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 Amddiffyniad 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?

— No

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)

If the Bill aims at tackling abuse and cruelty to children, then the existing legal remedies are sufficient for that purpose, and so the Bill is not justified.

If the Bill seeks instead to be an intrusion into the family, and the rights of parents to bring their children up appropriately, using legitimate means of discipline, then the Bill is an overtly ideological attempt to manipulate the social order - and that is not welcome.

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)

If there is at the heart of the Bill a genuinely sound idea which may provide real benefits, it is couched in such an explicitly ideological manner as to render that core largely invisible to scrutiny. Indeed, in its present form, the Bill seems to quite intentionally target parents who wish to bring up their children in a disciplined and loving manner.
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)

One potential barrier is the clear lack of any evidence that it would actually improve outcomes.

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)

The Bill seems to hinge totally on the persuasive power of ideology rather than on any substantive evidence that it might have a beneficial effect.

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)

It is difficult to describe the targeting of conscientious parents as an 'unintended consequence'. By any rational analysis, transforming parental discipline into a criminal act appears to be quite clearly intended.

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)

The clearest financial implication is that we have a Welsh NHS in meltdown and people either dying for lack of timely treatment, or simply becoming a cost to the economy. Devoting precious resources to an initiative which is clearly ideological seems to be an utter waste of time and public money.

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)
We already have the legal remedies available to tackle abuse, so if there are perceived deficiencies in that area, we ought to be toughening up implementation, rather than framing a Bill which is designed to create a whole new criminal underclass.