

GBV 15

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

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

Response from: Penny Harding

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

I am not given to writing in response to consultations on proposed legislation and I am now doing so as an individual rather than an organisation but I do feel after a working life involved in social care (including Women's Aid) and as a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), I would like to ask that the Assembly takes this opportunity to remove 'reasonable punishment' as a defense for physical punishment of children in Wales.

I applaud the Bill's overall intention to create a stronger and more consistent focus on prevention of violence between family members (including parents and children) and the protection of victims and support for all affected. While hitting children remains legal there can be no consistency of approach in either prevention or protection from violence and abuse.

In my experience, one of the most powerful learning tools is 'modelling' and if as a society we do not support this within families and communities we are failing future generations. I believe that the evidence tells us that abused children are more likely to go on to be perpetrators of violence. Supporting families to model respect and care for all members must be a good place to start.

In saying this I am aware as I am sure the Assembly is that there are financial implications – in order to achieve the intentions of the Bill appropriate funding must follow.

Penny Harding