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 crafu 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

Organisation: Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent

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)

We support the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill because it provides much needed legal protection to children subject to physical punishment. Moreover, the Bill takes an important step towards bringing Wales in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

We also view the introduction of the Bill as an opportunity to draw parents’ attention to alternative disciplinary methods that have proven to provide healthier outcomes for children, such as Positive Parenting. Additionally, we also welcome the contributions the Bill makes to several of the objectives in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, such as: A Healthier Wales and a Globally Responsive Wales.

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)

We believe that legislation will help strengthen the delivery of the aims the Bill is trying to achieve by providing a legal basis for compliance with the UNCRC. Furthermore, to abolish
the defence of Reasonable Punishment, legislation will be required to remove its legal standing. Finally, as mentioned above, we see the introduction of the Bill as an opportunity to engage with the public and communicate alternative and, often, more effective parenting models. While it is possible to present these messages to the public without passing the Bill, the attention and interest raised through its introduction will provide an effective platform to launch relevant media campaigns.

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)

As noted in the Bill’s Explanatory Memorandum, consultations around the Bill saw concerns raised over the potential criminalisation of parents and misunderstanding over the types of physical interactions between parents and children that would no longer be permissible. We believe that the potential for public resistance to the Bill through misunderstanding or confusion over its implications may pose the largest barrier to its implementation.

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 comment.

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)

None identified.

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)

No comment.
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)*

Following the introduction of the Bill, a run-in period will be necessary to both explain and gain support for the Bill and its principle aims. Examples of successful run-in periods can be seen in both the introduction of the ban on smoking in public places and the legislation for the charge on plastic bags. Given the potential public concerns surrounding the Bill, we believe that a run-in period of this nature is essential to garner the necessary support for its introduction. Finally, we would like to draw attention to the involvement PCCs and Police forces in Wales have had in the consultation and development processes of this Bill. Given the concerns over the potential implications for criminal justice the Bill may introduce, we believe it is worth noting the contributions made by PCCs and the Police in providing advice on the Bill’s aims from a policing perspective.