

Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights

Church Representatives

April 2021

Representatives from the Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Church of Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland, and Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland welcome the opportunity to engage with the Committee as it considers the matter of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. The Churches had engaged with the previous consideration of a Bill of Rights for NI through the Bill of Rights Forum, and its various sub-groups. The Committee's consideration of a Bill of Rights offers an opportunity to consider the sort of society we would like to see in Northern Ireland, and how we might learn to live and work together as a more reconciled community.

As well as offering spiritual support to individuals and communities through acts of corporate and personal worship Churches are part of the fabric of everyday society, providing support to those who are vulnerable and marginalised in practical and pastoral ways. This ranges from the provision of residential, nursing and respite care for the elderly and those with disabilities; support for the homeless; chaplaincy services in hospital, prison and universities; delivering assistance through foodbanks; youthwork in communities across Northern Ireland; education support; reconciliation work, and is manifested in many other ways. These pastoral and practical considerations inform the Churches views on human rights, alongside their theological perspectives.

The Churches, both individually and together, look forward to further engaging with the outcome of the Committee's deliberations on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland on completion of its final report.