

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".)

Academic with expertise in a relevant subject

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Anne Sinclair Taylor

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

I worked as a teacher with children who had experienced maltreatment and went on to become a lecturer and researcher in Education with a specialism in Child protection. My first hand experience and research in the field demonstrably shows that violence towards children results in social emotional and physical harm. A wide body of research makes clear that maltreatment in childhood substantially increases the risk of long term mental health difficulties, substance misuse, self harm and criminality. In their meta-analysis of 172 studies Gilbert et al (2008) found that approx. 10% children are physically abused with a similar number neglected and psychologically abused with up to 10% of girls and 5% of boys exposed to penetrative sex. However official rates show less than a tenth of this burden. Exposure to multiple types of abuse and repeated episodes of maltreatment result more severe psychological consequences. The burden on the children themselves and on society is substantial. For example a third of adults in their 20s who were maltreated meet the criteria for major depression. There is a huge gap in identification of levels of abuse in society with all the suffering and negative consequences that implies. Banning physical punishment sends a clear signal that it is as unacceptable to maltreat children as it is any adult. It sends a message that the most vulnerable in our society infants and children are to be respected as any other member of the human family. The potential benefits to individuals and society are obvious. It's time to make the change that is long overdue.

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

Unclear as to what other mechanisms could be employed

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?

Sends a clear message that violence towards children is unacceptable.
Causes parents and carers (as professionals have had to do) to develop alternative strategies to manage and promote 'good' behaviour.
Helps responsible adults to feel better about themselves (by not resorting to violence) and thus engender better communication and relationships between family members
Creates a society where respect for others no matter their ages becomes normalised.

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 but it here needs to be positive parenting advice and support to manage the transition.

Page 11: Financial implications

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

Significant reduction in cost

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

After an initial cost in positive parenting support there would be long term substantial savings e.g. in terms of mental health provision, custody/prison, services for substance misuse, eating disorders, unwanted pregnancy etc

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

As disabled children re 3x more likely to suffer from abuse this Bill would have an increased positive impact on this group.

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

How could reducing violence do anything other than have a positive impact on any member of society? Perpetrator or victim?

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:

Experience from other countries who have legislated in this way do not report disproportionate impacts in these areas.

Page 15: General

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

I support this proposal wholeheartedly because it makes sense empirically financially and morally.