

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 would like this response to be anonymous (the response may be published, but no name)

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

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

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?

A change in the law would change attitudes, making it socially unacceptable to smack. As a teacher I notice that children who are disciplined through smacking are generally the ones with more behaviour problems. Smacking doesn't work (beyond the very short term). Smacking generally occurs when parents are angry - a sign they have lost control. In this way smacking can easily slide into abuse. It can be hard to define when "reasonable chastisement" slips into abuse. If children are extended the same rights as adults then that uncertainty would no longer exist. Most parents would accept the change in the law and modify their behaviour as necessary. Those who did not would largely be those who had crossed an unacceptable line anyway.

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?

I do know parents, who I would consider to be kind, loving parents, who have resorted to smacking. While I believe they were wrong to do so, I think it would be a mistake if good parents were criminalised and otherwise happy families were torn apart as a result of a change in the law. My hope would be that the law would largely bring about a change in parenting behaviour, but that discretion could be exercised and "verbal warnings" given to parents, at least as the law bedded in.

Page 11: Financial implications

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

Some reduction in cost

Please explain the reasons for your response

I believe money would be saved long term for the NHS through less depression and fewer cases of physical abuse, resulting in fewer injuries. I also think there would be small savings in education in the long term, as I believe less smacking at home would result in an overall improvement in classroom behaviour. It might also lead to less violent crime therefore lower policing costs long term.

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