

Transcript – Democracy and the Rule of Law

KEY:

N: Narrator

N: Democracy is a system of government where citizens exercise power by voting in elections. There are two main types of democracy. In a direct democracy, citizens vote for a policy, deciding whether they are for or against the proposed issue. In an indirect, or representative, democracy the citizens vote to elect representatives to speak and vote on their behalf in a governing body. In the United Kingdom, elected representatives are known as Members of Parliament, or MPs. In Northern Ireland, citizens vote to elect representatives to the Northern Ireland Assembly as Members of the Legislative Assembly, or MLAs.

One of the main roles of government is to legislate, or to make and enact laws. Respect for the rule of law is a key feature of all democracies. Laws are essential for ensuring a peaceful, safe, and functioning society. This includes ensuring that governments do not abuse their powers, protecting citizens and their basic rights and helping to resolve disputes.

The law is based on the principle that everyone is treated equally, and no-one is above the law. But society needs to have ways to make laws effective. It does this through the Criminal Justice System. In Northern Ireland, the Justice System has three main areas: law enforcement by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, delivering justice through the Northern Ireland Tribunals Service, and imprisonment for those found guilty of crimes, provided through the Northern Ireland Prison Service.