

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Gordon B Drummond

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**

A majority of people in this country accept that it's wrong. A majority of countries, and international organisations such as the UNCRC, the Council of Europe, consider physical punishment of children to be wrong. The current position of the Scottish Government is that it's wrong. There is substantial scientific evidence that it's of long term psychological harm. Allowing physical punishment of children to continue will promote social problems in the victims and perpetuate a treatable source of social pathology. Scotland has a reputation as a progressive egalitarian society and the persistence of a law that allows physical abuse of children is contrary to Scottish ideals. The legislation involved appears simple and the costs limited: the opportunity for good is enormous.

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**

The legislation necessary appears straightforward and unequivocal. Many other jurisdictions have done the same.

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 long-term effects of cruelty to children would be reduced, with commensurate improvement in psychological well being and behaviour

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?

It's hard to think of any.

## 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

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

There would be costs in publicity and public education, followed by long term benefits by reduction of psychological and social harm to children and thus a reduction in the costs incurred by misbehaviour, offending, and the attendant requirement for social care.

## 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**

Boys are more likely to be assaulted. Many minority groups tend to use physical punishment more frequently: Judaism and Islam, in their more extreme forms, are more repressive. It will be helpful for society as a whole to accept that there are some social norms that over-ride the rights of religion to impose on children. Many marriages and partnerships are abusive: the knowledge that all violence in the home is unacceptable will possibly reduce physical abuse.

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

The responsible person system may help

## 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:**

The economic effects of reducing long term social problems and the environmental impact of bad behaviour by children and young people would be positive. Reduced costs of social care and environmental restitution (such as vandalism) would be also positive

## Page 15: General

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

Any possible pressure on social services in administering the provisions of any legislation would be short term, and reduce as people get used to the idea that hitting children is harmful and wrong.