

# 7-Minute Briefing: Equal Protection from Assault

## 1. Background

[The Children \(Equal Protection from Assault\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#) came into force on 7 November 2020, meaning that children in Scotland now have the same protections against assault as adults.

The Dumfries and Galloway Public Protection Partnership have developed a new local [guidance](#) for practitioners and managers working with children, young people and families to raise awareness and understanding of the legislation, and to highlight processes that should be followed if you witness an assault on a child by a parent or carer, or if such a matter is reported to you.

## 7. What to do

- Read the [Multi-Agency Children \(Equal Protection from Assault\) Act 2019 Guidance?](#)
- Discuss the new guidance with your team/manager.
- Contact the Public Protection Lead Officer Child Protection ([Clare.Cowan@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:Clare.Cowan@dumgal.gov.uk)) if you have any questions or would like to discuss the guidance further.

## 6. Questions to Consider

- Have you read and understood the new [guidance](#)?
- Are you clear on your role and responsibilities should you witness or be informed of an assault on a child?
- Do you know where to source advice and support?

## 5. Advice and Support cont. For Children and Young People:

[ChildLine](#) 0800 1111

[Physical Punishment and Discipline of Children-How-the-Law-is-Changing](#)

### For Professionals:

[NSPCC Having a Difficult Conversation Professional Curiosity 7-Minute Briefing](#)

## 2. What changes with the Act?

The Act removes the previous defence of “reasonable chastisement” - the boundaries of how to define this was problematic. This means that all forms of physical chastisement, punishment and/or discipline of children and young people are against the law.

## 3. The Guidance aims to...

- Raise better awareness and understanding of the change in legislation.
- Encourage all practitioners to be aware of and understand the impact on their day-to-day role.
- Ensure that all concerns about chastisement of children and young people are recognised and responded to in a timely and effective manner.
- Signpost to access materials which provides advice and support on behaviour management strategies.

## 4. Definitions and Information

**Child victims** applies to children and young people under the age of 16 years at the time of the assault.

**Suspects** applies to anyone who is aged 16 years or over alleged to have assaulted the child or young person.

The guidance explains what the Act means for practitioners, what they should continue to do, and what action they should take when they witness or are informed of such behaviour, and/or are worried or concerned about the care and protection of a child or young person.

The guidance also explains the role and actions undertaken by Police Scotland and highlights the definition and purpose of Recorded Police Warnings (RPW).

## 5. Advice and Support

The guidance provides information about advice and support including:

**For Parents:** [ParentClub: Coping with Being a Parent](#). [Children1st: Parentline](#) 08000 28 22 33.