

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".)

Professional with experience in a relevant subject

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

I am a retired social worker who has worked for 30 years in the field of community education work, adult mental health and adult learning disability. In the mid 70s I worked for 5 years as a Scottish pioneer in the field of adult literacy, becoming the first full time Co-ordinator of the scheme which was then in Lothian region. Though I do not personally have children, I have seen in adults in all these groups, the damage caused by physical punishment. In many many cases of adult illiteracy the belting damage was caused early in primary school by an insufficient understanding of various forms of learning difficulties-including deafness, poor eyesight, high functioning autism, and left handedness. Children who were belted or birched often ended up with stammers or stutters, as well as an inability to write or spell, and hid the damage for the rest of their lives..... I also remember as a child in an Ayrshire primary school, my own terror as various small boys were belted in front of the class, to ensure compliance. I never got the belt, but it terrified me. In fact to avoid witnessing it I often feigned sick even though I myself was never likely to get it. It leaves children and young people with a deep experience of terror which they do not need to have. Of course there needs to be appropriate control and management of children and young people, but it is an absence of imagination, empathy and diverting activity that leads to resorting to physical punishment. There is no need for it..... and in the case of some men, and a few women, an automatic recourse to physical punishment leads to various forms of domestic violence and abuse..... Obviously it would be difficult to supervise at home, but that is something that the scope of the bill would need to work out over time.

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

Think legislation is the only way to ensure across the board response.

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?

Giving respect and unconditional positive regard to the child. This is a desirable foundation for any learning development and later, good citizenship.....

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?

Need for considerable support and education for parents who have themselves been brought up by means of physical violence. So they will automatically fall back on it....
Verifying what goes on in the privacy of a home could involve significant resource allocation.
Chance of children exaggerating and telling tales on others..... very difficult to enforce in peer sibling situation where rough and tumble is a part of growing up

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

level of support and supervision required. Evidence of minor physical assault might be difficult to obtain? Witnesses?

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 lays out a model for the tolerant civil society we want to live in. It would be invaluable in maternity, pregnancy and for tolerance of different sexual orientations.

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

Its up to them to work that out. That would be similar to minimising sectarianism.

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?

Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response:

I think there would initially be a cost impact, but then later it might reduce adult crimes of assault so over time likely to be a societal investment, but that would be over a 20 year period.

Page 15: General

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

Long consultation period required and reference to other societies where this is already the norm eg Scandinavian ones.....

