

## **Grwp Cynulliad Trawsbleidiol ar Blant a Phobl Ifanc**

### **Cross-Party Group on Children**

**Date** Wednesday, 24th September 2014

**Venue** Ty Hywel, Conference Rooms C & D

**Present:** Julie Morgan AC/AM (Chair) Sian Mile (Senior Research Officer, Welsh Assembly) Jocelyne Davies AM Aled Roberts AC/AM Lindsay Whittle AM / AM Christine Chapman AC/ AM Hon Dr Jocelynne Scutt Barrister & Human Rights Lawyer Visiting Fellow, Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge, Delyth Byrne (Tros Gynnal) Robin Moulster (BASW Cymru) Eleri Griffiths (Children Are Unbeatable) Sara Reid (Children Are Unbeatable) Andy James (Chair Children are Unbeatable Cymru) Tina Reece (Welsh Women's Aid) Peter Newell (End Corporal Punishment of Children) Viv Laing (NSPCC) Pat Dunmore (Pat Dunmore Consultancy) Alaw Griffiths (6th Form Ysgol Glantaf) Maegan Davies-John Griffiths (6th Form Ysgol Glantaf) Claire Sharp (Children in Wales) Cliff DePass, Paul Apreda, (FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru) Sara Jones (Cardiff Women's Aid, Safe AS children) Rhian Croake (Save the Children) Diane Daniels (Chair Tros Gynnal Plant, Vice Chair Children in Wales) Jane Harries (Institute of Peace/Quakers) Emeritus Professor Jo Sibert OBE Jonathan Evans (Cardiff Councillor / Academics for Equal Protection) David Miller (NSPCC) Colin Palfrey AMSS (Lindsay Whittle)

**Apologies** Simon Thomas AC/AM Janet Weaver Elaine Clayton (The Valleys Regional Equality Council) Sonia Mason Acting (Head of Safeguarding Cymru ABMU Health Board) Dr Katherine Shelton (School of Psychology, Cardiff University) Pauline Galluccio (Head of Safeguarding Powys) Zoe Richards (Young Person and Carer's Manager Learning Disability Wales) Paul Fanning (The FosterCare Cooperative) Anne Crowley (Research Associate Cardiff University) Dr Judy Hutchins OBE (Professor of Clinical Psychology Director Centre for Evidence Based Early Intervention) Dr Gwenllian Lansdown Davies (Prif Weithredwr Mudiad Meithrin) Efa Gruffudd Jones MBE (Prif Weithredwr yr Urdd) Rhea Stevens (Action for Children) Cllr Julia Magill (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Cardiff Council) Lynne Hill (Children in Wales) Chris Dodd (Churches for Non Violence)

#### **1. Welcome**

Julie Morgan AM opened the meeting and handed the AGM over to Jocelyn Davies AM. Julie Morgan AM was nominated and re-elected Chair of the group, Aled Roberts and Lindsey Whittle were nominated and elected as Vice Chairs of the group. Children in Wales agreed to continue as secretariat for the group.

#### **2. Hon Dr Jocelynne Scutt, Barrister & Human Rights Lawyer, Visiting Fellow, Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge**

Dr Scutt made a presentation "Are children human? Corporal punishment as an issue of international human rights". (Attached).

#### **3. Alaw Griffiths and Maegan Davies-John, 6<sup>th</sup> form students, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf**

Alaw and Maegan made a presentation outlining their views and the views of 100 fellow pupils who had answered 5 key questions on the issue of children having equal protection from assault.

#### **4. Jocelyn Davies AM**

Jocelyn Davies shared a personal viewpoint on the issue of equal protection for children from any assault or hitting in the home. Whilst Jocelyn outlined that there was a time when she didn't question a parent's right to hitting their children, she has since re-considered and changed her views. She now believes that times have changed and attitudes have changed on this issue and addressing violence in society requires that the defence of reasonable punishment be removed from legislation in Wales.

#### **5. Andy James, Chair of CAU Cymru**

Andy summarised the debate so far. It was noted that in the 12 years that Wales have been discussing this issue, 27 countries have outlawed physical abuse of children. Julie invited AMs present to comment:

#### **6. Aled Roberts AM Lib Dem, Lyndsey Whittle AM Plaid Cymru, Christine Chapman AM Labour** all spoke to express support for the removal of the defence being part of the Gender Based Violence Bill.

#### **7. Julie Morgan opened the discussion to the floor:**

- 8.** Paul Apreda questioned the status of the legal amendment and it was confirmed that the change would be to civil law not criminal law
- 9.** Robin Moulster stated that there would be a need for guidance and education for families and professionals if when the legal change is made.
- 10.** Delyth Byrne from Tros Gynnal added that children must be part of the picture and that they need to be educated about their rights.
- 11.** Diane Daniels welcomed the contribution of young people and talked of all the government programmes now delivering parenting support through which government can promote this message to families.
- 12.** Dr Jo Sibert discussed the dangers of not recognising abuse when it is presented to paediatricians and that bruising of any kind must not be belittled.
- 13.** Dr Jocelyn Scutt warned against the stigmatisation of victims of physical chastisement based on assumptions about potential future behaviour as the research does not support this.
- 14.** Jane Harries from the Institute of Peace / Quakers was eager to know how they could do more to support the campaign.
- 15.** Julie Morgan asked if the survey of young people could be made available by Alaw and Maegan and brought the meeting to a close.