

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".)

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Stephen Rankin Dental surgeon

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 opposed

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

There is a clear and profound difference between physical chastisement of children and physical abuse of children. This has been recognised for centuries throughout every culture and time period. Such a proposal would lead to hundreds of thousands of caring and loving parents being labelled as criminals and divert resources away from the genuine cases of child abuse. The facts speak for themselves - child problems and discipline problems are increasing as less parents now use proper parenting methods which have included the correct use of physical chastisement historically. I have observed this both as a parent seeing other children's behaviour who have not been disciplined correctly and as a professional treating children who have not been disciplined properly. When a child is not guided properly by parents then not only does behaviour suffer and treating such patients becomes difficult but also children do not have the maturity to make the correct decisions and thus children from poorly disciplined homes usually require more medical treatment (in my sphere - more dental treatment) than children from well disciplined homes. In order to reinforce correct training the proper use of physical chastisement is required in certain circumstances and such a proposal as suggested by John Finnie should be rejected.

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

The proposal should be dropped

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?

Children already have protection from assault.
The use of language in this proposal is misleading and biased towards Mr Finnie's philosophy.

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?

As stated children have equal protection against assault.

To criminalise the use of proper physical chastisement would cause many problems - I note a few below - this threatens the freedom of families to bring up children as done traditionally for centuries in our land and culture

- it threatens religious freedom where for example the Bible is clear in advocating physical chastisement when required

- it is unfair to children who have not yet reached a level of maturity or wisdom to behave in a correct fashion. A child left to his own volition would eat the wrong food, watch the wrong TV programmes, not get the correct amount of sleep and abuse other children. We all accept these behaviours to be harmful to the child and sometimes correction of such behaviours require physical chastisement.

- proper loving and caring chastisement if criminalised would lead to thousands of trivial reports which would mean real cases of abuse would be allocated less time meaning that this proposal would in fact lead to child abuse going undetected.

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

Significant increase in cost

Please explain the reasons for your response

This is not only a waste of money but would mean that already stretched resources would be affected

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?

Negative

Please explain the reasons for your response

society would suffer producing children with more physical, emotional and psychological problems which in turn would require more money to try and fix. prevention is better than cure!

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?

No

Page 15: General

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

Smacking a child to correct behaviour is not child abuse and indeed is a loving and compassionate act for the parents care enough to form good character in that child. It is not loving to stand by and not direct a child's character and sometimes a smack can reinforce such guidance.

My wife and I have raised 5 children and we are fully aware that some children require more work and guidance than others and when required all of our children were smacked to correct bad behaviour.

Everyone of them understand the necessity of this and all intend to follow the same means of child rearing as they have had. they have witnessed poorly disciplined children in their home - they made it clear to us

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

that they did not wish to have undisciplined children who hit them and damaged their possessions, come to their home. parents who stand idly by watching bad behaviour in their children are not doing the best for their children.

We have seen unruly children abusing parents and because the parent did not smack that child the bad behaviour is reinforced and so many times we have seen that child having major problems in the future.

To give one illustration of this

In Sweden where smacking was banned in 1979 - that country has seen child-on-child violence increase since the ban.

I would strongly suggest that this proposal is not introduced so that our children are protected from further poor parenting in this country