

# **CHARTER FOR INVOLVEMENT**



**National Involvement Network**

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# FOREWORD

by Alan Mackenzie,  
Chairperson of the National Involvement Network (NIN)



As Chairperson it gives me great pleasure to introduce this 2019 edition of the Charter for Involvement.

It has been 4 years since the NIN wrote the Charter. Since then NIN members have been promoting it across Scotland and explaining that we must be involved in all decisions that affect our lives.

We have spoken to many organisations all over Scotland. The bosses of 80 organisations, large and small have signed up to the Charter. This includes 7 Health & Social Care Partnerships. Signing up means organisations have made a commitment to put the Charter into practice. We hope many more will do so.

We know that the Charter makes a big difference to people's lives. Organisations have told us more than 10,000 people have benefited from it. We also know that the Charter has shown people who get support can be leaders in their organisations and in their wider community.

The Charter is all about people who get support being listened to and respected. Everyone has a voice, and we all have the right to be heard.

I hope you enjoy this new edition of the Charter.

# WHAT IS THE CHARTER?

The Charter for Involvement shows how people who use support services want to be involved:

- in the services we get
- in the organisations that provide our services
- in our wider communities

The Charter is for anyone who receives support and covers all abilities, age, gender, race, colour, sexual orientation or religion.

The 12 Statements in the Charter fit in with human rights rules.

**Most importantly, the Charter helps us to be listened to and respected.**

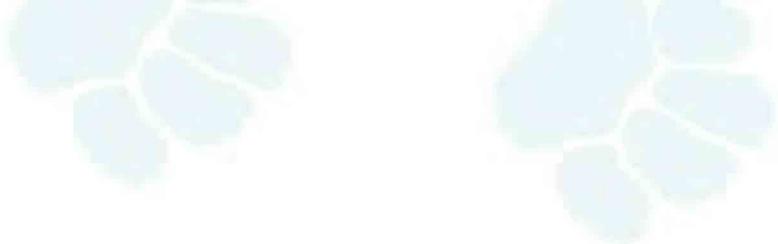
# WHO HAS WRITTEN THE CHARTER?

The Charter has been written by members of the National Involvement Network (NIN).

We are a group of people who get support from different social care organisations across Scotland.

We have been meeting since 2007 to share ideas about things that matter to us and to promote involvement.

**The Charter helps me with my confidence and anxieties which is good. It was written by people like me.**



We wrote the Charter because:

- everyone isn't asked their views
- everyone isn't involved
- everyone isn't getting the support they need to be involved

We wrote the first Charter for Involvement in 2009. 25 organisations 'signed up' to this. This means they promised to use the Charter to make involvement better for the people they support.

In 2012 we produced a report about how well the Charter was working. We asked a lot of people about the Charter. There were a lot of good things about it. There were also things that could be improved.

Since the first Charter was published the Scottish Government has made changes to laws and policies that affect people who get support, like Self-directed Support.

This new, improved Charter shows what we have learned and fits in with the changes that have taken place.

# WHY IS THERE A TIGER ON THE FRONT COVER?

You might be wondering about this!

- a tiger was on the cover of the original Charter and we decided to have another tiger on this one
- the tiger makes us feel strong and bold
- people take notice of the tiger and want to know what it is all about
- lots of people now recognise the tiger as being about the Charter
- **you don't mess with a tiger**



# WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE CHARTER?

The main aim is to get support organisations to sign up to the Charter and commit to putting the standards in the Charter into practice.

We also want to encourage people to take control over things that affect their lives.

We have written 12 Statements to improve involvement and given ideas for what should be happening to make these work. We spent nearly two years working on these.

Please read the Statements. At the end of the Charter we show ways it can improve things for people who receive support and the organisations that support them.

**It used to be that other people spoke for you, and nothing ever got done. Now we speak for ourselves and have much more control over things.**

**I make sure people who support me know about the Charter and what they need to know about me.**

# THE 12 STATEMENTS

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STATEMENT

# No. 1

“

We must be at the  
**heart** of any plans  
about **our** lives

”



# No. 1

## We must be at the heart of any plans about our lives.

### This means:

We must know what a 'person-centred plan' is and have one if we choose one.

We should have information about our care and support that is always easy to understand, accurate and up to date.

### When making our plans:

- at our planning meetings we must always be listened to and respected
- we must choose who comes to our planning and review meetings and what is decided
- our plans should help us to do the things **we** think are important. This might be everyday things, like our hobbies and interests, or big plans, like moving house or getting a job
- all plans about our lives **must** focus on **us**
- our plans should focus on our talents and skills
- our plans must be made in a way we can understand, like using pictures, easy-read and DVDs

- we must be at the **heart** of **all** our plans, including Risk Assessments which are made to keep us safe
- our plans must show how the things that are important to us will happen
- nothing should be put in our plans without checking it with us first
- things we don't agree with should only go in our plans if they are very important in helping to support us. It will say in our plan if there is anything we don't agree with
- where we need someone to make decisions for us, we have the right to choose who that person is where the law allows it

#### **After our plans are made:**

- we should be able to choose to sign our plans to show that we agree with what they say
- if things in our plan **do not happen** someone must speak to us to tell us why
- we must be able to change things in our plans that we have changed our mind about
- our support should always be planned and reviewed at a pace that suits us, and we should be told when our plans will be completed

STATEMENT

# No. 2

“

We have the **right** to  
live our lives  
**independently**

”



# No. 2

## **We have the right to live our lives independently.**

### **This means:**

We have a right to live our lives the way we choose.

We must be involved in all decisions about our lives.

We must be involved in any decisions made about how we keep safe.

We must be able to choose the friendships and relationships we have and where and when we see these people.

We would like guidance from staff to help us form safe relationships.

If the law says we can't meet with certain people, then we must be given clear information and support to understand why.

We must get the help we need if we want to get a job, voluntary work, training or education.

We must be involved in making decisions about where we live.

We must have a choice about who we live with.

We must be involved in decisions about keeping healthy.

We must be involved in how much say our family and carers have over our lives.

**Our money:**

- we must get the help we need to manage and control **our** money
- we must have control about choosing the services we pay for
- we should have control over the money that pays for our support if we want it
- we must be at the centre of any decisions **made** about **our** money
- we must get clear information about what **our** money pays for if we want to know

STATEMENT

# No. 3



“ We must be  
**involved** in our  
**communities** ”



# No. 3

## **We must be involved in our communities.**

It is our right to be treated the same as everyone else.

### **This means:**

We must have the choice to go to the same places that other people can choose to go to, such as:

- community centres
- shops
- libraries
- pubs and clubs
- others we choose

We must have the choice to take part in the same groups that other people can choose to take part in, such as groups about:

- religion
- hobbies
- sport and fitness
- education
- arts and crafts

We must be able to go to these places when we want, and come back when we want.

We should have support to take risks safely and plans to cope in case things go wrong.

We should be told how to get information on what is happening where we live.

We must have the choice to get involved in how decisions are made in our communities, such as taking part in Community Councils, Access Panels and Community Planning.\*

We should have the choice to get involved in educating people in our communities so everyone is treated equally.

\*These groups influence decisions in our communities.

STATEMENT

# No. 4

“ We must be able  
to **speak** about how  
our **support**  
is working for us  
and what would  
be better



# No. 4

**We must be able to speak about how our support is working for us and what would be better.**

This includes speaking to our support staff, key worker, team leader, manager, Care Inspectorate\* and other people who we can trust.

“Good support workers don’t tell us what to do. They support us to do the things we choose.”

**This means:**

**When we speak about our support:**

- the people who support us should always listen to us and respect us
- we should be able to meet with the staff team that supports us to speak about how we want to be supported
- we must have a manager or team leader who knows what is important to us. They must regularly ask us what we think about the support we get
- we must be able to meet with the Care Inspectorate\* in private when they visit
- we must be able to say what we think without worrying what will happen to us

- if we want an **advocate** to help us speak about how our support is working and what could be better, we must be supported to apply for one
- we must be able to say when we want to be supported and by whom
- we must only be supported by staff we get on with

**When we want to change something:**

- we must be able to change the time of support if we want
- we must be able to change the organisation that provides our support if we want to
- if we want to change our support, this should not be a reason to cut costs or save money
- we must be able to bank our hours if we want to

\*The Care Inspectorate makes sure people receive high quality care and ensures that services promote and protect people's rights.

STATEMENT

# No. 5



# We want to be involved in choosing the people who support us.

This includes choosing our support workers, key worker, managers and other staff, volunteers and our advocates.

## This means:

We must **have the choice** to be involved in:

- writing job descriptions\* and person specifications\*
- planning interview questions
- taking part in interviews
- deciding who gets the job

We must have the chance to meet everyone who is being interviewed to support us before they are offered a job. We must be asked who we think is the best person to support us.

We must get the training and help we need if we choose to take part in job interviews.

There must be an easy-read policy that shows how we are involved in choosing the people who support us.

\*A job description shows what things you have to do if you get the job.

\*A person specification shows what kind of person is being looked for to do the job. This could include what skills, experience and education they should have. It may also show what personal qualities they should have.

STATEMENT

# No. 6



# We want to give information and training to staff at all levels.

## This means:

We must have the choice to give information and training to:

- all new staff that will support us
- the staff teams that support us
- the managers and senior staff in the organisations that support us
- the Board members of the organisations that support us
- the people who are part of the local and national organisations that plan and run our support

We will know if we are going to be paid for giving information and training and how much we will get.

We will get the support and training we need if we want to do this.

STATEMENT

# No. 7



# We want to be **involved** in writing **policies\*** that affect us and making them easier to understand.

## This means:

The policies\* that most affect us must be made in ways we can understand.

We should **have the choice** of helping to write the policies that are most important to us.

We must get the support we need if we want to help to write policies.

Examples of policies that we should **have the choice** of helping to write are:

- choosing new staff and volunteers
- being involved in how the organisation is run
- complaints
- how our support plans are made
- holidays
- bullying
- keeping safe
- having control of our money

\*Policies are written by organisations to show how staff must do their work.

STATEMENT

# No. 8

“ We want to be  
**involved** in  
**decisions** made by  
the organisations  
that plan and run  
our support

”



# No. 8

## **We want to be involved in decisions made by the organisations that plan and run our support.**

Being involved in how organisations are planned and run can take time to understand. Everyone that plans our support must make an effort to make our involvement work.

### **This means:**

We must have the choice to be involved in all decisions that affect us. This includes decisions made by:

- the national organisations that make decisions about our support
- Councils and Health organisations in the area we live in
- the Boards of the organisations that support us
- the staff team that supports us

Our involvement in organisations could mean:

- being members of the Board, committee or group
- having an agenda item at meetings
- giving presentations at meetings
- people who make decisions coming to **our** meetings to listen to **us**
- helping to write plans

Our involvement in Councils, Social Work and Health could mean:

- finding ways to make things work in the right way for us and other people in our communities
- taking part in planning and decision-making groups, or focus groups, to improve things in our communities

These organisations must have a statement or policy about how people can be involved.

We must get the support we need to be involved in these things.

We must know how much power we have to make decisions. There should be a written policy or paper that shows how much say we have in making decisions.

Meetings must always be held in ways we can understand and take part in.

We must get information in a way we understand.

We should get information that shows if things are getting better for people.

STATEMENT

# No. 9



# **We want to be involved in events run by the organisations that plan and run our support.**

**This includes conferences, training events, planning days, annual general meetings and workshops.**

## **This means:**

We should have the chance to be involved in planning these events.

Events must be organised in ways we can understand and take part in.

We must get the support we need to take part.

We must get information in a way we can understand.

STATEMENT

# No. 10



# We want to be involved with 'Speaking-up' groups.

Speaking-up groups are where people speak up for themselves and say what they want. This includes: advocacy groups, peer support groups and Charter for Involvement groups.

## This means:

We should get information about Speaking-up groups.

We must **have the choice** to join Speaking-up groups if we want.

If there are no groups we can join, we should get help to start one if we want.

Speaking-up will help us to:

- speak up for our rights and the things that concern us
- help other people understand their rights
- get to know other people who understand us and who we trust
- meet with other people from outside the organisation that supports us
- make the Charter for Involvement work in the organisation that supports us

We must get the time and support we need to get ready for and take part in groups.

STATEMENT

# No. 11



# We want to take part in national and local campaigns.

This includes campaigns about:

- our local community
- our Council
- the environment, human rights and other world issues
- politics

## This means:

We must know how to get information about local and national campaigns.

We must get the support we need to understand and think about local and national campaigns.

We **have the right** to take part in campaigns that matter to us if we want.

We should get support to start campaigns if we want.

We will get the support we need to take part in campaigns.

STATEMENT

# No. 12

“

We have the  
**right** to make  
formal **complaints**  
if we need to

”



# No. 12

## **We have the right to make formal complaints if we need to.**

Some people will feel bad about complaining. People have said that they would feel “terrified”, “worried”, “horrible”, “sick”, “scared”. People are sometimes worried that they will not be believed, or will get a row.

If we make a complaint we want to feel “respected”, “believed”, “supported”, “taken seriously” and “reassured”.

### **This means:**

Complaints help to make organisations better. Organisations are not doing their job properly if they do not help and encourage us to complain.

We must never be told off (or picked on) for complaining.

Everyone must know about the Complaints Policy and how to make a complaint.

We should be involved in writing the Complaints Policy. It should be made in a way we understand, like easy-read, film or using pictures.

## Making a complaint

- complaints forms should be given to everyone and made in a way we can understand. We must be able to speak about our complaint if it is difficult for us to fill out the form
- we must get the help we need if we want to complain
- we must know who we can make a formal complaint to. They should be someone that we know and trust
- we must know what steps will happen if we need to complain
- we must know who will hear about our complaint. Complaints should be kept private as much as possible. Only people who need to know should know about them
- we must get help to apply to have an advocate if we want one
- we must be told the result of our complaint and what has happened as soon as possible

# WHY IS THE CHARTER IMPORTANT?

We wrote this Charter because we wanted to set out **in our own words** how we want to be involved.

We also wanted to show support organisations what they can do to help us get more involved and become better organisations.

It is important for other reasons too:

- it helps organisations provide better services
- it goes along with the principles and priorities in the Keys to Life and the Scottish Strategy for Autism
- it also fits in with the Scottish Government's Fairer Scotland for Disabled People delivery plan
- it goes hand in hand with the new Health & Social Care standards that seek to ensure we are all treated with respect and dignity
- it matches the values of choice and control in Self-directed Support. It encourages us to be in charge of our own support so we can live the lives we want
- it encourages people who get support to become leaders in services and communities

**Working with NIN has helped me grow in confidence. I have done things that I never thought I would be able to do. I can now speak up for myself and help others as well. I now have my own home and no longer need 24/7 support.**

# WHAT DO WE WANT TO HAPPEN NOW?

## 1. If you receive support you can:

- think about getting more involved in things that interest you
- get more involved in your support organisation
- ask your support organisation to sign up to the Charter
- work with your support organisation to put the Charter Statements into practice
- come along to a local involvement group or Speaking Up group meeting

## 2. If you work for a support organisation you can:

- talk about the Charter with the people you support
- talk about the Charter at your team meetings
- ask your organisation to sign up to the Charter (only the Chief Executive, Director or Chairperson can do this)
- work with the people you support to put the Charter Statements into practice
- support people to go to an involvement group or Speaking Up meeting

# WHAT DOES SIGNING UP TO THE CHARTER MEAN?

We hope that the Chief Executive, Chair of the Management Committee or another person responsible for the organisation will sign a statement to say that they:

- agree with the principles and Statements in the Charter
- will put the Charter principles and Statements into practice
- will draw up an action plan. This will say how the organisation will improve involvement in line with the Charter principles and Statements
- will work in partnership with people who use their service to check how the organisation is doing on a regular basis
- will make sure that all the workers in their organisation know about the Charter

We also hope that Councils and NHS Boards will sign up to the Charter. This will show their commitment to:

- supporting the principles and Statements of the Charter
- encouraging organisations to sign up to the Charter, and
- involving people who receive support in decisions that affect their lives

**The Charter means I have got my own choices. It means I can pick my own staff. If we didn't have choices we wouldn't be anywhere, people would just run our lives for us.**

**The Charter has given me the confidence to speak up.**

**The Charter gives me the choice to live the life I want to live. I can use it every day in my life to make decisions. I find it a very useful tool.**

**30 years ago it was take it or lump it. Things have changed now. People listen to what I want.**

Members of the National Involvement Network and ARC Scotland are here to help anyone who wants to use the Charter to get more involved. Please contact us.

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**The Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

The Charter for Involvement has been funded by the Scottish Government.



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ARC House, Marsden Street, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 1JY. Company No  
1658354. Registered Charity No 285575, Scottish Charity No SC039129.



Many thanks to all the organisations that have supported people to take part in the NIN. We would like to thank the following organisations for supporting us to produce the Charter:

Advocating Together (Dun-  
dee) SCIO  
ARK Housing Association Ltd  
Brothers of Charity  
Garvald Edinburgh  
Hansel  
Hillcrest Futures  
Key Community Supports  
Quarriers  
Real Life Options  
Redwoods Caring Foundation  
George Steven Centre  
St. Joseph's Services  
Turning Point Scotland  
Upward Mobility

The National Involvement  
Network is supported by  
ARC Scotland.