

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Patricia Lovatt

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 believe that we should treat children with compassion and therefore not physically assault them. I do not think that hitting children is a good form of discipline. It is often ineffective at best and damaging to their emotional development at worst. Many children are just too vulnerable and emotionally sensitive to cope with being hit or smacked. Some may not see it as doing any harm but they do not know what harm it does to an individual child. It can have serious and long lasting effects on some children. Good evidence of this lies in attachment theory and the ACE programme developed by people such as Suzanne Zeedek. Our society in Scotland should have moved on from this damaging culture. We say that we value human rights and therefore we should show this clearly.

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

I think education is helpful and particularly parenting groups such as Incredible Years are valuable but they don't reach everyone. Legislation would need to be backed up with campaigns and education.

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?

It would be clearer to all parents and carers where the line is drawn in terms of physical punishment. There would be no grey areas between how much physical punishment is acceptable and how much is not. Children would be less likely to be harmed and therefore have less ill effects as adults. I think it would be easier for parents who could concentrate on other ways to communicate with children.

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?

Sometimes parents are simply exasperated and can react physically through sheer frustration in a moment of despair when a teenager pushes them to their limits. I am not sure how the law would deal with a one off lapse. I think this would be an unpopular bill with many people who believe it goes against their rights as parents and that the state is interfering with these. That means that it may be an unpopular political move and fail to get through parliament. It would therefore benefit from cross party support.

Page 11: Financial implications

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

Broadly cost-neutral

Please explain the reasons for your response

Maybe education would cost something.

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

I believe it would be positive in all the areas where people can be discriminated against. Some groups are possibly disproportionately affected by physical punishment as children e.g. Children with disabilities.

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

I don't think there would be any negative impact.

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?

I hope it is taken forward with cross party support as well as the support of the 3rd Sector. I think it would have a positive impact on the mental health of children