter and the most dispensable part of her crammed timetable was school.

She elaborates, cautiously: 'We felt we were doing what God wanted us to do. Maybe your magazine wouldn't go along with that. But we felt God was telling us to home educate. And I think God was really clearing us for fostering.' If the children were at school all day she would feel they were losing out if she was also occupied with foster children. As it is her natural children receive plenty of attention during the day. While we talk Mrs Pape's foster son, Simon, a tall broad-shouldered 19 year old lad with tattooed arms, takes history notes at the kitchen table. There's no exam; he just enjoys it.

Mrs Pape also has a 'lodger in training' - 16 year old Brian - and she does emergency fostering. At one time she had seven youngsters in the house. For this reason she believes that her own children are not being overprotected or isolated.

The crux of her philosophy is that childhood is too precious to be spent in school. Her own educating combines the practical and the academic. She sets great store by the "authentic" experience. So the children are encouraged to do things for real, not make believe. They've written letters to MPs and to captains of industry and got gentle, considered letters back.

But are the children missing out in any way? Are they deprived of contact with their peers? Are they deprived of facilities? And are they already too far removed from the school system to stand a chance of re-entering it? To the first, Mrs Pape answers an emphatic no. She says that Joanne mixes with contemporaries at Brownies, drama groups, music, Sunday school and camps they go on to help handicapped children. As for missing out on facilities, she says: 'I can't think of anything that they're deprived of. They probably have more varied physical education'.

As for missing the boat educationally, Mrs Pape is convinced that her children learn as much as those in school, even if it's at a different pace and in a different order. If they need to know something complicated or advanced, she sends them to experts. And if they ever want to go to school, they are free to do so. There's also nothing to stop them from taking public exams from home.

But undoubtedly the Pape brood is not in the embryonic rat race. They are away from the competitive school ethos. They are neither top nor bottom of the class. They are not party to the first, school-fostered stirrings of materialism: 'I've got new shoes and you haven't.' However the children may have exchanged the greenhouse for the hothouse. Mrs Pape would dispute that, but she admits that only time will tell whether she has made the right decision. The fact is she'd rather produce 'a happy dustman than a neurotic sociologist.'

New Society, 3 October 1986.

APPENDIX 14: A SPECIMEN LEA LETTER TO SEND TO HOME
EDUCATORS, PROPOSED BY THE CHILDREN'S
HOME-BASED EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (CHEA)

SPECIMEN

FULL-TIME HOME EDUCATION

Local Education Authorities have a duty to satisfy themselves that every child in their area is receiving an efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have.

An advisor will be making an appointment to call so that we may assess your educational provision but it would be helpful in the first instance if you would furnish us with the following information:

Name/s of child(ren): (provide space for)

Date/s of Birth(s) (provide space for)

Name of Parent/s (provide space for)

Address (provide space for)

Tel:

It would help our adviser if you would attach an informal outline of the way you intend to approach your child's education at this stage. This might include the things you feel are important in your child's education and the way you intend to approach these, the way you intend to use your environment and local resources, how you intend to use topical matters and so on. Please feel free to include anything else you feel might help the adviser.

The following would also be helpful to the adviser when s/he calls:

A list of books you are using initially and intend to use in the near future and details of any schemes or courses.

A list of T.V. and radio programmes being used.

A list of any computer software you feel is useful to your child.

An idea of the types of clubs or classes attended can be useful as can be details of other associations the child might be involved in, your child's hobbies and so on.

A look at a diary of what your child has done.

Details of any other resources you have used or intend to use in future.

continued.....

The adviser may not be familiar with everything you mention so please add a brief note as to the value of each resource.

The advisor is there to advise the authority, not to advise parents but please feel free to contact the following member of this authority if you have any queries:

You may also like to contact the following voluntary agencies for help, support and publications:

Children's Home-based Education Association,
14 Basil Ave.,
Armthorpe,
Doncaster,
South Yorkshire,
DN3 2AT.
Tel: 0302 833596

Education Otherwise,
25 Common Lane,
Hemmingford Abbot,
Cambridgeshire,
PE18 9AN
Tel: 0480 63130

APPENDIX 15: DETAILS OF THE STATE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE
IN ALASKA, USA

Extracts from 'An overview of home
education in the United States of
America', Amanda J. Petrie, August, 1987.

Alaska is the only state which provides and supports home study as a public school alternative. The relevant laws show that it is an available alternative for all parents, but highly regulated.

A family educated at home is treated as a private school. It must still comply with applicable school health rules for immunisation, physical examinations, fire safety and sanitation. An application form has to be filed with the local school superintendent who must be notified of any changes. A non-public school comes under his supervision for administrative purposes. Parents are expected to keep similar hours and days to a public school (minimum 180 days a year) and keep accounts of things that are taught during the school year. If the child(ren) are enrolled in grades 4, 6 or 8, the parents must also agree to their being assessed by a nationally standardised test. The tests measure achievement in English grammar, reading, spelling and mathematics and the results are made available to the parents and the Department of Education representative. ... Alaska does not require home teachers to have any special qualifications other than the need or desire to teach their child at home.

..., it is not considered practical to insist on school attendance or teacher certification. If a child is 'enrolled in a full-time program of correspondence study approved by the Department', home education is automatically approved. [It is also approved] ... for a child who is 'equally well-served by an educational experience approved by the school board as serving the child's educational interests, despite an absence from school'. This is a very broad clause which could encompass many home schooled children, but which is strictly controlled by the school board and will thus presumably vary from area to area.

One of the most important influences on home education in Alaska has been the correspondence study course that the state is obliged to provide (section 14.070.20 - 9): 'the department shall provide accredited elementary and secondary correspondence study programs available to any Alaskan through a centralized office of correspondence study'. They are also obliged to fund such courses (section 14.17.022). ... students enrolling in the courses are strictly regulated. Those living in remote areas can enroll at any time, but those choosing not to attend school must enroll before the end of the first quarter of the school year. This is to ensure that children are following a course of study and not truanting. Students are not permitted to drop the correspondence programme during the school year without good cause.

In 1985, there were 1,300 students enrolled in the Centralized Correspondence Study (CCS). The CCS was

started 50 years ago and is now provided free by the state to any children. It employs 39 people, '23 of whom are certified teachers. Other employees include a librarian, registrar, publications specialist, word-processing staff, a book-keeper, stock handlers and clerical staff. There is a large materials warehousing facility and an extensive mail room in addition to the offices'. An information magazine, 49er is published and distributed to participants in the courses (extracts are included in this Appendix)

As is stated in Method: Alaskan Perspectives, Vol.7, No.1, Winter 1986:

'When a student is enrolled in C.C.S the advisory teacher develops an individual program based on student background and ability. Each subject has a packing list, by grade level. Teachers indicate which materials for each subject are to be sent to the child and submits this list to the warehouse, where the kit is packaged for mailing. Because of the individualized nature of C.C.S., a child may be sent elements from the third grade reading materials list, others from the fourth grade math list and still others from the second grade science list..... In addition to text books, the warehouse contains science materials, including dissecting kits complete with animal specimens, physical education equipment, such as balls, bats and jump ropes, art materials and filmstrip and tape players'.

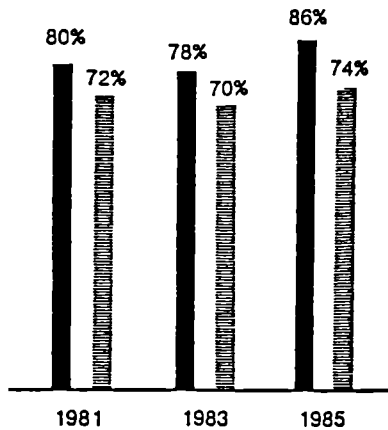
The advisory teacher prepares a report on each student and comments on both the home teacher and the student. Sometimes they visit the home. It does, however, seem to be a two-way system. If the parent or student does not like a particular course or book for any reason, the advisory teacher is open to alternative suggestions or can advise on another textbook. When using the course, there are very clear responsibilities placed on the home teacher by the state. (Details are included in this Appendix.)

C.C.S. is often used by students who are experiencing temporary difficulties with other school systems or within their own homes. These students return to the public school system as soon as possible. In these cases the programme serves as a support system to both the public school and the student, by giving each party a breathing space, with the minimum interruption to academic progress. A few of these students are pregnant teenagers, young mothers or those with an alcohol or drug problem. Flexibility, individualisation and attention to special needs are the characteristics which make it a valuable resource for families and school districts. ... The correspondence courses are considered

to be academically successful. [A graph of results is shown below.]

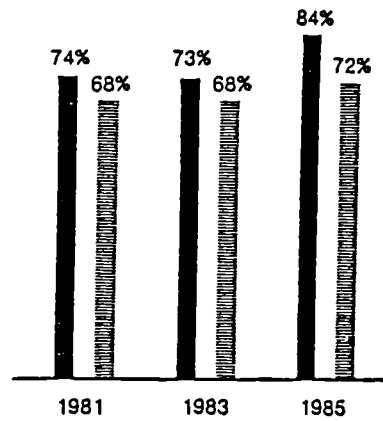
Alaska Statewide Assessment

Eighth Grade Reading



■ Centralized Correspondence Study Eighth Grade Average for Reading
▨ Alaska Statewide Eighth Grade Average for Reading

Eighth Grade Math



■ Centralized Correspondence Study Eighth Grade Average for Math
▨ Alaska Statewide Eighth Grade Average for Math

Apart from the academic courses, there are others such as training animals, beginning and intermediate piano, Alaska's botany and zoology and a private pilot's course.

Extract from The Correspondence Study Handbook, issued by the Centralized Correspondence Study, Department of Education, Juneau, Alaska.

Home Teacher Responsibilities

The home teacher, usually a parent, is responsible for teaching the student at home. The responsibilities of the home teacher are:

1. To provide a regular place conducive to good study habits for the student to work.
2. To organize a study schedule that will permit the student to finish the course in nine months.
3. To direct and correct daily work.
4. To supervise tests.
5. To help the student in all educational study.
6. To mail complete checkups to the CCS advisory teacher each month.
7. To be present (or available) during all study hours.
8. To inform advisory teachers of any vacation periods.
9. To communicate regularly with the advisory teacher regarding progress and/or needs of the student.
10. To notify the Admissions Officer of any changes in student information.
11. To notify the advisory teacher when a student wishes to withdraw from CCS.

The home teacher needs to be constantly available to provide instruction to the student. Teaching elementary children by correspondence is a full-time job.

49er

CENTRALIZED CORRESPONDENCE STUDY

September 1986

CCS STUDENTS ABOVE AVERAGE ON BASIC SKILLS TESTS

by Bob Falle
advisory teacher



CCS GRADUATES 16
DURING FISCAL '86

CCS students in all grades scored consistently higher than the national average in the Survey of Basic Skills tests conducted during April and May this year.

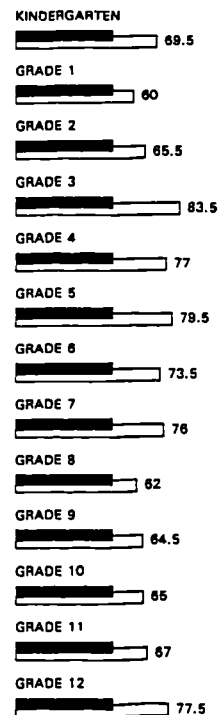
Scores were given as a national percentile, which shows the students' ranking in relation to other students in the country. For example, a score of 75 means that 75 percent of students nationwide scored lower. Conversely, only 24 percent of nation's students scored higher. The score does not reflect the percent of questions answered correctly.

Average scores for CCS grades kindergarten through 12 ranged from 60 to 83.5. Although all grade levels scored above average, third graders did the best (see the accompanying graph).

Scores have been fairly stable over the three years that CCS has participated in the Survey of Basic Skills tests. This year, 469 students were tested, 25 percent more than last year.

The testing shows staff how effective CCS courses and programs are and can point to areas that need improvement. Again this year, the test showed that CCS students receive an education as good as or better than that received by the majority of children in the nation.

SRA Survey of Basic Skills Scores
National Average = black
CCS = white



Sixteen CCS students graduated from high school during the past school year, and the entire staff joins in congratulating them.

The graduates are:

LESLIE ARD of Anchorage is interested in pursuing a career in medicine.

DANIEL BOONE of Eagle earned the highest grade average in the class. He was student body president and is known among CCS teachers as a self-motivated achiever. He was accepted at three Ivy League universities. He will be

CONGRATULATIONS GRADS



attending Williams College this fall on a generous scholarship. Boone studied with CCS for 10 of his 12 school years.

STEVE BOX of Juneau graduated early in the fiscal year. He completed his first year at Montana State University and is a member of the ski team.

BUNNY BEE BUNTIN of Ketchikan.

MICHELLE CARLSON of Anchorage.

KAREN KORN of Anchorage will begin studies at the University of Redlands this fall.

KURT LAMAREAU of Anchorage is employed and continuing to do volunteer work for his church. He hopes to become a full-time minister for the Jehovah's Witnesses. Kurt was one of the top students in his class.

PATRICK SHANE LASLEY of Yukon Flats has been accepted at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

STEPHANIE LETSCH of Anchorage.

RAFE RUSSELL of Yukon Flats is aiming toward a career in mechanics.

DEBRA SCHOONMAKER of North Pole, who quit high school ten years ago, graduated last November a few days before giving birth to her fourth son. Was school hard after a decade? "I enjoyed it," Debra said. Why did she decide to get her diploma? "One day I was trying to get my eight-year-old to finish some difficult homework. He said, 'You're a good one to talk. You never finished.' He can't say that anymore." Debra plans to study at home for certification as a travel agent. Eventually she would like to be a psychologist.

CYNTHIA SIMONSON of Juneau plans to get married next spring.

JAMES E. SPEAKS of Anchorage has enlisted in the Army.

MICHAEL STEFANY of Anchorage, another early year graduate, completed his first year at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa. He is employed now, but is looking forward to a career in political science or missionary work.

KATHERINE STILL of Juneau is employed and plans on traveling before thinking about college.

MELISSA WEEKS of Anchorage plans on a business career. She also plans to be married next spring.

FIRST GRADERS--
DON'T MUNCH
ON CORN SEEDS

Although there is no need for concern, you should be aware of this situation.

The sweet corn seeds were the only ones found to be treated with fungicide.

MIDDLE SCHOOL
HONOR ROLL LISTED

COLLEGE ENTRANCE
EXAMS SCHEDULED

Registration deadlines are generally six weeks before the test.

ANY FAIR WINNERS
OUT THERE???

We have just learned that sweet corn seeds sent as part of the first grade science supplies last year and this year were treated with a chemical that could cause rashes, swelling, and eye inflammations.

The chemical, called Captan, is used in commercial agriculture to prevent the growth of fungus on seeds. Captan is considered a low order toxin, meaning it will not cause severe problems.

If you received these seeds, avoid contamination of food, avoid inhalation of Captan dust, and avoid repeated and prolonged skin contact.

If you choose to dispose of these seeds, you may simply put them in the garbage. The Dept. of Environmental Conservation approves this method because the amount involved is so small. You may also return the seeds to CCS for disposal.

If you choose to keep the seeds, keep them out of the reach of children who may play with them or put them in their mouths.

If you have any further questions about Captan, contact us or call the Anchorage Poison Control Center at 1-800-478-3393.

The CCS honor roll for grades 6 through 8 was released recently. The roll includes students with a grade-point average of 3.0 and above as of August 15th. The honor roll is as follows:

GRADE POINT 4.0 to 3.5 - 8th Grade: Joshua Smith and Dawn Guilmet. 7th Grade: Wes Stadler, Jena Benten, Dietrich Pfeifer, and Becky Lohse. 6th Grade: Henry Ray Walters, Paul Johnson, Matthew Crum, Jonathan Soverns, Jesse Smith, Mieke Malmberg, Kirsten Bode, and J. Bleu Moon.

GRADE POINT 3.4 to 3.0 - 8th Grade: Warren Collins, Kim Kubrick, Tirzah Phillips, Judy Blackwell, Stacey Hammack, and Marcy Williams. 7th Grade: Kelly McCarley, Larissa Kotik, Todd Pollard, Rebecca Engen, Janelle Pickard, Cam Tulloch, Rosanna Watkins. 6th Grade: Colorado Clark and Rusty Vincent.

High school juniors and seniors should be aware of the following testing dates for the SAT college entrance exams and Achievement Tests for 1986-87.

SAT and Achievement Tests will be given on Nov. 1st, Dec. 6th, Jan. 24th, May 2nd, and June 6th. SAT tests will also be given on April 4th.

CCS counselors encourage all juniors and seniors to take these tests. Registration deadlines are about six weeks before the tests. You can get registration information from your nearest high school or by writing Judy Woytowich, CCS counselor.

If your CCS students won awards in a local or state fair, let us know. CCS advisory teachers entered 62 projects by 43 students in the Southeast Alaska State Fair at Haines, and we'll be announcing those winners in a future edition of the 49er. We'd like to announce your winners as well. Drop us a line.
