

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Andrew Turnbull

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

It is anachronistic to have laws which protect adults from physical violence when there are exceptions for children. In this day and age there is ample evidence that smacking and physical punishment is not effective. As a parent of four children smacking was certainly not part of our family pattern. Yes, we would lose our tempers and yes, we would not always be proud of our own reactions to difficult behaviour, but our children grew up to be responsible, happy adults who are wonderful parents, uncles and aunts. The reasoning of those who do not support this seems to lie in the belief that, if a parent, in an absolute exception, in the heat of the moment loses their cool and slaps a leg or similar, he or she will be dragged to the police station and charged for "cruelty". The problem is actually where physical punishment verges on abuse (as defined in regulations). Then the law would come usefully into action, removing some of the grey areas, and enable appropriate action to be taken by the Authorities. The role of Government should be to take account of evidence and drive forward legislation, where appropriate, to reinforce good practice. This is one instance where the government can lead by example and demonstrate that Scotland is not so far behind other nations who have already dealt with this issue. This should be a cross-party decision understood and supported by all and not influenced by political colour.

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 principle should be established in law and be the benchmark for appropriate adult behaviour.

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?

For children, it would allow them to be aware of their rights.

For adults it sets a standard to which we should aspire. It would also make it crystal clear to adults that they need to become aware of more positive ways of dealing with behaviours. The days of children being seen and not heard belong to the Victorian era, and the days of children being belted and caned at school are thankfully over. It is time to move to the next stage and catch up with those nations who can provide us with good parenting role models.

Good parents should not be afraid of this proposed legislation.

We would be better connected to Human Rights legislation by this Bill coming into being.

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?

None. Parent education is desirable anyway.

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

This behavioural change for some is, for them, a cultural change and should be managed through health and education.

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

It is important to ensure that all cultures living in this country are equally supportive of the goals of the proposed Act

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

If Government can take this progressive step then education is the key to its successful delivery

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 proposals of the Bill are more sustainable than maintaining our current duplicitous position

Page 15: General

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

I commend John Finnie on bringing it forward and sincerely hope that members do not play party politics with it!