

# 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 am content for this response to be attributed to me or my organisation

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Children should have the same protection as adults against assault of any kind - even if it is 'just a smack' as some people like to call it. The imbalance of power in the relationship adds to my concerns of using physical punishment in relation to children - the adult having power and exerting that over the child feels wrong. I also feel that the use of physical punishment could be confusing for children and sends them a mixed message about the use of physical punishment/violence. We would not expect a child to hit another child/adult or an adult to hit another adult if they are doing or saying something we didn't like or agree with - however when a adult feels that a child is behaving in a way they don't like or feel comfortable with they can smack them. It really is double standards. I wholeheartedly agree with giving children equal protection!

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

Unsure

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

I am not entirely sure however I do feel it is a good thing that it has been presented as a Bill in the Scottish Parliament.

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?

The law as it stands just now can be confusing about what and what isn't acceptable. It would vary in interpretation from one person to another about what is seen as 'justifiable'. In rare cases a child's plea for help because they are being hit (smacked) could be played down because the adult in charge could downplay what the child is saying by emphasising it as 'only being a wee smack'.

Having a zero tolerance policy takes away the grey area and protects ALL children from the fear of being hit.

I also feel this will help to strengthen the move towards greater recognition of children's rights as identified within the UNCRC.

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?

Some parents/carers might feel that they lose their rights to parent their child how they see fit so it may cause a little backlash initially.

I suppose some families who may have been brought up with physical punishment may feel that they are unable to deal with the challenging behaviour that the child/ren might display. Support should be offered on alternative methods of behaviour management to empower parents/carers.

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**

I am unsure of this element. There will obviously need to be an awareness raising programme if the Bill is passed but I am not sure of the bigger financial picture relating to this issue.

## 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?

Slightly positive

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

It could have a positive affect as family and/or personal issues in relation to the groups mentioned could prevent the frustrations being taken out in a physical manner on children who may be struggling to cope with life circumstances etc.

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

I can't think of anything

## 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:**

I suppose in essence its a change in how we approach children - so the change of mind set and attitudes. Doing so will need to involve education and awareness raising initially however as the generations come through it would filter through.

## Page 15: General

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

I really hope, for Scotland's children, that this Bill is passed and ALL children within Scotland are protected from not only actual physical punishment element but also the threat of it too.