

Concerned about a child/young person?

- Discuss your concerns straight away with a senior member of staff / designated child protection person
- Engage with the designated person about whether this information needs to be shared, and if so with whom, including consideration of the Named Person
- Ensure all this information is accurately recorded, with reasons for any decision reached
- If you cannot contact the designated person and there are immediate concerns for the child's safety, contact social work or police yourself

You can call the police on 101 if you think a crime has been committed.
 You can also contact [Aberdeenshire Social Work](#) if you are concerned about harm to a child from physical punishment. Another option is to contact [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 555 111 to report a crime anonymously. They'll pass the information about the crime to the police.
 Or, as has always been the case, you can call 999 if a child or young person is in immediate danger.

Support for Parents & Carers

- [ParentClub](#) website contains hints and tips e.g on [coping with being a parent](#) and [behaviour](#).
 - [Family Support Directory](#) organisations and support sources
 - If talking to someone might help, [Children 1st Parentline](#) on 08000 28 22 33.
 - Or [chat to someone online at Parentline](#).
- These are free services

Background

Equal protection from assault is the law in Scotland. On 3 October 2019 the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament, meaning children in Scotland now have the same protections against assault as adults. Equal protection is something our office has been calling for since 2004, and we're delighted to see it pass into Scots law.

What is Changing?

If a parent or carer physically punishes or disciplines their child, they can be prosecuted with assault. Under the current law, depending on what happened, the defence of 'reasonable chastisement' may be available to them.

When Does the New Law come into force?

The Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 will change the law and remove the "reasonable chastisement" defence from 7 November 2020.

What this Means in Practice

This means that all forms of physical punishment of children will be against the law in Scotland, and children will have with the same legal protection from assault as adults.

. The Act does not introduce a new offence. It just removes a defence to the existing offence of assault.

We are required by the Act to take steps to promote public awareness and understanding about the defence being removed.

Equal Protection from Assault

