



Young People's Rights Review

Josh Kennedy MSYP - Physical Punishment

Hi everyone, my name is Josh Kennedy and I represent the young people from the outstanding constituency of Renfrewshire North and West.

I am privileged today to be speaking to you about the negative effects of violence inflicted onto young people as a form of discipline

This is an area in which we have consulted on via the SYP Lead the Way Manifesto in which we consulted young people across the country on key issues.

Of the 226 responses from young people in Renfrewshire, 86% agreed, and only 8% disagreed.

Therefore it is not hard to see that this is something young people feel passionately about ending.

According to The UN, there are 7 EU member states that continue to permit violence inflicted onto children within the home. The UK is one of them.

Research has shown that physical violence inflicted onto children will result in long term damage in future life, leaving a lasting mark, which is a complete violation of our human rights.

An act of violence inflicted on an adult would be treated in a far more serious manner yet we allow for something similar to occur to our children without a thought?

This is something we have allowed to become the norm in our society and the negative impacts that it has on its victims can be detrimental in later life.

Therefore it is very much welcomed by the Scottish Youth Parliament that John Finnie MSP conducted a consultation to remove the legal defence of justifiable assault from Scots law, in advance of a proposed Private Members' Bill.

SYP is a firm supporter of this move, and we warmly welcome the announcement from the Scottish Govt in their Programme for Govt that they will back the Bill when it is tabled in the Scottish Parliament.

This is a move supported by both the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its concluding observations from 2016, Paragraph 41, as well as numerous academics, third sector organisations and young people themselves.

However, the successful passage of this legislation will not be a silver bullet to tackle violence against children and young people in Scotland.

To achieve this, a change in our culture is necessary if we seek to end violence inflicted onto children by their parents or guardians.

We must ensure that children know to speak out about abuse and remove the stigma around this.

Perhaps, looking forward we should ensure that PSHE, an educational blackspot in many cases, helps young people raise these kinds of issues when they occur.

As I previously said, the UN committee on the rights of the child made a concluding observation in 2016, that education on rights should be mandatory.

In order to implement this, perhaps there needs to be a greater focus to ensure that our PSHE curriculum is improved across all fronts to ensure that our young people are learning this essential information and know to speak out.

After all, there is a difference between talking about something and acting on it, I do hope that the latter occurs.

For the sake of Scotland's children.

Thank you.