Midlothian Sure Start Grandparents’ Group

21 January 2019

In attendance:

- Ruth Maguire MSP
- Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP

Comments:

- "I did smack my child but with my grandchildren I just need to raise my voice and they know". Children know by your voice if you mean it.
- "It's different with grandkids - you can hand them back!"
- Children aren't being brought up with a lot of respect now
- Parents used to be younger - there were "kids bringing up kids" so things were different, and there wasn't a lot of support. Times are changed now.
- One grandparent spoke of an assumption from their children (and children-in-law) that the grandparent would smack. They spoke of instructions being left when they were caring for the children and the first one was "no smacking". This made the grandparent feel "ashamed that that was my background and what they thought".
- Most of the grandparents "think the Bill is needed".
  - but, one said that while they were supportive they didn't like the point that was made about smacking being damaging to children because they don't want people to think that if they were smacked there's something wrong with them. They questioned whether evidence around smacking being damaging was with general population.
- One agreed it was "changed days" but children used to have more respect and that wasn't a bad thing. There have to be consequences and discipline. Love is discipline, not "letting them run riot". Additional support is needed for families – it should start early in ante-natal classes
- One grandparent said they thought that the Bill wouldn't stop children from being abused
- “Don’t want all of our rights taken away by the Government”
- “assault” is not a good term. Don’t want to criminalise parents. Parents need to have rights over their children.
- “lots of folk will clype [if the law changes and they seem someone smacking] but that's a good thing!"
- Girls need to be taught self-respect for themselves alongside sex education. They (and all children) need to be taught a sense of self-worth.
- Are there resources available to support this Bill? (Police and social work)
- One grandparent agreed with the ‘common sense’ approach. They understood the reasons for the Bill but felt that it ‘wasn't broken, so why fix it’.
- The grandparents agreed at the end that it would be good to share ideas among themselves about parenting skills, what to do and what works well, and that they would set aside a morning to do so