

Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill

The Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is the leading medical authority on mental health in the United Kingdom and is the professional and educational organisation for doctors specialising in psychiatry.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Health Committee on this Bill.

Q1 in view of short time of follow up of those involved in the original pilot – two to three weeks and with only 65 responses out of 98 - we would have a worry about potential re-traumatisation from this process. We are not convinced that it has been proved in this document to have been an unequivocal success.

However we think it is good to listen to experience in order to learn lessons.

Q4 yes all adults who were in residential care as children should be given the opportunity to participate - we can learn from what went well as well as what went badly.

Q6 all of the categories listed should be included - presumably the state has responsibility for all of these institutions?

Q7 it is not clear who is present to support those undergoing this process and what training they have but we would argue this is potentially difficult and delicate work and supporters would need to be carefully identified and trained as well as debriefed.

Q8 We believe the issue of confidentiality is a really tricky area. There is mention that members of the NCF could potentially be sued but it is not clear from the document who by – this needs to be clarified.

In any case if the NCF do not follow usual rules around confidentiality there is the possibility of a dynamic of collusion and secrecy - mirroring the original dynamics in the institutions and we believe this a dangerous precedent to set.

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