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

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<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**

Name: Elizabeth Davies

Role: Service Manager

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)

Children should be afforded no less protection under the law than adults.

Physical punishment is proven to be ineffective and to cause harm to children, not only physically, but emotionally.

Safeguarding children currently operates within a very grey area regarding physical punishment, so would be improved with a clear stance from within the law.

Changing the law would allow professionals to give clear advice to parents, there are better ways to parent children and the law needs to back this up so that children in Wales are protected and grow up in a society that values their rights and promotes a nurturing rather than punitive home environment.

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.
Whilst this defence exists within the law it is impossible to give a clear message that children should not be hit.

Physical punishment is usually borne from parental frustration, anger, loss of control and this law puts children in danger and fails to protect them until a point where more serious harm has been done.

The law conflicts with UNCRC, which states that children should be protected under law from assault as are adults.

Public education alone is not enough to ensure children are protected, much like smoking with children in cars, legal measures were needed to ensure children's health is protected.

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)

There will be resistance to the change from some sections of society, particularly from some religious groups who hold antiquated views. Cultural norms may also be presented as an opposition. However, this is not an enough to back down and Welsh Government should proceed with the change as its simply the right thing to do. There has been a lot of work undertaken to date to by Welsh Government, but a public campaign will be needed to educate all parents on the change.

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 there 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)
Professionals will be able to intervene earlier and give clear messages to parents form the outset. Early intervention pays dividends in the long run, so the law should bring financial savings in time.

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)