

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

William Armitage

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

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**

Smacking is NOT an assault in Scottish Law! Assault requires intent to harm. A responsible parent who lovingly chastises his/her child has no such intent.

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?

None! Indeed parents not disciplining their children is one of the main reasons why disruptive behaviour is so prevalent in schools (making teaching difficult) and in public places in general. Indeed child abuse cases and child-on-child assaults INCREASED in Sweden when they banned smacking in 1979.

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?

Many - too numerous to mention. The plan is intrusive and a threat to normal family life. Loving parents would be criminalised. Trivial instances would swamp already overloaded social services. Children are already protected from assault - smacking is NOT an assault on the child. Children benefit when disciplined by their parents. And children are NOT adults - they still need to be taught right from wrong.

## Page 11: Financial implications

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**

- Swamping social services with trivial cases - Criminalises parents and prosecution costs - Poor behaviour of undisciplined children - Poor education because of increased disruption

## 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 negative

**Please explain the reasons for your response**

Bullying increased in Sweden

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

It can't be avoided because bullying is behaviour related

## 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 be detrimental to society in general. Poorly disciplined children have less life chances - indeed they are disadvantaged.

## Page 15: General

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

The public strongly opposes a ban on smacking. A 2014 ComRes poll found 65% of adults said it is sometimes necessary to chastise a child who is being deliberately obstructive or displaying anti-social behaviour. Only 22% disagreed. Why do politicians think they know better than the public? If politicians cannot tell the difference between assaulting a child and loving parental smack, it is the politicians who need educating.