Consultation on the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill

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

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)

This bill completely undermines a parents right and responsibility to parent and discipline their children in the most appropriate way. I have 3 children and what works well as a form of discipline with one does not work as well with the other. In the context of a close and loving relationship I use the method I need to in order to bring up my children to be good and upright citizens. This bill would mean I would be unable to parent as effectively. The government has already confirmed that infrequent, light smacks are not harmful to children. I was smacked occasionally as a child (as many people were) and I can attest that this did not harm me in any way, indeed it was a very clear method of showing me right and wrong. A smack is absolutely not the same as abusing your child.

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)

Absolutely not.

The current legislation already protects children from abuse. Rather than criminalising parents who are trying to discipline their children and teach them right from wrong, we need to make
sure that people who are actually abusing children are stopped. There is a world of difference between a light, occasional smack and child abuse. Please don’t make the mistake of thinking that a smack in the context of a loving relationship is on a par with (e.g.) the beating of a defenceless child - implementing this will cause havoc on social services that are already stretched and destroy families unnecessarily.

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)

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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)

Yes.

Public consensus shows that around three quarters of people do not think we should have a smacking ban. Presumably this means they smack their children occasionally or would want the option to if necessary. This would mean hundreds or thousands of parents would be classed as criminals abusing their children if they smacked them. Implementing this will do more harm than good to families who are just trying to bring up their children to have a strong moral compass. I don’t believe that a smack is the same as abuse. Real child abuse must be stopped. Banning smacking is not the way to stop child abusers.

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)*

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