About you
Individual

1 The Bill’s general principles

1.1 Do you support the principles of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill?

— Partly

1.2 Please outline your reasons for your answer to question 1.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

I disagree with the principles of the bill partly for two main reasons.

Firstly is the principle of it. It creates an uneasy feeling of government involvement into family life beyond reasonable extents. Of course the state has a right to step in when a child is being abused, but a smack or even a pat is not necessarily abuse. Sometimes a child can not be reasoned with, and the threat of force is the only way to regain control of a situation in which the child may be endangering themselves. When I was younger, I used to run at electric fences to spite my parents during a tantrum, and only them threatening force was enough to dissuade me. Of course, if only the threat of force is necessary, then when the child tests limits, as they are apt to do, if you can’t back it up with anything, they will see through it. The child will learn that they can get away with anything if they don’t mind ignoring your reasoning or desperate pleas. I of course don’t think that a serious beating is reasonable punishment, and I know most people will think the same way, but if you can’t even make a theatrical display to dissuade a child, then you are doing more to obstruct normal parenting than protecting children.

This brings me to the second point: A normal loving parent must still act like a parent, and this law will mostly be punishing normal parents. Abusive parents will continue abusing...
children, in spite of the law. So who is this bill meant to punish? Normal parents or abusive parents? Because it is unlikely to really affect abusive ones.

1.3 Do you think there is a need for legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

I do not think it is necessary at all. Parenting is a difficult thing, and more educational services should be open to parents so they can better understand how to do it. If you know that there are more ways to discipline than resorting to violence, then it will be reserved for only the most serious of situations.

Ultimately though, there are some people who are just going to be bad parents, even if they are not abusive. It’s a difficult situation to fix, but I don’t think legislation will really improve the situation. Many people will continue to do it anyway, and the government can’t be everywhere at once. It would be nice if everyone was a perfect parent but I don’t feel it’s the government’s role to do more than educate if it wants to do this.

2 The Bill’s implementation

2.1 Do you have any comments about any potential barriers to implementing the Bill?

If no, go to question 3.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

The nature of the "crime" makes it practically unenforceable, as children will unlikely prosecute based on it (and if they did, what effect would it have on normal families? Can a child fully understand the power given to them over their parents?). It will be under-reported, and common place. I doubt it could be implemented properly.

2.2 Do you think the Bill takes account of these potential barriers?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

I do not think it does. It seems very idealistic, and based on the idea that a government can legislate it’s way into family life.

3 Unintended consequences

3.1 Do you think there are any unintended consequences arising from the Bill? If no, go to question 4.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

Yes. Firstly, it produces a climate of fear and mistrust between parents and children. Secondly, it will lead to a lot of normal parents and families being torn apart if it results in jail time. The
intention might be well thought out, but it seems like nobody thought of the consequences. If every child born in the last 50 years prosecuted their parents if they were struck, then what kind of outcome would it have?

4 Financial implications

4.1 Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum)? If no, go to question 5.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

5 Other considerations

5.1 Do you have any other points you wish to raise about this Bill?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)