

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Barbara Srodzinski

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 work for an organisation that supports children who have been abused and see and hear on a daily basis the impact of physical assault of children. It is our duty as a society to protect those who are the most vulnerable. Overwhelmingly the majority of European countries already have this law in place. For Scotland not to recognise this law sends a message that we are a society which tolerates the physical assault of children. Whilst the argument that 'I smacked my children' or 'I was smacked and it did them no harm' is often used we cannot deny the fact that today through extensive research programmes it has shown how ineffective it is and indeed in many cases the damage it has done, with health and wellbeing implications for those children as they become adults. Society and government then bears the cost. Scotland is a country that says it wants to be the best place for a child to grow up in. How can we say that when we fail to build a system which protects children? Too often the media focus and messaging on the issues of justifiable assault is on smacking, eclipsing the real driver of the proposal which is to protect those children who are cruelly, violently and systematically physically abused. I believe we will look back in twenty years time and say 'Why did we take so long? Why didn't we bring this law in sooner?' Society has made progress in so many areas to protect children like seat belts in cars, no smoking in public places or smoking in cars with children. At the time these laws were passed people recognised the research behind them but it still meant many people adapting their habits. Now we cannot imagine that you wouldn't have these laws. Government needs to re-focus and listen to the child's needs, keeping them at the centre of the proposal and cut out the distracting noise being created and fuelled by the media which wrongly moves the focus more to the desires of parents and carers.

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

No

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?

Helps protect children who are physically assaulted and acts as a deterrent for those who would consider physically assaulting children.

Changes societal behaviour. Those who would have considered assaulting a child would seek alternatives. Alters society's approach to reprimanding children by seeking and building understanding of more effective and supportive approaches to help raise confident and caring children. It will help to stop intergenerational cycles of abuse.

Cost saving. Fewer children grow up suffering the impact of physical assault on their health and wellbeing. This in turn would create savings for society in that there are fewer needing support in their adult life.

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

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

Significant reduction in cost

Please explain the reasons for your response

Reduction of spending as fewer children grow up with the impact of physical assault affecting their mental health and well being, which drives their need to access public services.

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

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

No Response

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?

No Response