

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.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

I am fully opposed to the proposal to criminalise smacking. This is because thousands of loving and caring parents such as myself would be turned into criminals overnight. Many, like me, would consequently lose their professional status and employment, which would in turn severely impact my children in a very negative and long-term way, as well as placing a significant financial burden on the state (perhaps for generations to come). Many parents (again, like me) believe that we should be rearing responsible children who value respect (both for themselves and others) who will become responsible citizens in due course - reasonable physical chastisement, as currently exists, is an important part of the process of disciplining the errant and sometimes violent behaviour exhibited by typical young children learning their way in life.

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

No 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?

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?

The disadvantages of prohibiting all physical punishment of children are many and include:

- removing the rights and responsibilities of parents (like myself) to discipline their children as they see fit.
- removing a very important disciplinary option from parents and leaving them open to abuse themselves from their children, and leaving society with children and eventually adults who see no limit to their own excesses and selfish, violent behaviour.
- smacking is not an 'assault' which is (quite rightly) prohibited by existing law.
- the criminalising of responsible parents who (by using smacking as part of their range of disciplinary measures within a loving family) try to raise respectful and non-violent children who respect authority and their fellow citizens in society.
- the proposals will certainly lead to the development of future generations of even more violent, selfish and undisciplined young people and adults who see no limit to their own priorities and have little respect for anyone else in society. Crime rates and violence will skyrocket if smacking is banned. Evidence from around the world - especially Sweden - confirms this.

Q5. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have?

No Response

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?

No Response

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 Response

Page 15: General

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

My suggestions are simple - leave the law as it stands. It provides a practical and pragmatic balance of rights and responsibilities between children and their parents. Smacking is NOT 'child abuse'. Failing to discipline a child with smacking (when appropriate) and thereby failing to foster their proper development as a responsible citizen is what constitutes genuine 'child abuse'.

Responsible and loving parents take on an essential role in our society. I have three young children whom I am trying to raise as respectful individuals who will become responsible citizens in due course and contribute in a positive way to our society. This comes at a huge financial, emotional and personal cost to responsible parents. It is not for others, let alone the overbearing state to interfere in family matters beyond what is reasonable, and these proposals are not in any sense 'reasonable'.

Many MSPs do not have children, either by choice or by fate - who are they to dictate to a loving, committed family how they should (reasonably) discipline their children? These Orwellian proposals are an affront to freedom and the rights of parents. They bring the authority and standing of the Scottish Parliament into serious disrepute.

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

As a teacher, I witness every day the terrible scale of child abuse in Scotland - by neglectful, indolent and indifferent parents, not by loving parents who may occasionally smack their children.

I would implore you to see sense and abandon the folly of these proposals to criminalise smacking - the adverse effects on Scotland will be monstrous if you do not.