



**The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith**

**Minister for Skills**

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The Baroness Barran MBE  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

14<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Dear Diana,

I would like to thank you for the thoughtful debate on Clause 30 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and for sharing your knowledge and expertise in child protection.

As you know, Clause 30 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill introduces a requirement for parents to obtain consent from the local authority before withdrawing their child from school to home educate. The measure applies to children subject to section 47 enquiries or child protection plans or those in a special school as arranged by the local authority. The primary aim is to ensure that children at risk of significant harm or those with specific needs continue to receive appropriate oversight and support from educational institutions when it is in their best interest.

I recognise and understand your intention with Amendment 207, which seeks to extend the consent measures to children who have ever been on a child protection plan. We share the desire to protect as many children as possible from harm.

However, amending to include all children who have ever been on a child protection plan would at least triple the number of children potentially in scope of the measure and it would not necessarily capture those who most need the additional attention. Parents often work hard with multi-agency professionals to reduce risk and to no longer need child protection support. To include within the consent measure, all children that had ever been on a child protection plan could mean that thousands more parents who wish to home educate their child would have to ask the local authority for consent, even if the child protection plan was many years ago. For children of secondary school age, this could mean going back 10-16 years.

The numbers could be challenging for the local authority to manage and could also perpetuate stigma for parents who have made genuine change.

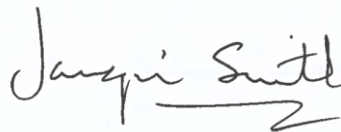
By maintaining the current draft of Clause 30, we can take a proportionate approach, focusing on the most vulnerable children or those with the highest needs, while respecting the right of the parents to home educate.

Alongside Clause 30, Bill measures relating to Children Not in School (registers and strengthening the school attendance order process) consider the child's wider home and other learning environments as part of local authority decision-making.

Additionally, the Bill introduces broader safeguarding measures, such as the single unique identifier, stronger multi-agency information-sharing requirements, and the establishment of multi-agency child protection teams. These provisions collectively provide additional safeguards that aim to safeguard and protect all children.

I would of course be happy to discuss this further with you. Thank you again for taking the time to engage on these matters. I hope these further details have been useful and I will place a copy in the House libraries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Jacqui Smith', with a stylized flourish underneath.

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