



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

RESEARCH, DOCUMENT

The Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020: April 2023 to March 2024

An overview of data relating to the monitoring of The Children (Wales) Act 2020.

First published: 28 November 2024

Last updated: 28 November 2024

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Background

The Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act (the Act) received Royal Assent in March 2020 and after a two-year implementation period, came into force on 21 March 2022. The overarching objective of the legislation is to help protect children's rights by prohibiting the use of physical punishment against children, through the removal of the defence of reasonable punishment.

The Out of Court Parenting Support Grant has been offered by the Welsh Government to local authorities since March 2022. The grant was created in preparation for the Act coming into force. It funds bespoke parenting support which the police can refer people to as an alternative to prosecution, in cases where the police decide it is appropriate to offer an out of court disposal.

The data should be interpreted with caution given that it relates to one year only. All numbers are rounded to the nearest five to minimise any risk of data disclosure.

A full data release will be published in spring 2025 which will include demographic breakdowns, referrals to social services and data on prosecutions relating to the Act.

Main findings

Out of Court Parenting Support Grant: 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

During the second year following the Act coming into force, there were 125 new referrals for out of court parenting support across Wales by the police.

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Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, 115 new individuals chose to take up the offer of parenting support. 20 individuals had partially completed the sessions in the previous reporting period and continued to access the support between April 2023 and March 2024. Of these 135 individuals, 110 have fully completed the sessions and 20 have partially completed the sessions at the end of March 2024. Some individuals have disengaged from the support before completion of the sessions; this means that the number of individuals who have completed and partially completed the sessions may be less than the total number of individuals who chose to take up the offer of parenting support.

Five requests for parenting support through the medium of Welsh were made.

Individuals completing the parenting support are asked to complete a post support questionnaire issued by local authorities. Figures on the total number of completed questionnaires is not available. The latest data on this shows that 90 of the individuals who completed the questionnaire self-reported a positive outcome. This is defined as an improvement in the child's behaviour, or in parental wellbeing or efficacy.

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Social research number: 82/2024

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Digital ISBN 978-1-83625-969-5



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