

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

Please explain the reasons for your response

There are many reasons why I am fully opposed to the proposal. I will highlight four here 1) Not ALL physical punishment of children is ASSAULT 2) many loving parents use mild physical punishment to discipline their children. This law would immediately criminalise these loving parents. 3) Parents should have the right to decide on the form of punishment they use to bring up their own children, not the state. 4) I was smacked as a child and I thank my parents for their teaching of me. I have suffered no long term ill, only good as a result. A child needs to know that life has boundaries and physical punishment is one way that can be used by parents to highlight the dangers of stepping outside these safe boundaries. For their protection, not assault!

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

Yes (if so, please explain below)

Please explain the reasons for your response

This subject can certainly be discussed but to use the law to criminalise those of an opposite view is oppressive and authoritarian.

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?

No Response

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?

1) Physical punishment such as smacking is not assault. It is a form of discipline that is used, and has been used, by thousands of parents for thousands of years. Parents discipline their children because they love their children. There are laws already in place, rightly so, to protect children from assault.

2) Criminalising smacking, which many loving parents use in a reasonable and fair way, will lead to thousands more trivial referrals to social work increasing the workload that they are already finding impossible to manage. This will put the children who are at genuine, serious risk of abuse less likely to be helped and rescued.

3) The Bible permits the physical chastisement of children. Criminalising smacking would discriminate against Christian parents.

4) I am a parent of young children and I strongly believe that the discipline of my children is my responsibility. This law is intrusive and undermines the right to a private family life.

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

Giving the state an increased and unnecessary workload, interfering in the lives of loving parents and their children. Leaving resources thin and abused children at risk.

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

The Bible allows smacking as a reasonable punishment for children, this law would discriminate against Christians wanting to raise their children in a manner consistent with their religion.

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

Please explain the reasons for your response:

It will divert resources away from genuine cases of child abuse.

Page 15: General

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

1) This ought not to be an 'equality' issue. Children are not adults and ought not to be treated as adults in lots of different areas of life. Fundamentally, of course, children and adults alike ought to be respected

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

and loved, however this is manifested differently for children and adults. In love and for their safety and protection, children are not given the responsibility of driving a car or marriage or are not allowed to own firearms, buy alcohol, go on certain fairground rides (safe height restrictions) and many other privileges and responsibilities of adults. Likewise, children are cared for by their loving parents in ways we do not care for other adults, like cleaning their dirty bottoms and helping them eat their food. Children are children and ought to be treated as such and loved as such, including their discipline to prepare them for the challenges and responsibilities of adult life. Reasonable smacking, administered in love is one such form of discipline.

2) A 2014 public poll showed that 65% of adults agreed that it is sometimes necessary for a parent to smack a naughty child. Only 22% disagreed. The public therefore strongly opposes a ban on smacking.

3) If children are not disciplined correctly, children suffer, families suffer and society will suffer.