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Dear Mr. Woodward,

As a group of mental health service users, we at LAMP would like to draw your attention to the following concerns. In response to the proposed Draft Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, we feel there has to be exemptions made within psychiatric services. Although we realise that for the general public, this will be a very good initiative, the same can not be said for those already experiencing emotional distress due to mental health difficulties.

We are particularly concerned about patients in psychiatric hospitals, both short-term and long-stay wards. By enforcing a smoking ban, they will have undue stress added to an already difficult situation. We feel for the staff in having to enforce this ban, as this would damage the fragile relationship, which they are trying so hard to establish with the patient. At present, smoking rooms, which should always be well ventilated, are available, and staff have no need to enter these rooms, thus ensuring they are not subjected to passive smoke. It has to be remembered that for these patients, this is home, no matter how long or short the stay.

Psychiatric day facilities, such as day centres and day hospitals, should have smoke-free buildings, but have a discreet designated smoking area outside. This should be out of sight and away from the main entrance.

We do hope you will take these concerns into consideration.

Yours Sincerely

LAMP

