

Disabled adults and social workers

Charter Guide



Disabled person silhouetted against sunset.



www.basw.co.uk

British Association of
Social Workers and
Shaping our Lives



www.shapingourlives.org.uk

What is the Charter?

This Charter was produced by **BASW** England (British Association of Social Workers) and **Shaping Our Lives**. It was jointly written by disabled adults and social workers¹.

The Charter sets out how we want to work together as disabled adults and social workers. It is supported by a Position Statement that explains why it matters that we work well together.

Why use the Charter?

Disabled adults and social workers met in February 2018 at a seminar to discuss why the Charter matters and how to use it. The group agreed that:

- **We want disabled adults and social workers to be inspired by and to use the Charter**

The Charter is based on our shared aims and values. The Charter matters because it:

- Supports us to *use the social model of disability, take a human rights approach and promote Independent Living* – this is what disabled adults want and what fits with social work values
- Helps us to *build a good relationship* – which we know from research is the means to a helpful intervention²
- Supports us to *fulfil the Care Act 2014 duties* – the Charter helps us consider what promotes wellbeing; it supports the principle of starting with the individual's views, wishes, feelings and beliefs; and it helps with thinking about outcomes that the person wants to achieve³ and what could support them to achieve these

¹ www.basw.co.uk/resource/?id=5909

² Ruch G, Turney D and Ward A (2018) Relationship-based Social Work, 2nd Edition, London: Jessica Kingsley

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted

- Supports us to *fulfil human rights duties* – the Charter is based on a human rights approach
- Helps to *improve the experience of care and support* – the Charter fits with evidence from NICE⁴ that we must use people’s views to inform services; it is a benchmark for good social work
- Helps social workers *meet professional registration standards⁵ and professional capabilities⁶* – the Charter fits with standards that social workers should meet.

We don’t yet work in the best way possible. This Charter can help us identify how we can do better and argue for what we need to do this.

“We can do better!” (Seminar feedback)

Who can use the Charter?

The seminar group identified a range of people who could use the Charter, as well as situations in which it would be useful.

Ideally the Charter will be used jointly by disabled adults and social workers.

“We need a more collaborative approach in a supportive way throughout the assessment process and during the process of creating a care package.” (Seminar feedback)

“If only my organisation would see the job like this.” (Social worker at the seminar)

⁴ www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng86/chapter/Recommendations

⁵ www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10005437Whatyoushouldexpectfromyourhealthandcareprofessional.pdf

⁶ www.basw.co.uk/pcf

Who	Where and When
Individual social workers	In individual reflection about your practice
Individual disabled adults	When you are thinking about what you want from social work and how it could be improved
Lecturers on qualifying courses	In social work education courses
Social work students	As a resource for learning during your training
Service user and carer educators	When you talk to students about disabled adults' views
Practice Educators	When you support new social workers to consider their practice
Social work teams	In a team meeting when you are talking about how well you support adults
Supervisors and supervisees	In supervision when you discuss practice or learning
Disability activists	When you are lobbying organisations for better support
Social workers and disabled adults	During assessments, support planning and reviews or any meeting
Learning and development people	In training about good social work practice
Managers and supervisors	When you are getting feedback about services or individual social workers
Management teams	To inform discussions about how to improve the service
Directors of Adult Social Services	To keep in mind what disabled adults want
Representatives at adults' and carers' forums	When you are discussing how services can improve
Anyone who supports good practice	In any discussion, meeting or presentation about how disabled adults and social workers should be able to work together

How to use the Charter

In any of these situations, the Charter can be used to think through what we are aiming for, how we are doing and how to improve.

Here is an outline of how it can be used. This can be used by groups or individuals. You can change this as needed for your particular situation.

1. Introduce the Charter

Use page 1 of this guide to explain where the Charter came from.

Read through the Charter.

Look at Appendix 1 of the Charter to find out more about the Social Model of Disability, Human Rights Approach and Independent Living⁷.

2. Consider why the Charter matters

Use page 1 of this guide for some areas to talk about:

- How does the Charter fit with what we know disabled adults want?
- How does the Charter fit with social work values?
- How does the Charter help us to fulfil the Care Act?
- How does the Charter help us to promote human rights?
- How does the Charter help us to improve people's experiences and outcomes?
- How does the Charter help social workers meet their standards?

3. Consider how well what we do now fits with the Charter?

The Charter can be used as a kind of audit to see how close we are to good practice.

The table below is based on a person-centred tool: Working, Not working. You can use this to identify what is going well in each area and what is not working well.

⁷ http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_42609-10.pdf

Area	Working	Not working
Guiding Principles		
A Personalised Approach		
The Process		
Relationships and Respect		
Rights and Welfare		
The Wider Context		

4. Identify actions that will help embed the Charter

The Charter gives ideas about how to improve practice, services and organisations. Once you have considered how well things are going, you can start to identify actions that will help things to improve.

The table below gives a framework for thinking about what you might do.

Area	Action	Expected outcome	Who	When
Share the Charter with others				
Take action to improve how we work				
Find out more about a particular area so we can improve				
Join up with other people to use the Charter				
Lobby for change based on the Charter				

5. Share learning about using the Charter

It is really helpful to share ideas and examples of how the Charter has been used. You can do this by emailing england@basw.co.uk

6. Use the Charter as an example of co-production

The Charter and Position Statement were co-produced from start to finish. A small group of social workers from BASW and disabled adults from Shaping Our Lives met together. We had a shared goal which was to improve working relationships between disabled adults and social workers. And we had a blank sheet of paper.

We discussed what the problems were, what solutions might look like, and what would help us to get there. We agreed to create a Charter. This was written based on discussions and jointly agreed.

This is an example of how people can come together to create something in answer to a problem.