

# Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Bill

## Page 2: About you

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

an individual

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Member of the public

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

*No Response*

Please choose one of the following; if you choose the first option, please provide your name or the name of your organisation as you wish it to be published.

I would like this response to be anonymous (the response may be published, but no name)

Please insert your name or the name of your organisation. If you choose the first option above, this should be the name as you wish it to be published. If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. We will not publish these details.

## Page 7: Your views on the proposal

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal of giving children equal protection from assault by prohibiting all physical punishment of children?

Fully Supportive

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal of giving children equal protection from assault by prohibiting all physical punishment of children?

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

Physical assault is not tolerated towards adults or some animals and children should expect to receive these same basic rights. My own experience of physical punishment made me angry as a child and I am still dealing with the after effects, this should not be accepted as a normal part of growing up.

Q2. Could the aims of the proposal be better delivered in another way (without a Bill in the Scottish Parliament)?

No

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I believe that education is an important part of dealing with this issue but I don't agree that this makes it unnecessary for a Bill to go through Parliament. A Bill may bring more attention to the issue and send a clear message that assaulting children is not accepted in this country.

Q3. What do you think would be the main advantages, if any, of giving children equal protection from assault by prohibiting all physical punishment of children?

Happier, more content children and families. In my own experience, physical punishment always escalated the problems in my household, leading to increased anxiety and tension. This would not only be beneficial to children but to parents as well.

Q4. What do you think would be the main disadvantages, if any, of giving children equal protection from assault by prohibiting all physical punishment of children?

Families who do use physical punishment not seeking help to modify their behaviour for fear of prosecution. As a child I never told anyone about being hit because I was scared of being taken away from my family. I think it is important that families have access to parenting classes or something similar to learn to discipline their children in an appropriate manner. There is obviously also a social stigma associated with this so this is also likely to be something that would have to deal with simultaneously.

## Page 11: Financial implications

Q5. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have?

Unsure

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

There could be an increase in cost if the Bill leads to an increase in social services or other agencies. However if physical punishment is also linked to poorer mental health in adulthood this could also lead to a reduction in cost as there could be less demand for mental health services. There may also be a long term reduction in costs associated with services who have to deal with violence (police and social services) if this Bill does manage to break the cycle where physical punishment leads to abuse.

## Page 12: Equalities

Q6. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on the following protected groups (under the Equality Act 2010): race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, age, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity?

Positive

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

If the Bill works as planned then it should obviously have a positive impact on young people. If LGBTQIA+ young people are at an increased risk of physical punishment from unsupportive parents they will have greater protection. Children of any gender, ethnicity, religious background should all be viewed equally under the law and none of these groups should have their belonging to a particular group used as a justification for physical punishment. Example - it being more acceptable to hit a boy than a girl, saying that's just the way people from x background do things.

Q7. Could any negative impact of the proposed Bill on any of these protected groups be minimised or avoided?

I don't think children of any group will be negatively impacted by being given equal protection from physical punishment. There may be some negative impact on parents which may then impact children. e.g institutionalised racism etc leading to parents of certain backgrounds receiving greater scrutiny/punishment.

## Page 14: Sustainability of the proposal

Q8. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably i.e. without having a disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impact?

Yes

**Please explain the reasons for your response:**

Very few people would argue that having similar laws in place to protect adults is unsustainable and I don't think widening the net to include children would incur any disproportionately negative impact.

## Page 15: General

Q9. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

I think this Bill has the potential to improve mental and physical health and well being of children who will grow to become adults in society, this can only be a positive thing.

I would like to further emphasise that the Bill should set out support for parents who do use physical punishment to adopt new methods of discipline to avoid a situation where this proposal is seen as "parents should go to jail for smacking their own children". I think this is important as it will likely improve the effectiveness of the Bill. I also think it is a good opportunity to address these attitudes and make clear

Q9. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

that children are not property of their parents who can do as they see fit to their children, but that children are people in their own right and as such should be afforded the same protection from assault as anyone else in society.