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)

I strongly support the principles of the Bill - we do not allow physical punishment for any other group in society, nor do we consider any form of violence against any other group to be "reasonable" under any circumstances. It is shocking therefore for the law to allow it and present it as "reasonable" for children - the smallest and most vulnerable members of society, who are most in need of our protection and guidance, and who are still developing and learning and shaping their views from every experience. If we want a peaceful society, we must teach children (by showing them) non-violent ways of learning and resolving conflict. In order to do that effectively, the law must be absolutely clear on the matter, so that social workers, police and others working with families can be absolutely clear on the matter.

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, in order to promote positive, non-violent methods of parenting and education, clarity is needed in the law that physical punishment of any sort is never acceptable. Without this clarity, it is confusing for parents and those working to support parents and families to say/be told to not use physical punishment, if the law says it is allowed. Also, in extreme cases of
physical abuse that end up in court, parents should not be allowed to rely on a defence that says some level is "reasonable" so as to belittle the experience of the child and the violation of their rights that has occurred.

It is an immediate obligation under international human rights law, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to ensure that the law does not allow any physical punishment of children, and persisting legality of physical punishment violates children’s right to equal treatment under the law, as well as their right to dignity and bodily integrity, and their right to health and development.

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)

Fear of how the Bill will be implemented can be a significant barrier, particularly the mistaken belief that it will result in poorer child behaviour, increased levels of violence or criminalisation of parents. Wide and sustained public education about the actual aims of the Bill and how it will be implemented, which responds to the inaccurate claims by some commentators, will be needed to alleviate those fears and build public support for the Bill and its aims.

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)

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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)

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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)