

Children (Abolition of the Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill

Strategic Implementation Group meeting

Tuesday 14 May, 1100-1500hrs

Ystafell Gyfarfod/ Meeting Room

Yr Hen Lyfrgell/ Old Library

Summary of Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

Welsh Government (WG) welcomed the group and introductions were made.

2. Background / Overview of the Bill

WG provided an overview of the Bill and its progress to date.

3. Terms of Reference for the Strategic Implementation Group

The group discussed the terms of reference. Members raised a number of key issues relating to implementation of the legislation, including raising awareness of the proposed law change; potential impact on capacity of organisations and services; and ensuring effective working with all stakeholders, including with organisations that are not devolved like the police, Crown Prosecution Service and HM Courts and Tribunals Service.

In terms of awareness raising, working with and through stakeholders would need to be part of the communications strategy, to increase the reach of the message generally and for specific groups. Consideration should be given to how to effectively engage with, and consider the views of, groups and communities such as children and young people, families, BAME and faith groups. The WG confirmed they have committed to a high intensity communications campaign, and are already working with stakeholders and considering how best to raise awareness both with the public generally and with different sectors. WG have set up a communications stakeholder expert group to consider the scope of the awareness raising campaign regarding the legislation. It was agreed that the Strategic Implementation Group (SIG) should be kept updated on the awareness raising plans.

It was noted that, the purpose of the SIG is to provide strategic oversight of the implementation work. It was agreed that the SIG should aim to meet quarterly throughout the next two years (covering the Assembly process, and if the Bill is passed, the period up to commencement) and may need to meet post implementation.

It was also agreed that the terms of reference for the SIG and all task and finish groups should include the option to co-opt expertise onto the groups. The terms of reference of the SIG would be updated accordingly and circulated.

4. Establishing Task and Finish Groups

A discussion took place on establishing task and finish groups. It was agreed that in addition to the four task and finish groups suggested and agreed to in the terms of reference, awareness raising would be included as a work stream in the overall implementation plan.

5. Workshops

The meeting split into two groups to conduct workshops on agreeing the range of task and finish groups required, their remit, aims and objectives, and the representation required on those groups.

Key points made during the workshops included:

- The four task and finish groups identified, and their remits, seem right in general. Suggestions were made for additional representation on some of the groups.
- Raising awareness of the change in the law is a crucial aspect of implementation, and this needs to be factored into the overall implementation work plan. It was agreed that the SIG should be regularly updated on this work, and links and synergies with the work of the task and finish groups identified.
- Engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, children and young people, is crucial, and where appropriate, the work of the task and finish groups could be tested through consultation with different groups and communities.
- For some of the task and finish groups, mapping existing provision or processes is a key step to understanding the changes potentially required as a result of the law change.
- Generally, the aim should be to achieve consistency across Wales in relation to any changes or new provision made as a result of the law change.

It was agreed the WG should consider additional representation on the groups where appropriate; and ensure the points and suggestions made are fed back for consideration by the task and finish groups as appropriate.

6. Closing Discussion

There were no other items of business. WG thanked the group for their time and for sharing their expertise. Date of the next meeting will be organised for September 2019.