



About Dementia (Age Scotland)

Response to the UK Government consultation on proposals to reform the Human Rights Act 1998



About Dementia and The Life Changes Trust

About Dementia is a five-year project, funded in 2019 by Life Changes Trust and hosted by Age Scotland. We bring together people affected by dementia with professionals in the public and third sectors to influence change around policy and practice in Scotland. We do this through the mechanism of thematic policy sub-groups. In our first year our sub-groups focused on Housing, Transport & Mobility, Human Rights of Unpaid Carers and Prevention & Living Well. We added Technology, Human Rights of People with Dementia, Sport & Physical Activity and Befriending & Peer Support to these in our second year. Throughout the project, we have focussed on the lived experiences of those with dementia and their unpaid carers. We also seek to use a human rights-based perspective, along with an understanding of related legislation, to empower the groups we work with.

The Life Changes Trust was established by The National Lottery Community Fund in April 2013 with a ten year endowment of £50 million to support transformational improvement in the quality of life, well-being, empowerment and inclusion of three key groups in Scotland: people living with dementia, unpaid carers of those with dementia and young people with care experience. The Trust is due to conclude their ten year tenure in March 2022. About Dementia is a formal legacy partner of the Life Changes Trust.

For more information on this response, or the About Dementia project, please feel free to contact Doug Sloan (Policy Officer), email address as follows:

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Introduction

“I feel we need to emphasise the rights of people living with long-term conditions such as dementia as well as the rights of unpaid carers. These need to be upheld and embedded in any amendments or changes to the Human Rights Bill”. - **Unpaid carer of a Person with Dementia**

In response to the UK Government’s proposed reform of the Human Rights Act 1998, and the associated introduction of a UK Bill of Rights, the About Dementia team consulted extensively with our membership. This included the following dedicated sessions:

- 3 Sessions with our Human Rights of People Living with Dementia Group
- 1 Session with our Human Rights of Unpaid Carers Group
- 1 Policy Drop-In Session (for People Living with Dementia, Unpaid Carers and professionals) with an opportunity to ask questions with the Human Rights Consortium Scotland.
- 1 Day of Action on Twitter to raise awareness of the proposals and allow people to engage with us on the consultation in a less taxing way.

Through these engagement sessions (organised, publicised and conducted within a 6-week period), we were able to gather immediate opinions on the UK Government’s proposals. We were also able to

work with our members to gather more information, with individuals and team members conducting independent research, thus creating a more thorough awareness of the topic. As our engagement progressed, we were able to develop a fuller understanding of the proposals and the potential implications of changes within human rights legislation.

As part of this knowledge-building, members (both staff and activists) attended external events with other organisations. These included the Human Rights Consortium Scotland (HRCS), the British Institute of Human Rights (BIHR) and the Rights Made Real in Care Homes project. Through these sessions, we have also been made aware of corresponding consultation responses being submitted by these and other civil society groups. We look forward to continued collaboration with these organisations, notably on an ongoing campaigning basis if some of the legislative changes proposed within the consultation are initiated.

Outwith the organised events, we also encouraged our membership to send us questions and opinions regarding the proposals via email. Despite challenges in navigating human rights complexities within the short timeframe, we endeavoured to provide as much clarity as possible when asked to provide greater context. We are extremely grateful to our members for their generosity with both their time and their willingness to share personal experiences, providing invaluable input and knowledge to About Dementia staff and fellow activists.

Our intent throughout this consultation response is to bring the voices of those with lived experience of dementia to the fore. We do so with the express wishes of people living with dementia and unpaid carers who demonstrated continuous strength throughout our engagement, often sharing traumatic past experiences of human rights violations. Whilst our engagement period was short, due to the timeframe given, we were fortunate enough to be joined by representatives from a variety of dementia and carer groups throughout Scotland. These include Deepness Dementia, the STAND group, Kirrie Connections, the Ecredibles, the Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG), the National Dementia Carers Action Network (NDCAN) and the Scottish Dementia Alumni.

We hope that we have managed to adequately reflect the wealth of views from our activists on the proposed changes to/replacement of the Human Rights Act. However, if the UK Government would like to consult directly and hear the thoughts and views of our activists with regard to the proposals, we would be more than happy to arrange a meeting to facilitate this.

Limitations in the approach to consultation

“My biggest concern is that the timescale for the discussion before the 8th of March is just ridiculous. I have never come across any legislation that gives you two and a half months of discussion and wow, that's it.” – **Person Living with Dementia**

The Human Rights Act 1998 is considered by our members as a central piece of UK legislation, affecting all parts of a person's life, especially in the case of those consistently marginalised in public settings. However, in each session before discussion began on the content of the proposals, there was a near unanimous concern about the way the consultation process had been conducted. The decision for the consultation to begin in late December, when individuals and organisations

were busy with preparations for Christmas and the holiday season, was perceived by our members as at best negligent and at worst an attempt to curtail the effectiveness of the consultation process. The limited length of the consultation process on such an important and fundamental piece of law was seen as particularly concerning. In the words of one carer, this was especially the case considering the “pandemic and priorities for Covid recovery”. Both the timing and the timeframe of the consultation were brought into question, with one person living with dementia suggesting that this may be a “deliberate act of sabotage” due to a lack of confidence in the proposals:

“That suggests to me that they're worried about it, about getting it through. There's things in it they think will be contested and rightly so.”

Whilst the choice of timing and timeframe may not have been made with malice, it is worth the UK Government considering how these choices translate to the people we engage with. Coupled with a lack of publicity to promote engagement with the consultation, it is not an unreasonable conclusion to draw.

Aside from the timing, the format in which the consultation document was delivered was considered inaccessible and exclusionary. The main consultation document's length of 123 pages was not adapted into an Easy-Read version until the final week before the original deadline for submissions. In effect, this was considered to alienate a huge swathe of marginalised individuals and organisations from contributing as effectively as possible. A recurring theme throughout our regular Human Rights group has been the rights of people living with dementia being impacted, not as a result of malicious thought, but as an unintended effect through of lack of consideration of dementia in larger planning decisions. The delayed publication of an easy read document could be observed as prime example of this common theme.

This type of negligent, even obstinate process was considered symptomatic of a greater problem in educating all members of society on their human rights. Education about human rights was raised consistently in the recommendations made by the Independent Human Rights Act Review panel, which recommended that the Government develop:

“an effective programme of civic and constitutional education in schools, universities and adult education. Such a programme should, particularly, focus on questions about human rights, the balance to be struck between such rights, and individual responsibilities.” (2021)

Our members encapsulated this recommendation themselves. One unpaid carer spoke of feeling like they “possess insufficient knowledge about human rights”, and that:

“the layperson barely knows what human rights means, or if they have heard of it they do not feel it applies to them and have never been in a position to become involved.”

This seeming indifference of the Government to fostering a greater public understanding of human rights legislation was seen as matched by an indifference to publicize the consultation effectively. For one person living with dementia, the consultation was “not in the public domain as much as we would like”. Indeed, for this individual, everyone they informed about the plans had little awareness but were “outraged” when it was brought up to them. This individual's experience not only highlights the lack of awareness of the proposals, but also demonstrates the commitment and motivation from activists we have spoken with to engage fully with the consultation. We are fortunate to work with such passionate people, who have engaged despite the challenges of the consultation process. However, many people living with dementia and unpaid carers lack the time

and energy to decipher complex legal jargon or are missing adequate technical skills to find online information. We believe that the UK Government should have encouraged more responses with a wider publication. In this instance, awareness raising through televised platforms would not have been a disproportionate action considering the gravity of the proposals.

The Government, Cabinet and even individual ministers may have their own opinions on problems with the balance of power between the courts and the parliaments, and indeed the strain that is apparent in the day-to-day workings of the former. Ministers are elected to positions of power in good faith, trusted as experts to understand and exercise the complexities of UK Law. However, even a layperson could determine that such a short timeframe is not adequate or appropriate for the weight of the proposals. It could be inferred that it goes against the spirit of an informed democracy, with a lack of care for building a broader understanding and awareness of human rights, and their relationship and application within UK law, being demonstrated. Without a clear and evident willingness to engage with the public more consistently on such issues, consultations on amendments to human rights are likely to be considered tokenistic by individuals with lived experience.

Collectively, through our lived experience engagement with our membership, we are of the opinion that, even if we agreed with the proposals full-heartedly, we would be unable to support a piece of legislation when such a limited approach and regard for the consultative process has been shown.

Concerns on 'Good Conduct' proposals

"The proposals are taking us back to a time where people are judged by their status and past and not by the injustice of the present." - **Unpaid Carer of a Person with Dementia.**

Within the proposals, one of the sections of greatest contention for our memberships related to "emphasising the role of responsibilities within the human rights framework". Of particular concern is point 303. of the consultation proposals, which states that:

"We aim to build an element of responsibility explicitly into the Bill of Rights by permitting UK courts to consider the claimant's conduct in deciding whether or not to award a remedy. The court will be invited to hear about the lawfulness of the claimant's conduct in the circumstances surrounding the claim but could also be empowered to consider relevant past conduct, such as whether the claimant has respected the rights of others." (Ministry of Justice, 2021)

Our members are well versed in the concept of responsibility. The activists living with dementia that we engage with give their time and energy freely, often noting their motivation for doing so as a responsibility to improve the lives of others, and those diagnosed in years to come. Unpaid carers speak of consistently putting the wellbeing of the person they care for above themselves (often without adequate access to breaks from caring). The same can be said for former unpaid carers, who continue to fight for the rights of both carers and people living with dementia long after their caring responsibilities have ended. Our membership are very much aware of the sacrifices that often need to be made in a cohesive society. Their selflessness and commitment is, in a very real sense, propping up of our society. Without it, the stress on health and social care systems would be unmanageable for

any government. As one of our members put it “unpaid carers save the government billions of pounds a year whilst undergoing extreme situations of anxiety, sensitivity, loneliness, isolation, financial concerns for some and most travelling along a rocky road not knowing what awaits them.”

And yet, even with the great personal sacrifices that are being made by our members, a worry was expressed in the sessions that the establishing of a link between previous conduct and judgements in human rights cases was a dangerous precedent. For one of our members living with dementia, “going back into somebody’s history is just a get-out clause”, a way to hamper access to justice in light of financial and logistical pressure on the current justice system.

For other people living with dementia, there were concerns that signs of significant stress caused by their condition could be used against them in future cases. It was suggested that the potential knock-on effects within a public setting could be substantial, with the potential for workers in public settings being able to exploit these moments and ultimately get away with denying certain human rights. This was felt particularly in the case of the denial of a right to family and personal life, something that our members suggested had already been apparent in care homes during the most intense periods of lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was an acute awareness among our members of the main people being targeted by the introduction of ‘good conduct’ caveats within human rights legislation, namely prisoners and migrants. This once again led to frustration with the proposed amendments, and to a level of cynicism with regard to any associated benefits proposed by the government. One person living with dementia thought that the government was “using immigration as the hook” to alter the HRA and, ultimately, to enforce cultural norms based on the current government’s ideological priorities. An unpaid carer stated that, if any good was to come from the government’s proposals, it needs to “be developed in such a way that it is not just a vehicle to sort out immigration issues, policing etc. while living through uncertain times”. For another of our unpaid carers, there was sympathy for individuals with difficult pasts who could potentially have their rights curtailed in light of previous actions:

“You know, we already know that a lot of people that end up in those circumstances have suffered horrific childhood trauma, abuse and violence and other things. And so, to take those rights away, I think is again even more dehumanising”.

Fundamentally, the proposals to consider good conduct and introduce greater connections between responsibilities and human rights were seen as patronising and unsympathetic by our membership. Individuals raised concerns that the introduction of such a measure would lead to people with lived experience being unable to access justice, alongside wider marginalised groups in society. In the majority, the idea was soundly rejected by those that we engaged with.

Concerns on the establishment of a Permission Stage

“[Everyone deserves] to be given a fair hearing. For someone ‘to listen, to hear’ and be treated with respect. After all, any person connecting with human rights must be in a bad/poor/alien territory before they embark on a connection.” – **Former Unpaid Carer of a Person with Dementia**

Within the consultation proposals, much is made of the current justice system’s inability to cope with the number of cases being brought to court. The number of these “frivolous or spurious cases” being pursued is also cited as causing a devaluing of human rights in the greater public conscious. Given the fact that there is seemingly so little public awareness on the application of human rights in UK law, and the existing barriers in place to individuals seeking recourse under existing legislation, this connection seems particularly tenuous. Nevertheless, the government’s proposed solution to restore a “sharper focus on protecting fundamental rights” is to introduce a so-called permission stage, detailed as follows:

“A permission stage would shift responsibility to the claimant to demonstrate that a human rights claim does, in practice, raise a claim which merits the court’s attention and resources [...] The permission stage would require claimants to demonstrate that they have suffered a significant disadvantage before a human rights claim can be heard in court.” (Points 221. & 222.) (Ibid.)

Many of our members and activists with lived experience saw this suggestion as obstructive to those looking to secure justice, in effect presenting an extra administrative ‘hoop to jump through’ before being allowed their day in court. It’s also worth considering that this additional stage may present a financial burden for claimants. If the claimant has to demonstrate ‘significant damage’, the collection of evidence may include the use of recording devices, technology and printing, all of which may incur a cost to the claimant. Additionally, as we have shown, many of our members do not feel well-versed in their rights and therefore may need to hire legal help to understand and undertake the proposed permission stage. This will no doubt lead to a hierarchy in which people with less access to expendable income will find themselves disadvantaged by this process, unable to provide substantial evidence that their rights have been impacted.

The overriding ethos driving the introduction of this stage seems to be a suggested need to remove burdens from public bodies and then redistribute this burden (repackaged as “responsibility”) on individuals with grievances. Central to this is the idea that individuals will need to build an evidence base of their own in order to demonstrate significant disadvantage.

Our activists had a number of issues with the assumptions informing this ethos. Firstly, people living with dementia called into question the concept that current human rights law was being manipulated. One of our activists living with dementia suggested that “cases where lawyers have tried to stretch human rights law are few and far between”, whilst another added that the opposite was in fact true:

“I don’t believe the Human Rights Act has been abused particularly. I don’t even think it’s been used as much as it could have been”.

Secondly, the renewed emphasis on the individual’s need to build up a large body of evidence was unpopular with both groups. In the case of unpaid carers, it was considered unrealistic and emblematic of a greater lack of empathy for those in a caring role. Building up a detailed evidence

base for the permission stage is something that most carers felt they simply wouldn't have the time to do without independent advocacy and access to greater breaks from caring. Equally, as one unpaid carer put it, "as carers, we only realise bad things have happened retrospectively", a state of affairs making it difficult to effectively gather evidence. Once again, a lack of broader education on human rights was also seen as hampering the ability to build a case individually. As another unpaid carer put it, "you don't really know about your human rights being infringed upon until either it happens, or somebody tells you".

Finally, the lack of process detailed for the proposed permission stage was noted, especially with regard to where responsibility for making judgements would lie. The possibility that the permission stage would turn out to be a cold, administrative exercise worried some of our activists, as did the idea that eligibility criteria for progressing cases could be applied inconsistently by professionals without the necessary legal background.

One of our members living with dementia did, however, understand the potential reasoning behind the government's action. In particular, the need to abide by human rights legislation was suggested as also providing an impediment to some processes. This was very much based on their own experience "having worked in both the private and the public sector" and realising that it felt like "things moved quicker there [private sector] than in the public sector". Despite this acknowledgement, however, the person living with dementia insisted that they:

"could understand the reasons for the stringent policies and procedures so that you were still treated with respect. Whereas if the [Human Rights] Act gets minimised, it's certainly not a good thing".

In contrast, many of our members had lost faith that public bodies they interacted with would uphold or even acknowledge their human rights. One unpaid carer spoke of the fact that, when their partner had been diagnosed with dementia, they were:

"never ever asked if I was prepared to be a carer. [...] And when you think about it, that should have been one of my main basic human rights, to be asked if I was prepared to do that".

For another unpaid carer, the experiences she had had with some public bodies had left them feeling that "certain people in positions of autonomy were not worthy of that position" and that it left them "wondering if such people are adhering to human rights or giving their own personal opinion".

In the case of these two individuals, the situation was clear. Some public services were already failing to uphold human rights values and the introduction of another administrative process was likely to lead to similar failures to uphold these values. For people in such situations, closer access to the judicial system and a chance to have a day in court to fully explain grievances were seen as crucial. This idea that this access existed impacted heavily on our members' belief in the rule of law and the concept that justice was being upheld.

On a related note, throughout our engagement there has been a desire for Human Rights to be more embedded in law, in order to give everyday people more power to hold public bodies to account. It appears as though the proposals in the UK Bill of Rights would reduce accountability of public bodies, which gives normal people less ammunition in conversations and situations in which their rights are being impacted. The members we engaged with were acutely aware of the amount of interactions the proposals could affect, as demonstrated by one comment from a person living with dementia:

"I'm in touch with public bodies all the time, be that the people that provide benefits, or the NHS

or my dentist, or my local leisure centre. All those things are where I have interactions where what we can do and what we're being allowed, it's already being weakened now. And I think it'll just be heyday after (the Bill)".

The consultation document suggests that faith in the justice system is being threatened by excessive human rights claims. Our activists, would suggest that it is being threatened by the further dislocation between members of the public and the courts that are tasked with, ultimately, protecting them.

Concerns of a Hierarchy of Rights becoming further ingrained

"If they take away some of your fundamental rights, to me it's like the thin end of the wedge – it's going to happen more and more." – **Person Living with Dementia**

During our engagement sessions, the dismantling of long-standing human rights legislation was viewed by people with lived experience of dementia as troubling. Beyond the immediate practical implications of the proposals, the concept of divergence from an internationally recognized standard of human rights protection was seen as a step in the wrong direction.

Of our members who responded in a written format, all stated that they believed that human rights should be universal. For many of our activists, the mere fact that alterations were being proposed to the Human Rights Act was a sign that the UK government did not share this principle.

The suggestion that a hierarchy of rights would be established by the new proposals was a topic consistently raised in our meetings. For some, this took on a class dimension. As one person living with dementia put it, "if you've got money, your rights will be protected" while the "people that are on ordinary wages living ordinary lives – we're going to be the ones that suffer under this". The suggestion that access to legal support and advocacy would be dependent on wealth ultimately informed this opinion. Given the consistent underfunding of and reductions in access to legal aid, this opinion is perhaps unsurprising. Specific extension of such support was also a theme raised by one unpaid carer who cited a clear need for "a good law project or an advocacy project" specifically for unpaid carers like them.

While this concern was being expressed, we also heard from individuals that they felt that a hierarchy of human rights was already in effect in some public settings. This was a sentiment expressed consistently by people living with dementia. One such individual suggested that, with regard to health care:

"I always feel as if they're pushing you to one side or making you hang on a bit longer for the treatment that you need. And I certainly think that if your rights are watered down even more, that's going to become even more prevalent".

Another person living with dementia agreed:

"Because when you've got dementia, it's almost like [they think] 'Why are we bothering to treat you? You're not a contributor towards society'".

Some unpaid carers were also sceptical of the current universality of human rights through existing law. In expressing this, many went on to cite the recent effects of lockdown and the rights of individuals during the worst moments of the COVID-19 pandemic. One unpaid carer relayed a particularly upsetting period during the pandemic, which they felt, in hindsight was a clear human right's violation. They spoke of their husband, who lives with dementia, being refused a home visit from a doctor, impacting their right to life and leading to a potentially life-threatening bleed in the brain. Another carer cited the fact that during these times, many human rights breaches were apparent "where treatment diagnosis and support [were] denied for people living with dementia as well as unpaid carers who carried excessive burdens". Another unpaid carer talked about the pandemic potentially facilitating a relaxation of human rights in certain settings, some that would be exacerbated by the new proposals:

"Under these powers, it could actually mean that at any time, a care home decides that it doesn't want visitors, it can just shut the door and say, we've got a cold here, or we've got something here and you wouldn't have access. So for me that that is extremely worrying."

It is clear that there are no rose-tinted glasses being worn by our members when it comes to the current efficacy of human rights legislation. For people with lived experience of dementia, there already exists a certain hierarchy in terms of human rights, with "people with dementia at the bottom of it". However, what is equally clear is that our membership thought that the proposals did not represent a feasible way to address or alleviate this current situation. If anything, it was seen that the amendments represented a roadmap to further regression and entrenchment of existing inequalities.

The Devolved Context

"There are so many factors that influence this. There's the UK, there was Brexit, there was the Scottish devolved governments. And the law is different in different parts [of the UK]." – **Unpaid carer of a Person with Dementia.**

In reference to the "Bill of Rights" proposed as replacement legislation for the Human Rights Act, the following is stated within the proposals with regard to application in devolved administrations:

"The Bill of Rights will seek to strike the correct balance between guaranteeing rights protection to all people across the United Kingdom, and allowing for difference in the application and implementation of the rights framework according to the needs and preferences of the nations of the UK." (Ibid.)

What is not immediately apparent or explained within the proposals is how such a "balance" is to be achieved.

Within the devolved context, our members highlighted the evident fact that the current administrations at Holyrood and Westminster were on different trajectories when it came to human rights. Indeed, the current Scottish Government has shown its desire to build on, rather than alter, the values and principles established in the Human Rights Act and its parent document, the European Convention on Human Rights (ScotGov, 2022).

As may be expected in the current political climate, divergence in priorities between Scotland and UK governments brought about highly politicized sentiments among the group. One person living with dementia spoke of the changes proposed in the consultation as “playing into the hands of those in favour of independence”, whilst another person living with dementia suggested that because “Scotland is big [on] human rights”, the proposals added to a “need to get the referendum [on independence]. The proposals could therefore have wider-reaching constitutional implications for the whole of the United Kingdom.

Political beliefs aside, the proposed changes certainly seem to present the UK government with a quandary if they are to continue to pursue the amendment or scrapping of the current Human Rights Act 1998. This is mainly due to the way in which the aforementioned parent document, the European Convention on Human Rights, was also built directly into the Scotland Act 1998 (and subsequent versions of the Act). If the UK government was to replace the Human Rights Act with a Bill of Rights, this may not immediately ensure that said Bill of Rights would necessarily supersede the rights established in the European Convention on Human Rights via the Scotland Act (Lazarowicz & McFadden, 2018).

In summary, it seems that to fully enact the new Bill of Rights in Scotland, the UK government would need to also amend the Scotland Act. Without the express consent of the Scottish Parliament (which it is currently unlikely to receive), any such amendment would be another breach of the Sewell Convention and may lead to accusation of legislating without the consent of a devolved power. Although this would certainly be legally possible, the political detriment brought to the UK parliament would seem to far outweigh the professed benefits of the proposals outlined in the consultation document.

On a more practical level, it was also suggested during our engagement that the enacting of the proposed changes in Scotland would undermine previous work done to educate and inform people on their rights under both devolved and reserved legislation. In particular, one unpaid carer cited her work in developing a “Charter of Rights for People with Dementia and their Carers in Scotland” (CPG on Alzheimer’s, 2009). The development and creation of such reference material, particularly by those with lived experience, can be a vital and dependable source of information at what can be some of the most challenging times in a person’s life. If the proposed changes are to take place, there is a risk that materials like these, addressing numerous conditions, may be rendered invalid.

Conclusion

Our membership raised concerns about both the process and the content surrounding the Human Rights Act Reform consultation. Both people living with dementia and unpaid carers were unhappy with the lack of consideration involved in the consultation design. In particular, the significant delay in creating an easy-read version was seen as symbolic of a closed consultation with a number of pre-determined outcomes.

The suggestion that greater responsibility was needed on the part of individuals in order to retain pre-existing rights was challenged. It was felt that considering an individual's broader conduct over their lifecourse and outwith the human right breach being raised was a get-out clause. It was also seen as a way to target other marginalised people in society, although members were very much aware that interpretation of good conduct could also affect them personally.

The proposed introduction of a permission stage for cases lodged on the basis of human rights grievances was also met with resistance. Our members saw this as an attempt to introduce an extra obstacle on the road towards justice. There were questions on what would constitute 'significant damage' and who would be tasked with judging this. The proposals contained in the consultation documents did not answer these questions. There was also a general feeling amongst our members that the government's reasons for introducing this stage were themselves spurious.

The fact that changes to the Human Rights Act were being considered was, in itself, seen as an unnecessary by our members. The possibility was raised that a hierarchical system of rights could come into effect or intensify, with some of members seeing this hierarchy as already in effect. In particular, the existing financial and logistical barriers to accessing support and advocacy for human rights claims will only be exacerbated by stated proposals.

Acknowledgement of divergence between current Scottish and UK administrations was made when it came to human rights policy. It was raised that the practicalities of specific application for the proposed Bill of Rights in Scotland was a bit of an afterthought, with some suggesting that it showed disrespect to the devolved administration.

Fundamentally the proposals were viewed as a step in the wrong direction by our members. There was much criticism of the current implementation of human rights amongst the groups that we spoke to, and no member was under the impression that the application of the current Human Rights Act was perfect. All this considered, this did not dampen our members opposition to the perceived diluting of their statutory human rights. If anything, we heard from numerous members that they intended to fight these amendments every step of the way, with the campaigning beginning in the near future.

What our members would like to see is more access to legal recourse, not less. They would like to see more engagement with those with lived experience, not less. And they would like to see more respect for their own human rights and the related legislation that is ultimately there to protect them, not less.

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