Scottish Disability Equality Forum

Mental Health (Scotland) Bill

Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) works for social inclusion in Scotland through the removal of barriers to equality and the promotion of independent living for people affected by disability.

We are a membership organisation, representing individuals affected by disability, and organisations and groups who share our values. Our aim is to ensure that the voices of people affected by disability are heard and heeded within their own communities and at a national and political level.

General point:
SDEF recognises the technical nature of some of the changes proposed in this consultation. We believe, however, that the overall number of responses will be limited by the consultation document’s complicated drafting, the lack of an easy-read version and the failure to explain, or provide a glossary.

As a result, only the very determined or professionally trained are likely to understand and respond to this consultation. This is a shame as many of the proposals are important and will have relevance to a range of people with mental ill-health, their carers and family members.

We have outlined our concerns below:

Accessibility
The structure of the consultation document is too complicated ‘jumping back and forth’. An easy read format needs to be produced to ensure all those affected can understand the implications; this will also widen responses to such consultations.

Target Audience
Those detained under the Mental Health Act should have access to information in an easy to read, inclusive format.

Inaccessible for ‘joe public’ – families affected would not find this an accessible document.

When asking for individuals to respond, this structure is not accessible or easy to understand.

Organisations are not in a position to comment from a professional perspective unless a Mental Health Organisation, reducing scope for wider and balanced views.

Explanation
No explanation of the implications the changes will have for those it affects.

Medical model – based on the procedures without due regard for the well-
being of those it affects.

**Representation**
Over 50,000 people detained under mental health act in UK, representation must be broadened.

Take into account the experiences of those detained under mental health act and assess impact of for example, increased detention, etc.

**Criminal Justice**
We seek assurance that the relevant departments have been consulted and provided comments on detention in State Hospitals; aspects of arranging transfers and the protection of wellbeing; and the individual's ability to prepare a defence.

**Scottish Disability Equality Forum**
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