

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Yvonne Nicoll

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

Children deserve to grow up in a loving environment free from the threat of violence. As the eldest of four children who was regularly smacked, but with no idea why, I have spent a great deal of my adult life suffering from chronic anxiety and depressive episodes, occasionally so bad that I contemplated suicide. I was not a bad kid, never in trouble at school, very quiet almost to the point of being mute, as I was afraid that by speaking up I might get into trouble for something. I grew up scared of my parents, my mum in particular, and this fear widened to include almost all adults in my life, and especially people in positions of authority. My mum was a well kent face in the community (she was the local citizen of the year recently) but behind closed doors she was angry and abusive and would take it out on me. I tried to talk to teachers but no-one would believe me. Despite the fact that it has taken me to the age of 42 to feel like I am an adult who deserves to be treated equally, my parents are still advocates of smacking and would state that it did them no harm, and did me none either. Clearly this is not the case and I fully support this bill which will give additional protection to the most vulnerable in our society.

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

Violence towards children is unacceptable and this bill will make it clear that this is the case, with no room for misinterpretation and ambiguity.

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?

Hopefully it would help parents re-evaluate their methods of discipline and encourage more loving and kind ways of encouraging good behaviour. Children would learn that violent outbursts are unacceptable. It is hypocritical that an adult assaulting another adult could face criminal charges but an adult hitting a vulnerable bairn might not.

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?

None

Page 11: Financial implications

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

Broadly cost-neutral

Please explain the reasons for your response

Not sure of any financial implications

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

Any moves we make as a society towards equality and the encouragement of kindness will have wider benefits for others who may face abuse.

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

Don't know

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

Page 15: General

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

Very grateful to John Finnie for raising this issue.