

giving us a voice



The National Charter for Inclusion

A National Charter that shows clearly what people with Learning Disabilities and their families from ethnic minority communities need to live happier and safer lives



all about people





What we did and how we made this National Charter for Inclusion

This **National Charter for Inclusion** was written in 2011. It is the result of the **Giving Us A Voice** project which was funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government with their Tackling Race Inequality Fund.

ARC, BILD and Mencap, 3 learning disability charities, worked on the project. There was a project team of 12 people and a steering group of people who know about learning disability and BME communities. Workers from ARC talked to people who plan and deliver services. Workers from Mencap talked to family carers and workers from BILD talked to people with learning disabilities.

We talked to everyone we could find who was interested in making things better for people with learning disabilities from BME communities. We filmed some people telling us their story and we used these films at the meetings. You can watch these films on the website: www.givingusavoice.org.uk

We held 9 big Regional Meetings and we talked to over 1000 people. We held meetings from November 2010 – February 2011. They were in Exeter, Nottingham, Newcastle, Birmingham, Preston, Brighton, Cambridge, London and Leeds.

We worked with people who were the leaders in each region and asked them to speak at our meetings. We worked with Government departments to make sure this Charter fitted with other work being done.

We chose 4 main topics to work on because these are the main topics from “**Valuing People Now**” – the government plan for people with learning disabilities. These were: **Citizenship, Health, Work and Housing**.

We have written **Regional Plans** based on what we found out at each big Regional Meeting. Everything we found out and more useful information is on the website: www.givingusavoice.org.uk



What we would like to happen now and how this could be done

This Charter was written at a time of great change in social care and a time when there are cuts in the amount of money that can be spent.

BUT the Charter will be important whoever is in power in government and whatever money is available for social care.

We believe that the Charter will make sure people have a good life that does not go into a crisis – which would cost money.

We believe using this Charter will help people do what the laws on Equality, Disability and Human Rights say must happen.

By signing up to this Charter local authorities and health organisations and anyone planning and delivering services can show that they have listened to the voice of people with learning disabilities from BME communities and their families.

There are other pieces of work to help with this and we suggest this Charter is used alongside the **Framework for Action on Ethnicity** 2011 published by the Valuing People team at the Department of Health. You can find other resources listed on pages 13 and 14).

This Charter should also be used with the Giving Us A Voice **Regional Plan** for your region which gives more details of what is happening locally. You can see all 9 Regional Plans on the website: www.givingusavoice.org.uk



What we would like to happen now and how this could be done *...continued*

We expect that now so many people have been involved in this work they will become involved in working where they live to put this Charter into action.

The best result of all this work will be if people from BME communities with learning disabilities and their families have a voice all the time.

We hope that the organisations that inspect services will also look and see if this Charter is being used.

If public services are not doing some of the things in this Charter they may be breaking the equalities law.

It is very important, therefore, that people with learning disabilities and their families use this Charter to ask what is wrong when services do not meet their needs.



How people with learning disabilities and their families can use this Charter

1 Read the Charter (on pages 7 and 8) and make sure you understand it.

2 Think about it carefully. Are you getting the things it talks about?

Make a list of anything you want to know more about. Make some questions about these things.

Ask people who support you to find out these things with you. If no one supports you ask for help from your local advocacy group. Look online for information.

3 Ask the questions at any meeting with people that talk about your life.

4 Find out how to become involved in planning services – see if you can join your local learning disability partnership board if there is one.

The government has said it will fund The National Valuing Families Forum and The National Forum of People with Learning Difficulties until 2012. These forums must speak for everyone including people from BME communities.

5 Tell everyone about the Charter and ask them to sign up to it.

6 If you think someone who provides your services is not using the ideas in the Charter and they are not giving you good support tell them that they may be breaking the law. These laws are the:

- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**

We hope that by taking this Charter with you to meetings you will know what you should ask about. The 3 organisations that ran the Giving Us A Voice project (ARC, BILD and Mencap) will be pleased to help you.



Important things people told us at the Regional Meetings



topic 1 – Citizenship

- People who came to the big meetings told us lots of things about how they were made to feel “outsiders”.
- There were lots of barriers that stopped services working well.
- These included not getting information in a way that they understood or not getting it at all.
- We heard about people being abused because of their disability and their ethnicity.
- We heard that people’s lives get much better if they have good community workers and good advocacy services.
- Many people who came to the big meetings had not been involved before and they wanted to carry on the work. We can put you in touch with people who came to the Regional Meetings.
- Many people who work in social care talked about how they found it difficult to talk to people from BME communities. They said that they were hard to reach.
- People with learning disabilities themselves and their carers said they felt left out and did not know how to become more involved.



Important things people told us at the Regional Meetings



topic 2 – Health

- When people talked about issues there was a wide difference in their experiences.
- Some people with learning disabilities were having their regular health checks. But some of these checks did not talk about illnesses common in people from BME communities.
- Many people talked about how the way individual medical workers behaved made a big difference to them.
- Again, getting good information to people was often talked about.
- We heard some bad stories of hospitals not understanding cultural needs e.g. food.
- There are going to be some big changes in how health services are run. These changes are just starting – GPs (doctors) will do much more work delivering services. So it is very important that they work with BME communities and know about the Charter.
- Also GPs should record the ethnicity of patients.
- The Public Health Observatory on the health of people with learning disabilities is continuing until March 2013 and they know about the Charter.

The National Charter

Key Message: People with Learning Disabilities from BME communities and their families need to get information in a way that they understand and have support to use it well.



Citizenship

- 1** People with Learning Disabilities from BME communities are supported and encouraged to take part in society at all levels of public engagement (take part in important meetings).
- 2** Advocacy for BME communities is well planned and funded.
- 3** Support is offered that enables people with Learning Disabilities from BME communities to travel safely.
- 4** People with Learning Disabilities from BME communities are supported to live safely and happily, free from abuse and hate crime.



Health

- 1** Health plans / passports are available to everyone with a Learning Disability (for all their medical care) that include reference / checks for specific conditions for that person's ethnic origin (where their family is from).
- 2** Health professionals are trained to work successfully with people with Learning Disabilities and understand their cultural needs.
- 3** Health checks, health screening and illness prevention (keeping people well) are available to everyone and take account of a person's ethnic origin.
- 4** Health and wellbeing boards and any health planning groups include people with Learning Disabilities and their family carers from BME communities.

for Inclusion

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www.givingusavoice.org.uk

Visit the website and sign up to The National Charter.



Work

- 1** Paid work for people with Learning Disabilities from BME communities is the goal (what we are working towards).
- 2** The value of employment in terms of living happily e.g. friends, respect, use of time, etc, is recognised and people are helped to find opportunities in a culturally appropriate way (a way that fits with their background).
- 3** Links are made with employers and BME communities so they can work together to find opportunities for people with Learning Disabilities.
- 4** Families from BME communities are helped to understand all the training and employment opportunities that might be available. This is part of good transition planning.



Housing

- 1** People with Learning Disabilities from BME communities are given support and choices in where they live.
- 2** Planning for housing takes time and people are supported from transition onwards.
- 3** Families are helped to remain involved and understand that independence does not mean managing alone.
- 4** People with Learning Disabilities from BME communities are supported to have a sense of belonging – a place they choose as home.



Important things people told us at the Regional Meetings



topic 3 – Work

- When people at the meetings talked about work the things they talked about were important to all people with learning disabilities. People agreed that there were lots of important things about having a job including: making friends, feeling useful, not being bored.
- Everyone agreed that paid work was the best outcome. But many people told us about unpaid work they did, including working for learning disability organisations and Partnership Boards.
- Some family carers from BME communities were worried that the person would not be safe or would not be able to do a job. They were keen to support the idea of work experience or “taster” sessions to see if people could do the job.
- Many people were worried that working for low amounts of money would mean they would lose their benefits and be worse off.
- Lots of people talked about the transition to adult life and said it was very important that people with learning disabilities got good support to find work at that stage.
- Also important is that families, especially those who do not speak English, are helped to know about all opportunities. A project is being funded as part of the Valuing People programme to look at how to improve opportunities and work for people with learning disabilities from BME communities. This work will be published by the Department of Health after March 2011.



Important things people told us at the Regional Meetings



topic 4 – Housing

- This was difficult for people to talk about as many people felt their options and choices were very limited.
- Some family carers from BME communities were concerned about the safety of people they cared about and whether they could live “independently”. But some people with learning disabilities told stories of how they were living successfully in their own places.
- Often people had had experience of professionals not understanding their care needs around their culture.
- It was often pointed out that housing schemes designed for people with learning disabilities were not likely to be near communities they came from.
- People wanted better use and more information they could understand on supported housing and on technology that helped disabled people live in their own homes.



How staff and organisations who work with people with learning disabilities can use this Charter

- 1** Chief Executives, Heads of Health and Wellbeing Boards, Partnership Board Leads, Heads of Departments in Local Authorities and Health, Heads of Voluntary organisations and anyone offering a service to people with learning disabilities should sign up to the Charter.
- 2** By signing up to the Charter people will show that they are thinking about the main points of the Charter and can show how they are working to make those happen.
- 3** The new **Framework for Ethnicity** (DoH 2011) will give more support and has a checklist to show progress on supporting people with learning disabilities from BME communities. Visit the Valuing People website: www.valuingpeoplenow.dh.gov.uk and we also suggest looking at the traffic light tool from the North East region which can be found on the North East section of the Giving Us A Voice website: www.givingusavoice.org.uk
- 4** By signing up to the Charter organisations will show that they are committed to working in partnership with people with learning disabilities and their families from BME communities. They will work actively with communities and encourage them to develop and challenge services.
- 5** By signing up to the Charter they will agree to take this work forward and check the progress at regular intervals which will be recorded. This can be used to show that organisations are meeting the legal requirements under the Equality Act.
- 6** By signing up to the Charter organisations will agree to develop their services to better meet the needs of people with learning disabilities and their families from BME communities.



Why anyone offering a service to people with learning disabilities should sign up to this Charter

There are many reasons to make services better for people from BME communities. We know that more than 1 in 5 people moving into adult services comes from a BME community. They deserve and should expect a good standard of service. As people have more control over buying the right support they will look for those services that best meet their needs.

There are legal obligations to ensure that services provided by public authorities and provided by public money are not discriminatory. The **Equality Act** came into force in October 2010 and the **Public Sector Equality Duty** starts from April 2011. Visit the website: http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx

The duty consists of a general duty, with three main aims:

- to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- to advance equality of opportunity
- to foster good relations.

According to the Act this means:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics (this includes disability and ethnicity).
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- Visit the website: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-duties/the-new-public-sector-equality-duty/>

There is also the **Human Rights legislation** which offers protection. For example, “dignity” is applicable in many health and social care settings. Visit the website: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/being-treated-fairly-and-with-dignity/>

Work by other organisations to help people with learning disabilities from BME communities

There has been lots of work happening recently to help improve services for people with learning disabilities from BME communities and their families. There are several new documents from other organisations being published alongside this Charter – these include:

- The revised ‘Framework for Action on Ethnicity 2011’.
(DoH, 2011). Visit the website: www.valuingpeoplenow.dh.gov.uk
- ‘Reaching and Supporting Diverse Communities: a guide to meeting the needs of people with learning disabilities and family carers, from newly arrived, Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities’.
(HFT, 2011). Visit the website: www.hft.org.uk
- ‘The Guide to Getting it Right at Transition for Young People with Disabilities from Ethnic Minority Communities’.
- ‘Caring for all carers’ – a survey of services for BME and seldom heard carers in Carers’ Centres and Crossroads Care schemes.
(Princess Royal Trust, 2010). Visit the website: www.crossroads.org.uk

Information about these resources and links to where you can find them online are also on the website: www.givingusavoice.org.uk



Reports, websites and networks that will give you more information

This list gives a few examples of resources (things to help) that will give you some more information and help with this work:

- ‘Leading the Way to Race Equality – a guide to good practice’
(*Network for Black Professionals, 2011*).
Visit the website: www.nbp.org.uk
- ‘Is Information Enough?’
(*Mencap, 2011*).
- ‘Carers and their Rights’
(*4th edition Carers UK, 2011*).
- ‘Achieving equality in health and social care: a framework for action’
(*Afiya Trust, 2010*).
- The National Learning Disability and Ethnicity Network
(*Run by ARC*).
Visit the website: www.lden.org.uk
- The National Ethnicity Training Network
(*Run by the University of Leeds*).
Visit the website: www.etn.leeds.ac.uk
- The Briefing Papers published by the Race Equality Foundation.
Visit the website: <http://www.better-health.org.uk/briefings.asp>



www.givingusavoice.org.uk

Visit the website to sign up to the Charter or contact us for information

ARC, BILD and Mencap ran the Giving Us A Voice project. We will all be able to offer advice and support to help the Charter make a big impact. You can get in touch with us using these details:



ARC (the Association for Real Change)



ARC House, Marsden Street, Chesterfield S40 1JY



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contact.us@arcuk.org.uk

visit our website: www.arcuk.org.uk



BILD (British Institute of Learning Disabilities)



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01562 723 010



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visit our website: www.bild.org.uk



Mencap



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