



28 January 2021

FAO: NI Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

Royal College of Psychiatrists Northern Ireland, which represents all (440 approximately) Psychiatrists in Northern Ireland, welcomes the opportunity to engage with this Consultation issued by the NI Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. This response is the work of a small College Working Group which met to consider this.

First the College makes clear that we will not be making any comments whatsoever on the merits or otherwise of the creation of a Bill of Rights. Rather, our response is strictly limited to our concern for the specific inclusion of those with a mental health condition/s and/or learning disability, in the event that such a Bill of Rights is created.

In those circumstances, we would seek the inclusion of those with a mental health condition/s and/or learning disability as having an inalienable right to high quality, sustainable healthcare, to the full range of disability rights and to the full range of appropriate support in accessing said healthcare and rights, as is afforded to, and as is the equal inalienable right of those with physical health conditions. The support aspect is of crucial importance for this cohort, given that the intrinsic nature of their mental health condition/s and/or learning disability may hinder such access.

Additionally, Mental Health and Learning Disability must also be included for protection within the broad social and economic rights which may be specified for protection.

Finally, we are very happy to discuss further the above mental health and learning disability issues with you in the context of your deliberations, should that be deemed helpful by you.

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Richard Wilson, Consultant Psychiatrist  
Chair of RCPsych in NI & Vice President RCPsych