



EMBARGOED: 00.01AM Monday 26 July 2021

Press release

23 July 2021

The journey towards ending physical punishment in Wales visits north Wales

21 March 2022 is a historic moment for children's rights in Wales. From this day on, all types of physical punishment will be illegal thanks to new Welsh Government legislation. The Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020 will remove an archaic legal defence by outlawing the physical punishment of children when it comes into force in Wales on 21 March 2022.

As part of the nationwide public awareness campaign, an Ending Physical Punishment advertising van will visit key tourism destinations across north Wales during August.

Visiting over 40 locations over the school summer holidays across the whole of Wales, the van is designed to raise awareness for local residents as well as visitors to Wales of the forthcoming change in the law.

The van will be at the following locations in north Wales during August:

- Tuesday 3 August: Rhyl, Llandudno, Colwyn Bay
- Wednesday 4 August: Zipworld, Zipworld Fforest, Adventure Parc Snowdonia
- Thursday 5 August: Bangor, Caernarfon, Anglesey
- Friday 6 August: Llanberis, Aberdaron, Abersoch, Pwllheli
- Thursday 19 August: Wrexham and Mold
- Friday 20 August: Rhyl, Prestatyn, Talacre beach
- Saturday 21 August: Conwy, Welsh Mountain Zoo, Llandudno Pier, Llandudno Junction
- Sunday 22 August: Zipworld, Adventure Parc Snowdonia, Porthmadog

** Locations are subject to change*

The van tour of north Wales' holiday hot-spots is the first phase of outdoor advertising in advance of the nationwide campaign launch which takes place in September with the roll out of television and radio advertising.

Julie Morgan, MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services, said, "Wales will soon join over 60 nations across the world who have outlawed the use of physical punishment towards children. The nationwide awareness campaign in support of this important legislation will tour key summer tourism destinations across north Wales, along with other advertising that people may see when they are out and about. We want to help ensure anybody who lives in, or visits north Wales, is made aware of the law before it comes into force on 21 March 2022.

“The passing of the legislation ensures Wales meets its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child by prohibiting the physical punishment of children in Wales. Children in Wales will now have the same legal protection from common assault as an adult for the first time. In tandem with the legislation we are also providing additional support through our *Parenting. Give it time* resources for parents and carers looking for alternatives to physical punishment when it comes to disciplining children in their care.”

Sally Holland, The Children’s Commissioner for Wales, added, “This is landmark legislation for children’s rights in Wales. I wholeheartedly support the introduction of this legislation as there is no room for physical punishment in Wales or the long-term trauma caused to children as a result of it.

“I’m pleased to see Welsh Government investing in raising awareness of this new law and promoting positive parenting techniques, to ensure people living in and visiting Wales know that physical punishment simply does not work as a means of disciplining children.”

Jenny Williams, Chair of the North Wales Safeguarding Board, said, "This may be a difficult subject for many to broach, but having the van visit north Wales is a great way to get people, whether living here or just visiting, to start thinking about the issue of physical punishment of children, and to seek out support, if they need it, before the law change.

“Parenting is not easy, but there are effective means of disciplining children out there which do not need to involve the use of physical punishment. We want to work alongside Welsh Government and local safeguarding partners in each region in Wales to ensure all parents and carers are made aware of the law before it comes into force next year.”

ENDS

Contact Information:

Rebecca Ellis Owen, Cambrensis Communications
rebecca@Cambrensis.uk.com or 07899 668853.

Editor’s note:

In January 2020 the Senedd passed the Welsh Government’s Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020 (“the Act”). The overarching aim is to help protect children’s rights and give all children in Wales the best start in life.

The Act received Royal Assent on 20 March 2020 and there now follows a comprehensive multi-media stakeholder and public awareness campaign before the Act comes into force on 21 March 2022.

The change in law does not create a new offence, rather it removes a 160-year old legal defence which sent the message that it was acceptable for children to be physically punished by their parents or those with parental authority. Over the years legislation has limited the circumstances where the defence could be used and limited the settings where children can be physically punished. Physical punishment has been outlawed in schools, children’s homes, local authority foster care homes and childcare settings.

Physical punishment is when you use physical force to punish a child. While smacking is what usually comes to mind, physical punishment can take many forms including hitting, slapping and shaking.

Attitudes towards physical punishment have changed with fewer parents and guardians of young children in Wales supportive of physical punishment. What was seen as okay 30 years ago is less so now.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the basis for the Welsh Government's policy on children. Prohibiting the physical punishment of children is in accordance with article 19 of the UNCRC – the right to protection from all forms of violence. Once the law commences Wales will join over 60 nations across the globe who have already outlawed physical punishment towards a child.

More information on the legislation can be found here: gov.wales/endphysicalpunishment

More information on positive parenting including resources to help parents, is available through *Parenting. Give it time*: gov.wales/giveittime