

‘SDIM CURO PLANT! CHILDREN ARE UNBEATABLE! NEWSLETTER

Summer 2007

Welcome to the Summer 2007 edition of the Children Are Unbeatable campaign in Wales.

As we go to press, the Government has announced a review of Section 58 of the Children Act – which allows parents and carers to use a defence of “Reasonable Punishment” against charges of common assault on their child. Review is an important opportunity for us to make our voices heard in the new Westminster Government. The new government brings new opportunities, as does the new Welsh Assembly Government.

Please do your best to respond to the Section 58 review – we need good quality in good quantity to help the government hear our message.

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Urgent!

**Responding to the Review of “Reasonable Punishment”
Deadline: August 10th**

Respond to: the Department for Children, Schools and Families

This is the most important piece of action you can take on behalf of Children Are Unbeatable! since the Children Act Campaign of 2004.

<http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/1362.html> for more information

Please respond to the Review of Section 58.

The Government says that the public consultation “is intended to obtain views and evidence from those working with children, young people and families on the working of section 58. Individuals, including parents, with relevant evidence

are also welcome to respond to this consultation”.

So anyone can take part. We hope everyone who wants to achieve equal protection for children will respond before the August 10 deadline. Of course, responses should be as individual as possible, and should emphasise

experience, whether as parent and/or person working with children/families. Children and young people – with their unique experience and perspective – should be encouraged to respond too.

The consultation questions

The consultation poses nine questions. You don't have to answer all of them. Several questions ask for "evidence" to support answers. DO NOT be put off by this – see question-by-question briefing below.

How can you make your response?

The review is available **on-line** at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/>. At the moment, there is a direct link on this page to "The use of Physical Punishment", or you can follow links to "Consultations".

We can **e-mail** you the consultation and review documents, contact lian.williams@childreninwales.org.uk

We can send you **hard copies**, e-mail or call Lian on 02920 34 24 34

What should you say?

The review in itself is looking at the consequences of the legal change in 2005. The questions do not lend themselves to giving the answers that we want to give. It is fine to answer just one or two questions, as long as you get across them main messages;

- The law must be changed to give children equal protection: this is a fundamental human right.
- Section 58 is unjust, unequal and unsafe.
- Section 58 has created parental/public confusion; professional uncertainty; legal ambiguity and policy inconsistency.

What is evidence?

Most of the questions ask for evidence. Use anything you know which is relevant.

Evidence can be simple things. Have you witnessed a child being hit in a shop – would you have behaved differently if you knew children had equal protection? In working with families, have you found it hard to counteract arguments for smacking because of the law?

Evidence does not need to be complex studies – there really aren't many since the change in the law; but a weight of different anecdotal material will be very helpful to back up the CAU! message.

Do you want more help or information?

Signed-up supporters of CAU! should have received a mailing from CAU! in London with more detail about answering the questions. If you feel you need more help, you can contact us for more help and information. We will be producing some "model answer" templates.

The Review in Welsh

At the time of going to press, the consultation has not been issued in Welsh. We have asked the DCSF to rectify this. They have told us they will do so "before the closing date". This is clearly not satisfactory, and CAU! Cymru will be making a formal complaint. Please feel free to make a formal complaint yourself, and also to submit your reply to the consultation in Welsh if that is appropriate for you as an individual or organisation

Background - What is the Government's Review of Section 58?

In 2004, Parliament passed a Children Bill (now the Children Act 2004), which included a provision that allows parents and others to continue to justify common assault of children as "reasonable punishment". This provision is known as section 58 of the Children Act 2004 and came into force in January 2005. The Government gave a commitment to review "reasonable punishment" two years on from its commencement.

On 15 June 2007, the Government announced the start of this review and launched a consultation on the "practical

consequences” of the “reasonable punishment” provision.

The review will not change the law. It can only recommend “changes to practice”, but the findings, including the views of contributors to the consultation; will be put before Parliament later in the year.

Even if you only answer one question, please do it!

NEWS

Jill Taylor, who was Campaign Co-ordinator for CAU! in Wales from 2002 has, as you know, been unwell for some time, and is unlikely to be returning to work. Jill has worked tirelessly for the campaign, and taken it a long way in Wales and the UK. Thank you Jill for everything you have done, and we wish you well in the future.

Rachel Matthews has been covering Jill’s work while she has been ill, and will continue as Campaign co-ordinator until March 2008. Rachel previously served on the CAU! steering group, representing Cymdeithas Tai Hafan.

A New Prime minister may be **Good News** for CAU! Gordon Brown is moving house as I write – and things may have already changed for CAU! after this has gone to print.

Deputy Leader **Harriet Harman** has said, “I want children to have the same protection from assault as adults have. I support there being a free vote on the issue in parliament.”

A New Assembly in Wales will build on the work already put in place in the last two Assemblies.

We give particular thanks to **Jane Hutt AM** who supported the campaign so strongly as Minister for Children, and wish her well

in her new post as Minister for Budget and Business.

Aims of the Children Are Unbeatable Alliance - One

to change the law so that **children and young people have the same protection from being hit as adults**

Campaigning for Legal change – Update

Campaigning at Westminster – Early Day Motion 606

This Early Day Motion – Review of Reasonable Punishment – calls for the review above, and insists that it should focus on equality and human rights obligations, and give children the same legal protection as adults.

Early Day Motions are signed by MP’s to give an indication of the strength of feeling in the House of Commons on a particular issue. There are currently 125+ signatures, including 14 MP’s from Wales.

You can check whether your MP has signed by going to <http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=32275&SESSION=885>. If you don’t know who your MP is, you can find out at <http://www.upmystreet.com/commons/>

Please write to your MP if they have not already signed the EDM. You can get template letters from CAU! Cymru by e-mail: cau@childreninwales.org.uk or post: Children in Wales, 25 Windsor Place, Cardiff CF10 3BZ. Tel: 029 2034 2434.

Campaigning in Wales – Working with the Welsh Assembly Government

The National Assembly for Wales has been very supportive of the Children are Unbeatable! position, and the Welsh Assembly Government has funded the

campaign in several different ways. CAU! will be consolidating support in the new Assembly, and working with the WAG on the way forward for the campaign.

Find out if your AM is a supporter of CAU! – you can ask us. If they are not, please write inviting them to sign up.

Aims of the Children Are Unbeatable Alliance - Two

a [public education campaign about why 'smacking' children is not OK](#)

Developing a Public Education Campaign - Update

We are currently developing a CAU! Toolkit. This is a portfolio of materials that can be used by a range of groups and individuals to promote the aims of "Children Are Unbeatable". Many of the materials can be used in groupwork settings, and it is hoped to create units of work that can be accredited by nationally recognised training providers. We are building a database of resources for parents and professionals.

Do you; or do you want to:

- Work with parents to help them see that smacking isn't an answer?
- Train your staff to work with parents on the no smacking message?
- Educate your students on the issues surrounding the physical punishment debate?
- Celebrate and commit to a non-violent approach to parenting in your place of worship?
- Bring together the members of your Children and Young people's partnerships to explore how to promote positive, non-violent parenting in you area?
- Develop policy and practice on non-violence towards children in your organisation?
- Create a supportive, non-violent environment for children and parents?
- Research attitudes and behaviour relating to physical punishment?

If so,

Can you help us to trial our materials? Do you have materials or resources which we can include?

Please contact us as soon as possible, cau@childreninwales.org.uk
tel: 029 2034 24 34

For more information on anything in the newsletter, and particularly if you want

Model Answers to the Section 58 Review

The Questions for the Section 58 Review

Contact:

cau@childreninwales.org.uk

<http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/1362.html>

Aims of the Children Are Unbeatable Alliance - Three

[for parents to have lots of information and practical advice and support about alternatives to 'smacking' and using a positive approach to bringing up children](#)

Providing advice and support to parents – Update

“Help at Hand” – Event at The Senedd, Cardiff Bay 14th February 2007

We will report in more detail on this event in the next edition of the newsletter. In the meantime, we enclose a “Briefing paper” which gives information about the “Help at Hand” research.

Spirituality in the Home – the Interfaith Council for Wales

“ A Handful of Love” was the title of a workshop delivered by Rachel Matthews, CAU! Associate, at this conference on Spiritual Parenting held in Cardiff in March. We will report in more detail on this event in the next edition of the newsletter.

Interfaith Dialogue

Children Are Unbeatable! has always recognised the important role of faith groups in promoting our message.

We are currently working with the co-ordinator of the Interfaith Council for Wales, and the Churches Network for Non-violence to run some in Wales events relating to children and Non-violence.

If you are involved with a faith group, and are interested in this, please contact Rachel Matthews at CAU!
cau@childreninwales.org.uk

You may also like to look at:
<http://www.churchesfornon-violence.org/>