



Live Fear
Free Helpline
Providing confidential support
and information on domestic
abuse, sexual violence and
violence against women in Wales

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Llinell Gymorth
Byw Heb Ofn

Darpar gwybodaeth a chlaskioedd
cyffredinol yng Nghymru i dras mywol a thraws yn wirion merched
yng Nghymru

0808 80 10 800



challenging inequality between girls and boys, improving safety and minimising the immediate and future impact on children and young people experiencing violence and abuse.

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. Welsh Women's Aid is a longstanding member of the Children Are Unbeatable Alliance. When Welsh Women's Aid asked our 22 members (independent specialist VAWDASV services across Wales) and survivors whether they thought the legislative proposal to remove the defence of reasonable punishment and prevent use of corporal punishment would help with the stated policy aim of protecting children's rights, responses were 100% positive. For example, a specialist service stated:

"Children do not need to be hit or physically punished. We have laws which protect adults from this so why are children treated differently?"

Therefore, Welsh Women's Aid supports the principles outlined in the Bill.

1.2 Please outline your reasons for your answer to 1.1

Welsh Women's Aid's (WWA) mission is 'to prevent domestic abuse and violence against women', this includes domestic abuse suffered by children and young people, both directly and indirectly, or within their own intimate relationships, and violence against girls. WWA does not condone the use of any violence within the home or between family members, including against children for 'discipline'.

Any kind of violence or abuse in the home can significantly affect a child's well-being and access to their rights. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹ demonstrates the Welsh Government's recognition that physical and mental well-being can affect future choices and behaviours. This is supported by the recent Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study², which highlights alcohol use, drug use, violence, sexual behaviour, incarceration, smoking and a poor diet as experiences that can contribute to negative well-being and attainment into adulthood. Links should be made with these portfolio areas to reinforce the Welsh Government's joined up response to these issues.

Around 1 in 5 children have been exposed to domestic abuse in the home³, therefore the increased connection between Welsh Government policies around ending violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) and the removal of the defence of reasonable punishment need to be made and incorporated into the supportive campaign to ensure all messaging is aligned.

¹ Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. Welsh Government 2015

² 'Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study: Adverse Childhood Experience and their impact on health-harming behaviours in the Welsh adult population', Public Health Wales NHS Trust, 2015.

³ Radford, L et al (2011) Child Abuse and Neglect in the UK today. NSPCC



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