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: Self Employed Psychotherapist and Trainer

**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)*

As a psychotherapist, specialising over 40 years in working with disturbed children, I have seen the damage that has been done to children by parents who have little or no understanding of the traumatic impact of physical violence on children. In my adult practice, I saw the results of physical punishment in neurotic individuals who had not achieved their full potential because of their early trauma.

I have trained staff across the helping professions and introduced them to the work of Dr Alice Miller, who made it her life’s work to get people to understand this. Her book "For Your Own Good" is a seminal text on the subject and explains the reasons so many people are in denial about the damage smacking does to a child.

The psychological impact of smacking has been minimised or disregarded for years and that needs to change if we wish to foster secure, confident and mature citizens.

I have also read research about the long term positive results in countries like Scandinavia where smacking has been banned for several years, contributing to improved peer relationships in schoolchildren and a reduction in bullying.
It is indefensible that a person can inflict violence on a child without fear of redress when similar acts against an adult are criminal.

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

Legislation will set a standard, encourage debate and discussion, prompt new ideas and educational training for parents and citizens.

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)

It will take time to have a wider impact but this must 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 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)

We cannot afford not to do this.
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 Incredible Years programme from Bangor University is a very useful training tool for parents who need support in learning how to positively manage young children.

It should be taught in schools as part of PSE