The Royal College of General Practitioners Scotland

Mental Health (Scotland) Bill

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) is the academic organisation in the UK for general practitioners. Its aim is to encourage and maintain the highest standards of general medical practice and act as the ‘voice’ of general practitioners on education, training and issues around standards of care for patients.

The College in Scotland came into existence in 1953 (one year after the UK College), when a Scottish Council was created to take forward the College’s interests within the Scottish Health Service. We currently represent over 5000 GP members and Associates in Training throughout Scotland. In addition to a base in Edinburgh, the College in Scotland is represented through five regional faculty offices in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Inverness, Dundee and Glasgow.

Comments

Mental Health Context

GPs provide general medical care to patients from cradle to grave. In cases of severe and enduring mental illness their psychiatric care is usually undertaken by specialist psychiatric services. Increasingly this is undertaken in the community when GPs will have continued input into their care. GPs will often be the first to refer patients to these services, be called to attend urgently, be asked for medical reports and have a role as a patient’s advocate.

1. Do you agree with the general policy direction set by the Bill?

   RCGP Scotland approves of the objective of allowing people with mental health problems to access proper care and treatment.

2. Do you have any comments on specific proposals regarding amendments to the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Scotland Act 2003 as set out in Part 1 of the Bill?

   The amendments appear reasonable and proportionate.

3. Do you have any comments on the provisions in Part 2 of the Bill on criminal cases?

   No.

4. Do you have any comments to make on Part 3 of the Bill and the introduction of a victim notification scheme for mentally disordered offenders?

   This scheme appears reasonable but must ensure it does not further ostracise people with mental health problems who are attempting to re-enter society.

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