

Dpohan S (Sean)

From: HSS Secretary [secretary@humanism-scotland.org.uk]
 Sent: 12 January 2007 15:33
 To: Public Health Consultation
 Subject: Public Health Consultation Reponse

Importance: High

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HUMANIST SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND
 272, Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4JR

Public Health Legislation - Written Submission

The Humanist Society of Scotland thanks you for the opportunity to submit a written response to the subject, following our attendance at 3 of the 5 regional events. Our response is not only aimed at the legislative essentials of the proposed changes, but also a commentary on its ethos. As humanists, we are concerned with equality for all, ensuring non privilege in all aspects of society. As funeral ceremony officiants, we would expect parity in any and all considerations given to ministers of religion, funeral directors and crematoria operatives, re rites of passage. It is apparent that we are not included as such in any emergency management policy. Could this please be addressed ?

We agree that the NHS should assume overall responsibility for the outbreak management and control of disease with considerably enhanced powers within the new Bill, as a means of aiding transparency and clarifying accountability.

The category of 'nuisance' being replaced by 'environmental health concerns' was criticised, being a very useful catch-all phrase for use by EHO's. There is a gap in the legislation addressing control over individuals who represent a public nuisance, until such time as their situation becomes so unsanitary that they can be sectioned.

Q2.3 (and table 1/64) We recommend that no cultural or moral sensibilities should impair any policy designed to achieve optimum protection of public health.

Q2.4 & 6.3 We recommend that there should be no exclusion provision which impairs public health.

Q6.1,2,3 Yes.

Q8.1,3 Agree

Q8.2 Option a)

Ch10.4,6,7 Human rights law is important to the Society and we endorse the principles of humanitarian ideals that are enshrined in all such declarations, covenants and conventions such as the ECHR, as well as the universal initiatives promoted by the United Nations and WHO for the peaceful and safe co-habitation of all the world's populations.

Other observations :

An EHO representative said their remit now covered a huge area from food poisoning to choked drains to

the smoking ban, and so the legislation desperately required updating. There was no mention of this problem in the draft Bill. EHO's firmly believe that some controls have to be left with Local Authorities.

Voluntary and Independent Providers felt the importance of their role in overall Health provision has not been properly addressed. Areas of concern included confidentiality.

A Medical Officer (Dr) referred to the lack of concern over housing which was a major concern in the provision of health care. For example, four out of five disabled people live in houses without proper access.

Further concern was expressed about patient confidentiality provision in the Bill. Patients have also to be better informed.

Closer cooperation with the voluntary sector is required. Overcrowding in Nurseries and Care Homes has to be addressed.

Ron McLaren Secretary ~ Humanist Society of Scotland
01334 474551

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