



Northern Ireland Assembly

Justice Bill

Notice of Amendments tabled on 19 September 2025 for Consideration Stage

New Clause

After clause 23 insert—

‘Abolition of defence of reasonable punishment

Abolition of common law defence of reasonable punishment

23A.—(1) The common law defence of reasonable punishment is abolished in relation to physical punishment of a child taking place in Northern Ireland.

(2) Accordingly, physical punishment of a child taking place in Northern Ireland cannot be justified in any civil or criminal proceedings on the ground that it constituted reasonable punishment.

(3) Nor can physical punishment of a child taking place in Northern Ireland be justified in any civil or criminal proceedings on the ground that it constituted acceptable conduct for the purposes of any other rule of the common law.

(4) For the purposes of this section, “physical punishment” means any battery carried out as a punishment.

(5) Article 2 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (physical punishment of children) is repealed.’

Mrs Michelle Guy