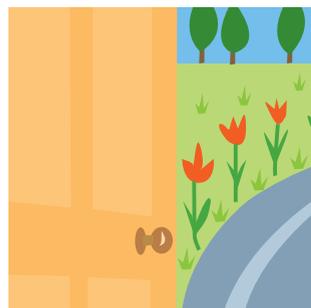


# Charter of Rights

Cheshire Ireland National Consumer Committee







## Introduction

The Cheshire Ireland National Consumer Committee is a way for people who use Cheshire services to have a say in how Cheshire is run. The National Committee meets on a regular basis, with representatives of services throughout the country attending. There are now also three Regional Consumer Committees who meet once a month. These Committees have the potential to be a powerful way of ensuring that Cheshire services are always responsive to the needs of the people who use them. The launch of the first Cheshire Charter of Rights, which was written by the National Consumer Committee, is testimony to that.

In recent years there has been a welcome change in society's attitudes towards people with disabilities. This is reflected in the Governments commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities, establishing the National Disability Authority and developing legislation to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities. It looks like Leonard Cheshire's vision of a society which recognises the rights of people with disabilities to exercise choice and independence is becoming ever more real. The Charter of Rights represents a commitment by Cheshire Ireland to really act in keeping with Leonard Cheshire's values, and fulfils one of the recommendations of the Commission Report.

This Charter was written for and by people with a disability – it is hoped that it will help people to recognise their rights as users of Cheshire services and will be an empowering document. It is also hoped that it will provide useful guidance on how these rights, which can sometimes seem like vague statements, can be put into practice to create services which are truly empowering for the people who use them. However, it must be recognised that while Cheshire Ireland



undertakes to uphold this Charter of Rights to the best of its abilities, it must always act in accordance with existing Irish law.

We would like to thank all those people who contributed to the development of the Charter of Rights during 2003 and 2004 - users of Cheshire services and staff members have provided valuable feedback to the Committee. We realise that the success of the document is totally dependent on the people who live and work in Cheshire taking on board the principles and values behind the Charter of Rights, and putting these into practice. We appreciate the commitment made to implementing the Charter of Rights, and wish you all the best in doing so.

*The National Consumers Committee  
2004*





## Charter of Rights for People Who Use Cheshire Services

- 1** *The right to a safe environment, and to be free from abuse of any kind*
- 2** *The right to personal choice, and to be treated with sensitivity and respect as an individual*
- 3** *The right to be listened to and to have wishes and opinions considered fairly*
- 4** *The right to privacy and confidentiality*
- 5** *The right to accommodation options*
- 6** *The right to be supported in his/her personal development*
- 7** *The right to a quality service*



# 1 *The right to a safe environment and to be free from abuse of any kind*

**A fundamental right is the right to be free from abuse of any kind – physical, psychological, institutional, verbal, financial or sexual abuse. Cheshire services must try to prevent abuse from occurring by:**

- Developing a culture which promotes the rights of users of Cheshire services, and recognising what abuse is.
- Developing and implementing policies and procedures which safe-guard against abuse, and which respond appropriately where an abuse has happened, or is suspected to have happened.
- Providing appropriate support for individuals affected by abuse, or allegations of abuse.





## 2

### *The right to personal choice, and to be treated with sensitivity and respect as an individual*

One of Cheshire Ireland's biggest challenges is providing services that have traditionally been provided in a group setting, in a more individualised way. To enjoy a good quality of life, we all need to be respected for who we are, and treated in a way that is sensitive to our individual needs. Exercising personal choice in all aspects of living is the essence of living independently, and can be open to all individuals, regardless of the type or extent of their physical disability. In practice, this includes the development of services and supports that ensures:

- The service is truly focused on the needs of the people who use the service, rather than the needs of the service.
- People who use Cheshire services have a right to be involved in all decisions relating to them at all times.
- People who use Cheshire services have a right to freedom of movement both within and outside the service.
- Services are provided in a non-judgmental and non-discriminatory way.
- Services are sensitive and responsive to the values and beliefs of users of Cheshire services.
- People who use services are respectful of each other, and make reasonable efforts to ensure that people's personal choice is not obstructed.
- There are processes in place to manage conflict where this occurs.
- People using a Cheshire service have a person centred plan, if they so choose, which has been designed by them with the staff of the service.



- There are regular reviews and updates of the person centred plan to make sure that the necessary supports are available to meet the person's needs.
- The service tries to facilitate each user of a Cheshire service, to meet their goals, in accordance with their wishes.
- The right of people who use Cheshire services to refuse to participate in treatments or activities, and to take informed/considered risks is respected by all.
- All fundraising and PR for Cheshire services promotes a positive image and upholds the dignity of people with disabilities. The participation of users of Cheshire services in fund raising and/or PR activities is a matter of individual choice.





### **3** *The right to be listened to and to have wishes and opinions considered fairly*

In order to develop services that are responsive to the people who use them, and to meet the goal of "Learning through Listening", it is important that users of Cheshire services, on a group and/or individual basis, and their advocates, actively contribute to the development of the service. In practice, this includes:

- Respecting the right of users of Cheshire services to give feedback and/or make a complaint.
- Developing a culture where feedback and complaints are welcomed and acted on appropriately.
- Developing effective ways for users of Cheshire services, their families and/or their advocates to give feedback and/or make a complaint.
- Developing a culture of trust, where users of Cheshire services can express their views with confidence, and all parties know that feedback and complaints will be responded to fairly and in complete confidence.





## 4 *The right to privacy and confidentiality*

**All steps should be taken to ensure the confidentiality of written and verbal information. In practice this includes:**

- Users of Cheshire services' personal information is only shared on a need to know basis.
- Only necessary information is recorded in writing.
- All written information will be carefully stored to ensure that only those who need to access the information can do so.
- All users of Cheshire services have the right to request access to documentation about themselves and to have any inaccuracies in such documentation corrected.
- The bedroom/apartment of a user of Cheshire services is considered to be their personal space, and as such permission must always be given by the resident before it can be entered by any other person in



a non-emergency situation.

- Users of Cheshire services will have privacy for intimate activities including bathing or using the toilet.
- Private conversations will be conducted in an area that reduces risk of being overheard.



## 5 *The right to accommodation options*

The environment in which we live plays an important part in the quality of our life. Cheshire is committed to providing a high standard of accommodation for people with physical disabilities. In practice this may include:

- Providing a private bedroom and décor of choice, if a person chooses not to share with another.
- Access to a private bathroom/ shower room.
- Future accommodation will be built according to the principles of "life-time adaptable housing" and will be provided in or close to community settings.
- Supporting people who use Cheshire services to move into mainstream housing in the community, if that is their choice. Cheshire Ireland may continue to provide a support service to the person living in

the community if that is their choice.

- Where a person does not currently have, but would like to have a private room with bathroom, the Cheshire service will work positively towards fulfilling this right.





## **6** *The right to be supported in his/her personal development*

Life offers many opportunities to grow and develop as a person – often from making “mistakes”! Within Cheshire it is important that people are supported in their chosen route to personal development. In practice, this may include:

- Users of Cheshire services are facilitated to maintain and/or develop their personal/intimate relationships with others. Individual relationships will be treated with respect, dignity and given privacy.
- Ensuring that users of Cheshire services are offered information in relation to possible/likely outcomes of their choice.





- Users of Cheshire services are facilitated to choose their own direction in life, in ways that take any perceived risks into consideration.
- Users of Cheshire services are facilitated to maximise their independence.
- Users of Cheshire services are facilitated to contribute to society, and to the Cheshire service, in their chosen way e.g. through paid employment, involvement in community groups, providing companionship for others etc.
- The right of users of Cheshire services to act in accordance with religious/spiritual/moral beliefs and values are recognised and supported.



7

## *The right to a quality service*

**Cheshire Ireland is committed to providing quality person centred services. Cheshire will strive to achieve this by endeavouring to ensure that the necessary structures, processes and quality systems are in place. In practice this will include:**

- The right of users of Cheshire services to have services provided in a manner that is consistent with his/her needs within or as close as possible to norms and patterns which are valued in the community.
- Ensuring that users of Cheshire services have an opportunity to take a leadership role in the development, ongoing delivery, management and evaluation of Cheshire services.
- All Cheshire services complying with legal, professional, ethical and nationally agreed standards of service delivery.
- Working towards continuous improvement and excellence in service delivery.







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