Submission to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee at the Scottish Parliament on the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Bill

The Scottish ADHD Coalition would like to make the following points in relation to the proposed Bill.

- The Coalition is broadly in favour of this Bill in that we believe that physical punishment of children is ineffective as a means of discipline, can result in harm to children, and can create a cycle of violence within families.

However, we have some reservations about the potential consequences of the Bill.

- Children with ADHD who display challenging behaviour may be more likely than others to be assaulted by their parents who are at a loss as to how to manage them. To prevent this, there needs to be a focus on earlier diagnosis and treatment of ADHD and much better parenting training and support offered via the NHS. Without this, there is a risk that this legislation will result in parents being criminalised for their inability to cope with their children, resulting in some children being inappropriately being taken into care. This carries enormous consequences for the wellbeing of children and parents and great cost to the public purse.
- Children with ADHD may be more likely to assault their parents than others, and parents need to be able to defend themselves and not criminalised if they act in self defence. Again, the availability of ADHD parenting training is an important preventative measure.

The Scottish ADHD Coalition Trustees
21 February 2019