

Ending the physical punishment of children will protect their rights

Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies will today publish a summary of the consultation responses received to the Welsh Government consultation about its plans to introduce legislation to remove the defence of reasonable punishment.

The consultation, which was launched in January and closed in April 2018, was designed to gather feedback from the public and key stakeholders to further develop a Bill and to help the Welsh Government to address any concerns as the legislation develops.

More than 1,890 responses were received to the consultation, from a range of individuals, organisations and groups. More than 270 people also attended one of the engagement events held across Wales.

The consultation found just over half of respondents (50.3%) agreed and 48.1% disagreed with the statement that the legislative proposal will achieve the aim of protecting children's rights; 1.5% said "don't know".

The First Minister has announced the Welsh Government will introduce a Bill to remove the defence of reasonable punishment in year three of the legislative programme (between September 2018 and July 2019).

Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"As a government, we are committed to introducing legislation to remove the defence of reasonable punishment, which will prohibit the physical punishment of children by parents and those acting in loco parentis. This reinforces our long-standing commitment to children's rights.

"The consultation we launched earlier this year was intended to help inform our legislative proposals, ensuring we develop the very best legislation to help us achieve our aim. I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to respond. The responses received will be considered during the development of the Bill.

"While the primary responsibility for raising children lies with parents, the Welsh Government has a very specific role in creating a society in which children can grow up in a safe and nurturing environment. Our commitment to introduce legislation, alongside support for parents, is key to us achieving success in this endeavour."

The Welsh Government is developing the Bill as part of a much wider package of support for children and their parents. This includes:

- the Parenting: Give It Time campaign, which aims to help parents to do the best job they can, by providing positive parenting tips and information
- access to a range of services to promote positive parenting delivered by local government, health, education, social services, social justice and the third sector
- more targeted interventions, such as Flying Start and Families First, which offer support and advice to parents.