

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Please explain the reasons for your response

While this proposal may be seen by some as the 'nanny state' dictating what parents can and cannot do, the current legislation leaves a legal loophole of 'reasonable chastisement'. Set against this we have seen recent very difficult cases where children have suffered awful abuse at parent's hands resulting in their death. I can see no reason why children should not receive the same equal protection as adults from assault. Of course this legal protection does not stop adults being assaulted but it does allow the law to intervene.

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 this is an example of legislation being needed to reinforce the need for change in the same way as car seats for children in rear seats, smoking in public places and so on. I would also like to see more funding going into services to support young/new parents such as Homestart, parentcraft groups and so on.

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?

I think it will help children to grow up without the belief that hitting someone is a way to solve an argument. How can we teach children that it's wrong to slap, kick and hit if we cannot set that example?

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 can't see any disadvantage other than the 'nanny state' accusation.

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 increase in cost

Please explain the reasons for your response

As I said above, I would like to see additional resources going into projects that work with families and children. Many of these services have been cut as local authorities have tried to make ends meet financially. Direct support is needed for families to encourage positive ways of behaviour management with young children.

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

I think I am right in saying that there is evidence that boys are more likely to be physically punished than girls so this legislation would level this out, and I would think this would be true across race, disability and religion and belief.

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

Not sure.

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:

I think that the direction of travel of Scottish Government on protection of children has been pretty clear to the general public over the past 10 years. The trend is that an increasing number of parents recognise that physical punishment is ineffective. This proposed legislation is in tune with this and should not come as a great surprise so I would not anticipate a significant social impact.

Page 15: General

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

No