

Campaigners take fight to Stormont

BY KIERAN HUGHES

k.hughes@belfastmediagroup.com

A NORTH Belfast mental health rights campaigner brought his fight for better rights for patients to Stormont last week.

Oldpark man Gerard McCartan, whose son Danny took his own life in 2005, was one of a number of campaigners who met with the Stormont Health Committee on Thursday (March 3) to demand more action from politicians on addressing the number of young people being treated on adult psychiatric wards and other key issues.

Gerard, a member of the Belfast Mental Health Rights Group, said the meeting was "positive" and that the Committee have promised to raise the concerns with the Department of Health.

A report published last month by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) found that 47 young people in the Belfast Trust area were admitted to adult psychiatric wards between 2007 and 2009.

A 2007 report into Danny's death had recommended that young people shouldn't be treated on adult wards.

"Young people should not be treated on adult wards and the Committee told us that they are



Gerard McCartan

going to ask for all the recommendations in our report to be implemented by the Department and we welcome that," said Danny.

"The meeting was very, very positive. We put all our points to the Committee and they have said they will raise them with the Department of Health. I am confident that they will get back to us."

He said the Committee was impressed with the work that the Belfast Mental Health Rights Group has done, particularly the Card Before You Leave scheme which was implemented by the Department of Health last year.

The scheme is an appointment card for mental health patients with a date and time and the name of doctor who will see them to help address their problem.