

Children Are Unbeatable! Newsletter England

Issue No. 3 – September 2010 (see [website](#) for previous issues)

If you do not want to receive further issues of the newsletter, please inform Miranda Horobin at info@endcorporalpunishment.org.

Appeal for funds

Many thanks to those CAU! supporters who responded to our recent appeal for funds. Please note that you can now donate online on the CAU! website, via [Charity Choice](#)

Contents

Parliament and Government

Child protection

Across the world

Research

And finally...

Parliament and government

New MPs elected at the general election have already signed up to support the aims of the Children Are Unbeatable! Alliance. Our new supporters include Luciana Berger, Paul Blomfield, Mike Crockart, Alex Cunningham, Julian Huppert, Cathy Jamieson, Ian Mearns, Bridget Phillipson and Valerie Vaz. Supporters Richard Allan, Matthew Taylor and Phil Willis have moved from the House of Commons to the House of Lords.

In June, Baroness Morgan of Drefelin (former Children's Minister) tabled an amendment to the Academies Bill to make sure that new academy schools are not permitted to use physical punishment. In the debate, the new Government Minister, [Lord Hill of Oareford, confirmed](#) that academies are already covered by the ban on physical punishment in independent schools that came into force in 1999.

The full contents of a restraint manual used in secure training centres (privately run child prisons) were released to CRAE, the Children's Rights Alliance for England, following a Freedom of Information request. Previously redacted material included the techniques which deliberately cause pain. In the House of Commons, [Caroline Lucas MP called on the Secretary of State for Justice](#), Kenneth Clarke, to introduce an explicit ban on corporal punishment in secure training centres. Physical punishment is already banned in other types of custody for children, including secure children's homes and young offender institutions.

What you can do:

[Ask your new MP to support the Children Are Unbeatable! Alliance](#)

[Find out who your MP is](#)

[Return to contents](#)

Child protection

In June, CAU! sent a letter signed by key supporters of change to the law on physical punishment to all chairs of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in England, repeating the request that boards consider supporting the Alliance's aims. The letter was signed by the following chairs, chief executives and senior officers of organisations concerned with children and protection:

- Dame Clare Tickell, Chief Executive, Action for Children
- Dr Catherine Powell, Chair, British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (BASPCAN)
- Hilton Dawson, Chief Executive, British Association of Social Workers
- Maggie Jones, Chief Executive, Children England
- Alison Higley, Vice-Chair, National Professional Committee, Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA)
- Dr Katherine Rake, OBE, Chief Executive, Family and Parenting Institute
- Sir Paul Ennals, Chief Executive, National Children's Bureau
- Andrew Flanagan, Chief Executive, NSPCC
- Pamela Park, Chief Executive, Parenting UK
- Dr Peter Carter, Chief Executive and General Secretary, Royal College of Nursing
- Professor Terence Stephenson, President, Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health
- Bob Reitemeier, Chief Executive, The Children's Society.

Since the April newsletter, three more LSCBs – **Havering**, **Manchester** and **Norfolk** – have signed up to the Alliance's aims, bringing the number of supporting boards to 26. The former two signed after receiving the CEOs' letter, and it is hoped that many more will follow in the coming months.

What you can do

- Please let us know if you are a member of a LSCB.
- If your work involves child protection in any way, please contact your LSCB and encourage them to support the Alliance's aims.
- If you are a member of an LSCB that has not yet discussed supporting the Alliance's aims, please urge your board chair to place the issue on the agenda for the next meeting.
- If you are a member of an LSCB that has signed up, please ask your chair to promote that decision with other boards in the region.
- If you are a member of an LSCB that voted not to sign up, please ask the chair to reconsider the decision.

For more information or materials for LSCBs, please contact Pat Gordon-Smith on 07528 275646; pat.gsmith@yahoo.co.uk

[Return to contents](#)

Across the world

Since the last newsletter four more countries – Liechtenstein, Tunisia, Poland and Kenya – have been added to the list of countries prohibiting corporal punishment of children in all settings including the family home. This brings the number of countries with full legal prohibition to 29, including the first two from the African continent. Of the 27 EU member states, 16 have achieved a complete ban (plus Italy by Supreme Court decision not as yet confirmed in legislation).

Other positive moves include a high level court ruling against corporal punishment in schools in Bangladesh; the introduction of a bill in the US Congress to ban school corporal punishment, and a Tonga Appeal Court ruling that overturned the sentence of judicial whipping imposed by a British judge sitting in the Tonga Supreme Court on two 17 year-olds.

22 of the countries with full prohibition are members of the Council of Europe, which is campaigning hard for law reform in all 47 member states. In April, together with Save the Children Sweden, the Council held a high level debate in Strasbourg marking the 30th anniversary of prohibition in Sweden. In May, in cooperation with the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Violence Against Children, Marta Santos Pais, and the Austrian government, the Council of Europe hosted an international conference in Vienna on ending violence against children including corporal punishment. For further information on the Council of Europe's efforts to end corporal punishment, see the [campaign website](#).

A technical workshop on law reform in the Middle East and North Africa region was held in Beirut, 30 June to 2 July, organised by Save the Children in partnership with the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, the League of Arab States and the Higher Council for Childhood in Lebanon. The workshop followed a two day meeting of the League of Arab States concerning the region's follow-up to the UN Study on Violence against Children and provided an opportunity for participants to focus on the recommendation of the Study to prohibit as a matter of priority all forms of corporal punishment of children.

For further information on this and all aspects of prohibition, see the [Global Initiative website](#). For regular updates on global progress, including news of new campaigns, research and resources, sign up to the Global Initiative e-newsletter (email info@endcorporalpunishment.org).

[Return to contents](#)

Research

Number of assaults on children “rose significantly” in 2009

A study of 44 Accident and Emergency hospital departments in England and Wales by [Cardiff University](#) found that, although fewer adults and teenagers were treated for assault in 2009 than in the previous year, the numbers of under-10 year-olds treated for serious violence in 2009 had risen by 8% from 2008. Although the causes for this rise are speculative, the researchers were sure the increase was genuine, not a statistical quirk.

Slapping children is not seen as high risk behaviour

Being slapped by parents was put last in a list of potential risks to children, in [a survey](#) of 2,000 adults commissioned by the Children’s Society. Only one in three thought slapping was a high risk activity (though more – 36% - thought it was if the child concerned was of secondary school age). Respondents thought that, for example, parents failing to arrange medical help when the child needed it, not knowing the child’s whereabouts in the evening or calling the child ‘stupid’ was more risky. The Children’s Society Chief Executive Bob Reitemeier commented: “Physical violence is definitely something children need to be protected from. The survey revealed a worrying lack of concern by one third of people surveyed about parents slapping children.”

[Return to contents](#)

And finally...

Children’s voices raised in self-advocacy seems like a relatively recent phenomenon. In fact the earliest attempt to persuade Parliament to ban beating was in 1699 when a “lively boy” (nothing more is known about him) presented a petition to Parliament “on behalf of the children of this nation” to protest against “that intolerable grievance our youth lie under, in the accustomed severities of the school discipline of this nation”. The petition also described the sexual dimension of corporal punishment, “of that nature as to make our schools to be not merely houses of correction, but of prostitution, in this vile way of castigating in use, wherein our secret parts, which are by nature shameful, and not to be uncovered, must be anvil exposed to the immodest eyes and filthy blows of the smiter...”

[Return to contents](#)