

GBV 20

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill:
Stage 1

Response from: The British Association for Early Childhood Education

I am writing on behalf of The British Association for Early Childhood Education to ask for the removal of the “reasonable punishment” defence for physical punishment of children in Wales to be included in the current domestic violence Bill.

We are a charity and membership body which works to raise the quality of early childhood education for 0–8 year olds and to promote the best interests of the child. Our members include individuals and organisations concerned with early childhood education including nursery teachers and practitioners, local authorities and colleges and universities which train practitioners.

We believe it would be keeping with the bill's aim to reduce violence by all family members to take the opportunity to remove the "reasonable punishment" defence. While this loophole exists, the response to violence and abuse will be inconsistent and less effective. Research supports the case for removing this defence, and would send a clear signal that violence is never acceptable.

Members of the Welsh Assembly have shown support in the past for giving children equal protection, and we hope this opportunity to do so will be grasped.

Yours sincerely

Beatrice Merrick