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)

Firstly, the change of description from ‘reasonable chastisement’ to ‘reasonable punishment’ has the subtle effect of emphasising the punitive effect. The word ‘Chastisement’ is more complete and encompasses the positive, directive effect. When used within the current law, smacking can be one of a number of effective measures for the prevention of harmful behaviours and actions. When a child is born most mothers and fathers experience a feeling of overwhelming love for their new baby and naturally want the very best for them. Most parents want their children to grow up to be mature, responsible members of our society, who will one day be good citizens. As a child grows up we realise that children don’t always know what is best for them and they need good guidelines and boundaries and instruction in acceptable behaviour. As parents we need to effectively instruct and communicate these to our children in many ways. Parenting is work!

Some children do not listen to reasoned arguments as to why something is unacceptable behaviour. They just want their own way. If smacking is criminalized, an effective parental tool to stopping anti-social behaviour, will be removed from society. A mild smack, accompanied by good instruction and reassuring hugs from a loving, caring parent helps a child to change their wrong behaviour and control themselves in an appropriate way, that is beneficial to them and to society.
It is possible that if smacking is banned, many parents will not discipline their children at all. An undisciplined, disobedient, insolent, rebellious child creates misery in the home and the school and then as they grow up, in society. Many teachers will testify to the distress these children bring to them and the accompanying disorder in the classroom. Parents need help & encouragement to discipline their children in a wise and loving way. A mild smack is sometimes necessary and children learn quickly. They learn to control themselves and avoid anti-social and dangerous behaviour.

A mild smack is not aggressive or violent. It is a way to train a child, who won’t listen to any other instruction or explanation, to respect other people and their property. Some children may never need to be smacked because they will listen to instruction or explanation. There are many good ways to teach a child and these are all useful in raising children. It would be detrimental to our society to remove the freedom to smack a child if a loving parent felt they needed it.

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)*

No. There is already suitable legislation in place which protects children.

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 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)*

Yes, if reasonable chastisement is banned, when a child won’t listen to a parent and enjoys being sent to their room or somehow gets around the confiscation of their mobile phone, etc. will they respect them?
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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