Consultation on the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill

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<th>Tystiolaeth i’r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar gyfer craffu Cyfnod 1 Bil Plant (Diddymu Amdiffyniad Cosb Resymol) (Cymru)</th>
<th>Evidence submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill</th>
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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?

— Yes

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)*

Just as adults have legal protection from assault, children should have the same right to be protected from violence and the removal of this as a defence will ensure that right is recognised in law. There is no justification for why children, who are by their nature more vulnerable to assault than adults, should have less protection under the law.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recognises that any physical punishment of children, however minor, is incompatible with the human rights of children, and has called for it to be abolished. It recognises the right of the child to respect for their human dignity, physical integrity and equal protection under the law.

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)*

Yes. The law needs to be clear that children have the same rights protecting them from harm as adults. Any person inflicting injury on a child must know they face consequences under the law and there is no possible defence suggesting it is in the child’s interest to be physically punished.
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)

I support the need for a publicity campaign explaining what this change in law will mean in practice for parents, and additional parental support to understand and implement the changes through schemes such as Flying Start.

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)

Yes

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)

No

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)

No

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)

The use of violence in disciplining children is morally wrong. It sets the example that violence is an acceptable way of controlling someone’s behaviour. It sets children up to think that violence is a way of sorting problems.

Any student of GCSE psychology knows that negative re-enforcement (smacking) doesn’t work in the long term, but positive re-enforcement (rewarding good behaviours) does. This is what parents should be taught.