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

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)

It will improve child safeguarding and protect children’s rights.

There is extensive research evidence that physical punishment is ineffective, and it can cause considerable harm.

Removing the ‘reasonable punishment’ defence acknowledges children’s status in society as holders of human rights and is consistent with the ‘due regard’ duty in the rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011.

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.

International human rights bodies, including the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, have stated clearly that children should have the same legal right to protection from assault...
as adults and governments must remove any legal defences that allow them 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 don’t believe that there will be any real barriers to implementing the Bill. There are some things that might need to be addressed to make implementation easier including:

• A well-resourced public information strategy, using face-to-face contact and universal services, not just targeted programmes such as Flying Start and Families First funding.

• Enough resources for positive parenting programmes

• Making sure that professionals working with families are prepared for the change, know what to say and how to act.

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)

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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)

Some families and communities may be harder to reach with information and support, Welsh Government needs to make sure that they receive the information they need.

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)
After changing the law far fewer children will experience any physical punishment because their parents will be guided by the law. It will also mean that people working with families can give a clearer message or intervene earlier. This will mean spending less on more costly interventions later as well as savings in the huge cost of providing services that children who have experienced ACEs such as physical abuse might need longer terms – into adulthood even. Figures obtained from the Early Intervention Foundation by the NSPCC found that the overall financial cost of late intervention with children and young people to Wales was £1.15bn in 2014/15.

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)

I welcome the plans to introduce this legislation and believe it will improve the lives of many children and young people in Wales.