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?

— 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)

As an ex-au-pair of children in two families, a potential future mother and a person who, like so many others, was myself smacked in my childhood by a loving mother, I oppose this bill for the following reasons:

- Smacking is not child abuse. Most reasonable people see there is a world of difference between abuse and a loving smack.

- The present law is clear and widely understood. A new law would only divert resources away from protecting abused children.

- To criminalise loving parents who choose to discipline their own children in this way is totalitarian in nature - raising children is the parents’ responsibility, not the government’s.

- Supporters of the bill say the law should be the same for children as it is for adults. But children are not adults. Parents do many things for their children that they would not do for an adult.

- Let us not ban things that are reasonable!
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)

The law already protects children from violence. It is completely misleading to describe a loving smack as violence. The law which is in place needs to be enforced, not changed.

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)

Yes:

The public is overwhelmingly opposed to banning smacking. 65% of people in Great Britain say it is ‘sometimes necessary for a parent to smack a child’*. Almost seven in ten people in Wales oppose a ban on parents smacking their children.**


- A 2017 ComRes poll found that 76% of Welsh adults were against criminalising smacking, while only 11% were in favour.
- The state should not use criminal law to regulate parenting.

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)

No

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)
- Banning smacking could turn many parents into criminals overnight and mean that social services are flooded with cases which are not real child abuse. In turn, cases of REAL child abuse could easily get missed.

- It would be bad for children, families and society if children were not properly disciplined.

- We may experience the same as in Sweden, where child-on-child violence was increased after smacking was banned in 1979 (Larzelere et al, Swedish Trends in Assaults Against Minors Since Banning Spanking, 1981-2010, see http://tinyurl.com/lydz6pe)

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)

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)