

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

Tystiolaeth i'r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar gyfer craffu Cyfnod 1 (Saesneg yn unig)	Evidence submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny
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Organisation: Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

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)

Support for the bill includes:

- A welcome acknowledgment that the bill encourages the use of positive parenting, as a more acceptable form of behaviour management.
- Will supersede current legislation where there can be difficulties around the interpretation of "acceptable conduct" and there could happen a possible risk of flouting / evading the current law due.
- We fully support the UNCHRC and support actions that protect children and young people from any forms of violence. This legislation will protect children in the same that adults are protected from assault.
- This legislation will help to protect children from the psychological and long term damage to the emotional wellbeing of children.
- The legislation supports the evidence of the impact of domestic abuse on children in relation to Adverse Childhood Experiences WG (2015)
- The word "injury" used on page 4 of the summary indicates harm at any level
- The proposed legislation acknowledges that behaviour change is a psychological , cognitive , developmental and learning experience for the child which takes time , positive support and appropriate techniques by parents

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 500 words)

- Yes without legislation again this could be open to interpretation by parents and agencies and potential different thresholds and levels of intervention
- Same answers as for first question
- Legislation will definitely improve the safeguarding of children
- Services that are directly involved in the safeguarding arena have experienced many occasions within a safeguarding meeting, where parents and professionals have justified their violent actions towards their children with an excuse of the fact that no breach of common law has occurred and stated "it is not against the law".
- There is evidence that parents who have experienced violence against themselves as children from their own parents often consider that it "did me no harm" when in fact they go on to assaulting their own children. This act demonstrates that indeed harm has occurred to themselves as a child because they perpetuate intergenerational behaviours of abuse to children.
- The proposed legislation that it sends a clear message that in our society 21st century that we are very far away from historical attitudes and that we value and cherish our children as most vital for our future generations.

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 500 words)

Possible Barriers include:

- Limited resources to enable wider public and professional , governmental , service adoption of the new law
- Ongoing sustained Public campaigns are vital
- Culturally diverse communities will require sensitive education and support

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 500 words)

- The Bill could go further to ensure that finance and education is made available for parents and organisations to embed a pledge , policies , procedures of no tolerance of violence to children.

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 500 words)

Possible unintended consequences could include:

- Reduced self-reporting by parents
- Increased referrals and prosecutions
- Increased support for vulnerable groups will be essential to educate and inform

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 500 words)

The following financial implication should be considered:

- Production of National Media Campaign material
- Preventative work
- Educational packages
- Updating training packages
- Updating Policies/processes

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)

What happens if a Welsh child is subject to physical punishment outside of Wales?