

Submission and Proposal Paper

Introduction

The Antrim Community Forum is an umbrella Group made up of seven Community Associations and seven “Special Interest” Groups, based within the Antrim Area.

The combined representatives of the above Groups have derived at the following agreement to Proposals and comments.

4. Equality and non-discrimination

Question 12. Should “status of victim” be a ground for protecting individuals against discrimination?

Answer YES

Proposed the phrase “right to be protected” and the inclusion of “status as a victim” and “other status” should be included.

Comment Each and everyone must be protected regardless of “status”.

Question 13 Should the clause in the Bill of Rights dealing with positive action *require* or *permit* such action?

Answer YES. The Bill of Rights should make positive action, which is ***“required”***.

Comment In the interest of promoting effective equality. “permit” does not adequately protect individuals.

5. The rights of women

Question 14. Where would the rights of women be best placed in the Bill of Rights – Within a special chapter on women’s rights or allocated as appropriate to relevant chapters in the Bill?

Answer Within a special chapter on women’s right.

Comment Not withholding other pertinent issues relating to other relevant sections.

For
Consideration “part-time” workers should have equal statutory rights of employment regardless of occupation or status.

These rights must include “agency/part-time” workers under contract; the same privileges to equal pay including sick pay, holiday pay after a set period of time. They should be offered full time contracts if the job is envisaged to last indefinitely or for at least a further 2 – 3 years.

10. The rights of children

Question 22 Which approach would you prefer for the protection of children's rights in the Bill of Rights?

Answer The combination of approaches to include (1) and (2).

Question 23 Where would the rights of children be best placed in the Bill of Rights – within a special chapter on children's rights or allocated to relevant chapters throughout the Bill?

Answer Special chapter on children's rights.

Comment Not withholding other pertinent issues relating to other relevant sections.

Question 24 Should the enhanced right of children to play a constructive role in society be included in the Bill of Rights?

Answer YES

Comment To be included in the Education Curriculum at Schools and other statutory bodies.

Question 25 If so, how should this right be enforceable?

Answer Through citizenship studies as a National Curriculum in schools.

Question 26 Should state support for children to enable them to grow up in a stable, safe and loving family environment be framed as a positive right or as a state obligation?

Answer A “Positive” right.

Comment The age of Children “in care” to be raised to 18years. Further support should be given to overcome the outside -environment.

Question 27 Should the age of criminal responsibility be raised from 10 to 12 years?

Answer 80% consider that the age limit remain at 10 years.

Comment Children aged 10 years are today more matured and streetwise.

However, some children are not and therefore in all such cases some form of assessment should be made on individual cases.

Parents are to be held responsible for their children’s action.

Question 28 Should the Bill of Rights include an obligation on the state to keep the age of criminal responsibility under review?

Answer YES

Comment To be under regular review.