

Geoff Barton, Radio Suffolk, 29 February 24

Wayne Bavin - 29/02/2024 - BBC Sounds

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0h938y4>

Extract from a segment which started at approximately 2:08 into programme

Original recording was only available for 28 days - copy of relevant segments available on Soundcloud

<https://soundcloud.com/user-253906669/radio-suffolk-breakfast-show-29-february-24-extracts>

This exchange is commented on in this article on our website

Union Leader Challenged for Suggesting that HE Children are Prone to Involvement in Gang Culture and Drugs

<https://he-byte.uk/england/union-leader-challenged-for-suggesting-that-he-children-are-prone-to-involvement-in-gang-culture-and-drugs>

Wayne Bavin (Breakfast Show host, BBC Radio Suffolk)

Jeff Barton (at the time General Secretary, Association of School and College Leaders)

Barton

It's worth saying, Wayne. It won't be popular with people, that because we haven't got a national register that those young people who aren't in school may be getting high quality home education, but some may not, and we might not know exactly what's happening and what will be, they might just be prone to is falling into gang culture and drugs and so on and so forth. And that's why I think the emphasis on as many young people being where they need to be to be educated about subjects, but also to socialise with other young people and all the benefits that schools give. That's the most important thing I think society can do to prepare young people for them to take their place as adults in the future.

Bavin

That's quite a strong statement to make, Geoff, isn't it? You know, insinuating that children who are home schooled could fall into knife culture, gang culture and crime?

Barton

Um, well, it's not as strong. It's simply a statement.

Bavin

Well it is if you, if you, if you've got no, no, no evidence to back that up.

Barton

We have we have got evidence of that. So for example.

Bavin

What evidence?

Barton

So I'm based here in Suffolk, Wayne, as you know, but I represent 25,000 school and college leaders and I travel around the country. The most striking example of this was in a leafy part of Yorkshire, where a headteacher of a really good school was concerned that there was absenteeism from some of their young people. It wasn't because of home schooling. The kids were simply not turning up at school, and what they found out through the police is that those youngsters were

being used as drugs mules. In other words, they were being paid £40 to carry drugs from one side of the town to the other side of the town. Now, what I'm not saying is every child who a parent is saying is being homeschooled is doing that. But what I am saying is because we haven't got a national register where parents have to register their child and say, actually, I am homeschooling my child, how do we know that those who aren't attending school today are safe? And we have a responsibility. So it might sound a tough statement, but ultimately we all have a responsibility as adults.

Bavin

So those...

Barton

Young people who can fall victim to things they really shouldn't be falling victim to.

Bavin

All those children you just talked about there being drugs mules, the police told you they were all home schooled or weren't in school.

Barton

They were certainly not in school. I think we've just got to be careful.

Bavin

So there's a big there's a big difference there, isn't there, between being home educated and not going to school, being being true. There's a big difference.

Barton

And that's and that's and that's my point. But what I would say...

Bavin

So you haven't got evidence to back up your statement then have you, that if you are home educated, you could fall into crime and gang culture, because any child at school, even with a good education, can fall prey to gang culture and crime.

Barton

Absolutely. I think, I think, probably Wayne we're trying to say the same thing here, I don't think we're being quite as controversial as people might think. What I'm saying is, if you're not in school, it might be because you're being home educated, but we don't know whether other things might be going on. And that's why having a national register for every young person so if they're not turning up at school today, I don't have to worry about it because actually the parent has registered they are going to home school. That means we can feel more secure, and that means we can focus on those who aren't turning up and we don't know where they are. And that's the most important thing I think I'm trying to say.

Transcript made with voice recognition app and then edited.

