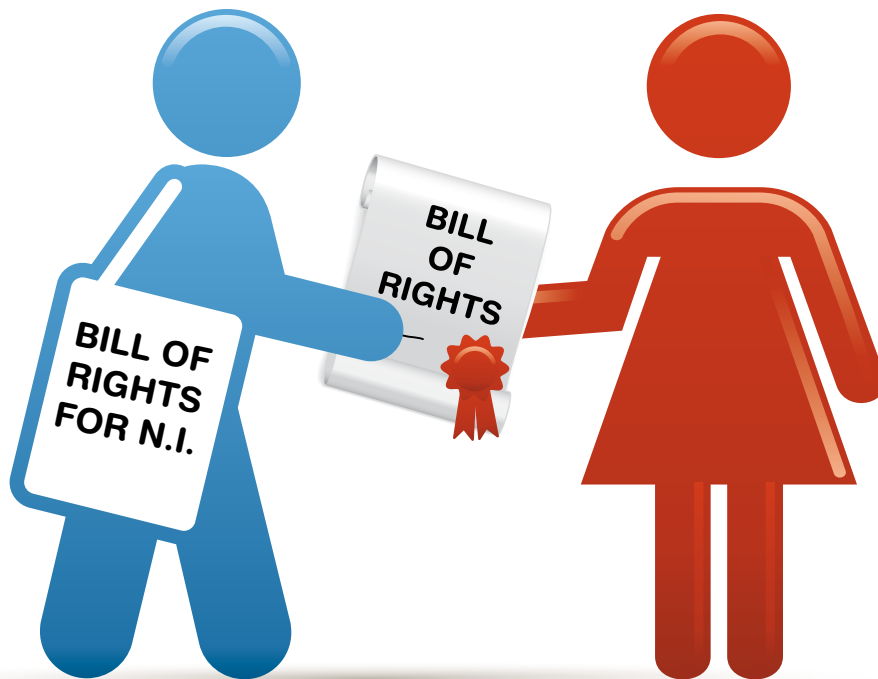


A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

An easy-read booklet explaining what we told
the Government about a Bill of Rights for
Northern Ireland

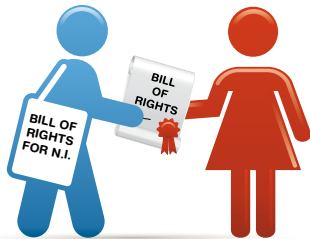


People with a learning disability
helped us to make this booklet.

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Who this booklet is from



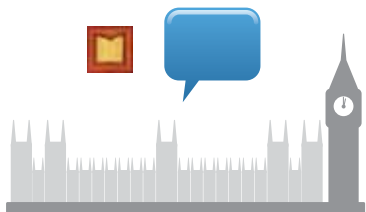
We are the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

It is our job to make sure the Government protects everyone's human rights.

We also let everyone know what their human rights are.

We were set up because of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

What this booklet is about



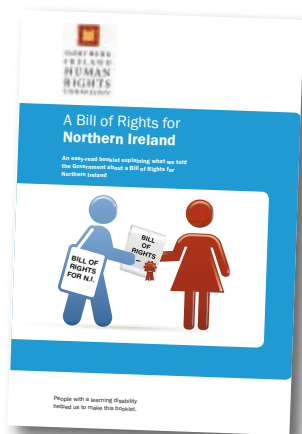
The UK Government asked us to advise them about a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.



A Bill of Rights is a list of laws a country agrees to make to protect all the people who live there.

Most countries have a Bill of Rights.

Northern Ireland does not have one yet.



This booklet tells you what we told the UK Government about a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

Human rights – what are they?

RIGHTS = ✓



Human rights are the freedoms and protections that every person should have.

They are about the things everyone should be free to do. They are also about the harm everyone should be protected from.



You already have many human rights.

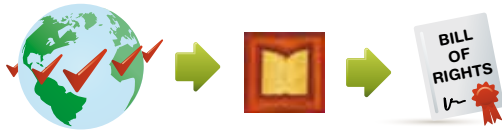
These are included in laws all around the world.



The UK Government agrees with many of the human rights laws from around the world.

It also agrees that people in Northern Ireland should be protected by these laws.

Human rights in Northern Ireland



We collected information about human rights laws around the world.

We collected information about the human rights everyone wants in a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.



We did this by talking and listening to all kinds of people.

More about: Human rights in Northern Ireland



We used all the information to think up extra human rights for everybody in Northern Ireland.



The UK Government agreed that we should do this.

CATHOLIC PROTESTANT



A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland should:

- help Protestants and Catholics to respect each other
- make Northern Ireland a peaceful and fair place to live.

Rights you already have



You have the right not to be treated badly or punished in a cruel way.

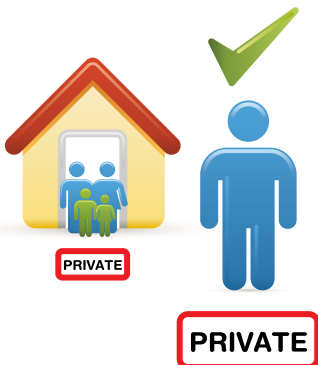
FREEDOM



You have the right to not be made into a slave.



You have the right to say what you want as long as it does not break the law.



You have the right to your own private life and family life.

More about: Rights you already have



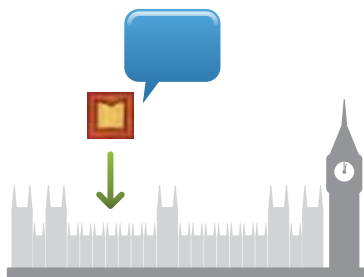
You have the right to believe in and practise any religion.



You have the right to be free to mix with people.



You have the right to own property.



What we told the UK Government about these rights:

- Keep these rights in a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.
- Do not change these rights or add any words to them.

Other rights you already have



You have the right to life.



You have the right to be free and to be safe.

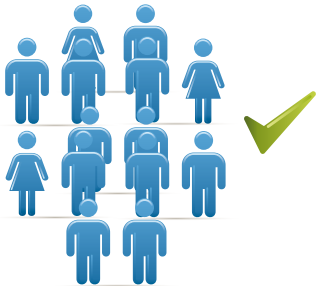


You have the right to a fair trial in court if you are accused of breaking the law.

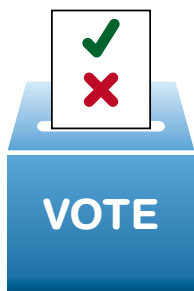


You have the right to get married.

More about: Other rights you already have



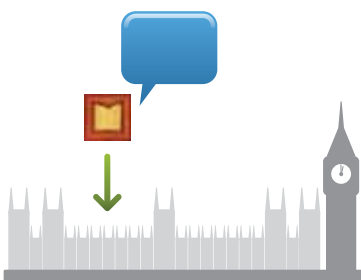
You have the right to be treated fairly by having the same rights as everyone else.



You have the right to vote and take part in free elections.



You have the right to an education.



What we told the UK Government about these rights:

- Keep these other rights in a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.
- Change them a little by adding more parts and new words to them.
- More parts and new words will make the rights stronger and better for the people of Northern Ireland.

More parts to the rights you already have

Here are some examples of the new words we want to add to the rights you already have.

The new words will make your rights stronger.



The right to life

If this right was broken because of the conflict in Northern Ireland it should be investigated using the rules we have today.

FREE AND SAFE



The right to be free and to be safe

If you get arrested you should be treated properly. You should be able to see your solicitor and family. Children and adults with special needs should get the help they need.

FAIR TRIAL



The right to a fair trial in court

Children and adults with special needs who are accused of breaking the law should be treated the right way for their age and understanding.

More about: More parts to the rights you already have

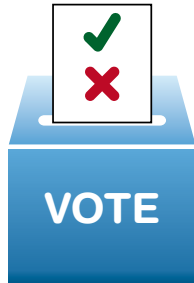
Here are some examples of the new words we want to add to the rights you already have.

The new words will make your rights stronger.



The right to get married

You should have the right to a civil partnership. You should be able to end a marriage or a civil partnership.



The right to vote and take part in free elections

Everyone should have the same chance to join public bodies. The government should try to make sure that public bodies are representative of the whole Northern Ireland community.



The right to an education

Education should help promote equality and human rights, and it should help people to be tolerant and respect difference. No child should be stopped from getting a full education.

Extra rights we want everyone to have

We think people in Northern Ireland should have these extra rights:



You should have the right to move freely and to live wherever you want in Northern Ireland.



You should have the right to choose if you are Irish or British or both.



You should have the right to speak and learn in your own language.

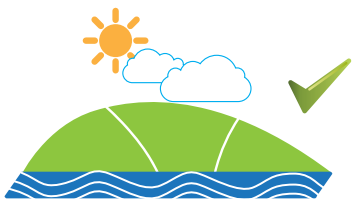


You should have the right to support if you are a victim of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

More about: Extra rights we want everyone to have



You should have the right to be treated fairly by the Government. You should get the information or help you need without waiting too long.



You should have the right to have a well looked after environment.



You should have the right to equality.

More about: Extra rights we want everyone to have



Nobody should be allowed to hurt you, take advantage of you or harass you because of who you are.



Children should always be safe from harm and have special protections.



The Government should protect your right to be as healthy as possible and to have good health services.

More about: Extra rights we want everyone to have



The Government should protect your right to a decent standard of living.



No-one should force you out of your home and the Government should always protect your right to have somewhere to live.

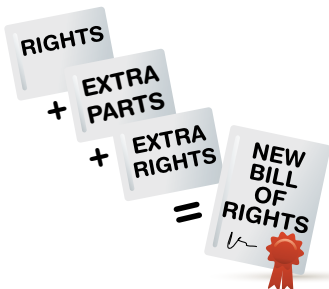
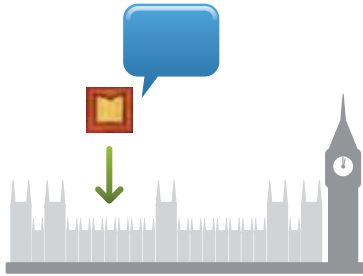


The Government should protect your right to work and to have good conditions in work.



The Government should protect your right to social security and benefits and pensions.

Add all the rights together



What we told the UK Government about the extra rights:

- We need extra rights because they will help to make sure there is fair treatment for everyone.
- Add the extra rights to all the rights everyone already has and make a new list of laws.
- This new list of laws will be a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.
- A Bill of Rights in Northern Ireland will help everyone to live in peace.

Remember, you already have most of the rights mentioned in this booklet. They are just in different parts of the law.

Who is in charge?



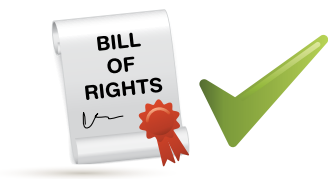
One government is in charge of making a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

It is the UK Parliament.



Two governments are in charge of changing the laws and rules for Northern Ireland.

They are the UK Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly.



To put everyone's rights together in a Bill of Rights the law and the rules in Northern Ireland need changing.

The UK Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly are in charge of making the changes.

Changing some laws



At the moment there is a law that says what a 'public body' is.

It includes some organisations and people who provide a service for the public.



The government, the police, the health service, schools and courts are all public bodies.



What we told the UK Government about a public body:

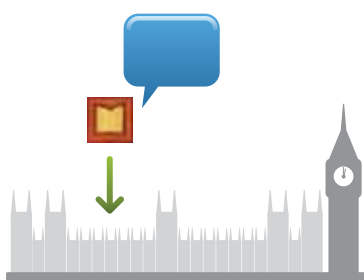
- Change the law about what a public body is.
- Include more organisations and people who provide a public service. That way more people can get their rights.



More about: Changing some laws



At the moment a law says only the victim can claim against a public body if they break someone's human rights.



What we told the UK Government about a victim:



- Change the law about the way a victim can claim against a public body.

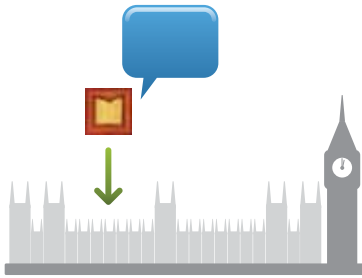


- The victim should be allowed to be helped to claim against a public body. Any organisation or any person interested in their problem should be able to help a victim.

Changing some other rules

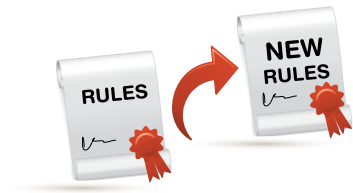


At the moment there are rules to help courts to decide if the human rights you already have are being broken.



What we told the UK Government about courts:

- Change the rules so the courts can also decide if the extra human rights we want everyone to have are being broken.



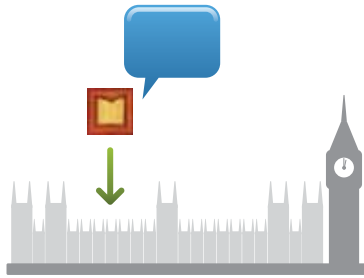
In an emergency like war the UK Government might need to stop a Bill of Rights working.

What we told the UK Government about stopping a Bill of Rights working:

- If you have to stop any rights in the Bill of Rights because of an emergency, you must only stop them for three months. Then you should think again and decide what to do.



More about: Changing some other rules



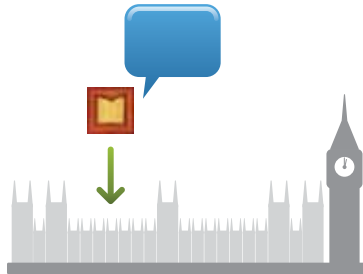
It should not be easy to change the rights in the Bill of Rights.

What we told the UK Government about changing a Bill of Rights:



- Only change the Bill of Rights if politicians from all communities in the Northern Ireland Assembly agree.

The governments should stick to a Bill of Rights



What we told the UK Government about who has to stick to a Bill of Rights:

- The UK Government has to do what a Bill of Rights says.



- The Northern Ireland Government has to do what a Bill of Rights says.



- All groups who do work in Northern Ireland for these two governments must do what a Bill of Rights says.

What to do now



The UK Government is reading the report we gave them.



They are going to tell everyone what they think and write their ideas in a report.



Then they are going to ask everyone to give their opinion about this report.



If you are going to give your opinion, please think about what we told the UK Government about a Bill of Rights.

Find out more about a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

You can get a copy of our long report about a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland on the internet:

www.nihrc.org

You can also get a shorter report here:

www.nihrc.org

You can find information about the Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland on another website:

www.borini.info

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