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

Organisation: Voices From Care Cymru

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)

We support the bill on the grounds that Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) obliges countries to take appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of violence. It is also acknowledged, through research, that physical punishment is not effective in maintaining the behaviour of children. The bill also brings equality between children and adults as there is no provision for Reasonable Punishment as a defence in an adult scenario.

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, currently there is a discrepancy between positive parenting models and the law which cannot be good. Research and practice shows that physical punishment of children is ineffective and harms children yet it is still lawful. This needs to be rectified.
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 results of the Bill needs to be effectively communicated to families throughout Wales. However, we are sure that much of this will be achieved via the media reporting on the change and by young people’s and children’s charities sending a consistent message.

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)

N/A

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. In all of the countries that have prohibited physical punishment of children, the law has never been changed back and the scaremongering of opponents to the prohibition has not been justified.

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)

We would see there being positive financial implications to the Bill as it should make cases of abuse against children more straightforward if the defence of Reasonable Punishment is removed. This current grey area can lengthen court cases whilst the defence is being explored.

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)

As an organisation that promotes the voice of care experienced children and young people we would see this as a positive step towards the prevention of physical harm and abuse. We
hope that this would show a clear line that physical punishment is not acceptable and that there are no more mixed messages for families and parents.