

## **College policy on the mental health bill**

The Mental Health Bill for England and Wales is currently in Committee stage in the House of Commons. I am delighted to report that the Royal College of Psychiatrists' evidence, as set out in its briefings and statements, is being used extensively in the Commons, as it was in the Lords, as a specialised and expert source of information.

It is important to emphasise that the College's policies on issues raised by the Bill were adopted after widespread consultation with its membership, including through its 10 faculties (which represent the full range of psychiatric specialisms), 12 divisional offices, and its standing committees, special interest groups and special committees. Following consultation, the policies were agreed democratically by its Central Executive Committee, the College's elected Council, comprising representatives of its membership.

I am aware that a few members of the College disagree with the policies adopted by the College and are rightly expressing their views. The College has approximately 10,000 members in England and Wales, working in a range of settings and with differing expertise, and it would be surprising indeed if everyone had the same views as to the best legal provisions for the safe and effective care and treatment of our patients.

My hope is that the College's policies, which have been subject to full democratic consultation and agreed by its elected membership, will continue to be relied on as the Bill makes its way through its remaining stages in the House of Commons. I believe that the policy recommendations of the College would, if adopted within the amended Mental Health Act, introduce provisions which would greatly improve the care and treatment of people with mental disorders.

**Professor Sheila Hollins**  
**President, Royal College of Psychiatrists**