

# **LA DOLCE VITA PROJECT**

**Response to the public consultation on:**

**“Do We Need a Bill of Rights in Northern Ireland”.**

**La Dolce Vita Project** welcome the opportunity to provide information gathered to assist Northern Ireland committee members in their decision-making-process on a “Bill of Rights”.

Miss Donna-Maria Logue of La Dolce Vita Project met with MLA Mark H Durkan (SDLP) who is a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Bill of Rights, January 2021.

- a) To acquire a better understanding of the proposed/ potential Bill of Rights
- b) To express the voices of those working with the most vulnerable in society, highlighting their rights.

In an attempt to explore existing perspectives and ascertain the need for such a bill in Northern Ireland La Dolce Vita Project held a focus group.

A number of La Dolce Vita Project volunteers, and members of our community, who have availed of our services between 2016 to 2020 participated in the focus group. Age range between 24 to 61 years.

The focus group were in agreeance Human Rights cover a diverse range of topics. Due to the times constraints agreed to explore the following areas:

- a) Disability Rights
- b) Protection & Family Life
- c) Volunteers/ Student placements
- d) Employment opportunities

The focus group strongly disagree that we all enjoy the same Human Rights.

## Disability Rights

The group concluded those with disabilities don't have the same access to attend all services within the Western Trust Area. Due to limits of disability access.

Recommendation:

- a) The right to access to all services without limitations.

Recommendation:

A provision made to have the right to have access to space. Government should provide allocated space for those who are disabled, organisations can facilitate on an ad hoc basis.

## Family Life

Article 8: Protects your right to respect for your private life, your family life.

The group believe the European Convention on Human rights would set the standard when determining the Rights to Family Life in Northern Ireland.

Examples given of ECHR:

**Article 3:** Best interest of the child must be the primary concern in making decisions that affect them. Adults should think about how their decisions will affect children's care and well-being.

**Article 9:** Separation from parents. The child has the right to live with both parents. Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their interests e.g if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child).

Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.

Recommendation:

- a) The Right to family life post separation.

### **Volunteers/Student Placements**

Discussion took place on the removing of financial barriers for volunteers and student placements to provide charitable services.

- a) The Right to be financially supported.
- b) The Right to have information, noted at their academic level, to ensure understanding. (Use of language can be a deterrent).
- c) The right to have easier access to information that they may not be aware of. E.g: Grant opportunities, sponsorships.
- d) The right to have access to free training to enhance their personal development and employment opportunities.

### **Employment**

The group believe, within Northern Ireland we do not have the same opportunities, as other parts of the world. They also believe that certain professions are not valued e.g: nursing, counselling therapy.

Recommendation:

- e) The Right to be valued
- f) The Right to employment opportunities

The survey provided was published to all La Dolce Vita Project social media sites. Feedback received, was that the higher percentage of those who took part, did not wish to complete the second part of the survey containing 75 questions.

In addition to the findings pursuing to the focus group La Dolce Vita Project have considerable robust research to validate the importance of a Human Rights Bill particular to our work in domestic abuse and parental alienation, which we are happy to provide on request.

**La Dolce Vita Project.**