

GBV 09

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill :  
Stage 1

Response from : Pat Dunmore

Response to consultation on the Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill

Please accept the following comments as my personal response to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee inquiry into the general principles of the Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill.

I understand that the purpose of this Bill is to prevent violence. Given this I find it strange that there is no mention of removing the defence of 'reasonable punishment', which allows fully grown adults to hit small children, anywhere in this Bill. Surely this is the obvious place to legislate to remove this abhorrent defence. How can the Welsh Government purport to be against violence to women whilst it appears happy to allow routine and casual violence to children to continue unabated?

Earlier this year, on 11<sup>th</sup> February during a debate on the Social Services and Wellbeing Bill, Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Social Services, announced that the Welsh Government was looking for a suitable vehicle to remove the defence of 'reasonable punishment'. I can see absolutely no reason why the Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill is not that suitable vehicle. What better way to:

*'improve—*

*(a) arrangements for the prevention of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence;'* (Section 1.1a of the Bill)

than to stop demonstrating to children that violence is completely acceptable so long as it is perpetrated against those less able to defend themselves?

Please help to end violence against children now and live up to the commitments the Welsh Government has made under Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.