

Lisa McMahon
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Our Reference: 202000048362
Your Reference: Equal Protection Act

26 June 2020

Dear Ms McMahon

Dear Ms McMahon

Thank you for your email dated 1 June, in which you asked about a national marketing campaign on the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland Act 2019).

As you will know, this Act will remove the “reasonable chastisement” defence currently available to parents and carers charged with assaulting a child in their care. The Act itself provides that this will come into force 12 months after Royal Assent, which in practice means 7 November 2020. The Act also requires the Scottish Ministers to raise awareness about the removal of the defence, and this obligation is already in force.

The Scottish Ministers are committed to taking forward what is needed to implement this legislation ahead of 7 November, and has formed an Implementation Group which is working on this. You can read about the work of this Group [here](#).

We are not planning a national marketing campaign on this Act, having concluded that awareness raising – in line with the obligation in the Act – could be effectively and proportionately achieved by other means. At present, we are giving consideration to:

- Circulars for organisations (and I would be happy to add your name to the copy list for these circulars if that would be helpful)

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- Mainstreaming information about the Act in other sources of information (Child protection guidance, Ready Steady Baby, and Ready Steady Toddler, for example). You may be aware that the Child Protection Guidance is currently under review and we have made arrangement for content on this Act to be included in the updated version.
- A factsheet aimed at parents with high level information about the Act. The intention is that this could be shared by stakeholders via social media, and we would be happy to send this to you when it's fully developed.
- A new page on the Scottish Government website, including information about the Act itself as well as sources of support and guidance for parents.
- Articles in specialist journals (for example, those aimed at the legal profession)
- Communications activity (a news release, for example) in November.

We have already:

- Sent a high level circular to over 125 organisations
- In line with our commitment to providing support for families, produced a national marketing campaign which focusses on positive parenting and provides information, advice and practical tips coping with being a parent or carer. As you will appreciate, this subject matter took on enhanced relevance due to the lockdown. You can see this campaign on the [Parent Club website](#). We are considering further promotion of this campaign in the run up to 7 November.
- Created a toolkit for use by stakeholders linked to the marketing campaign materials. I can send this on to you if that would be helpful.

I hope that this provides a helpful overview of implementation of this Act, but I would be happy to discuss or address any questions you might have.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Meanley
CLLS : Family Law

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