

Dorset People First

13th October 2004

Strategy Unit Disability Team
Cabinet Office
Room 4.14 Admiralty Arch
The Mall
London SW1A 2WH

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have just very much enjoyed reading all about your project "Disabled People and their Life Chances".

I would like to tell you about some work that our members (all people with learning disabilities) have done recently. They came up with a Bill of Rights. Things which are important to them, and things that many in the group do not currently get. [For example, the right to grieve, and to not to be told to "cheer up", was close to many people's hearts.] It has really concentrated all our minds; never before have so many people with learning disabilities got together on one day and given us such a clear message.

These are just 10 basic rights, many of which would cost nothing to give to people, but for some reason, a large number of people are denied them on a daily basis. Lives could be transformed if these rights were observed.

The rights have not been edited, the order has not been changed – this is exactly as our members wrote them.

I hope that this helps in some way towards your project. Keep up the good work! If you need help with surveys and consultation with people with learning disabilities, I'm sure the members of our 3 forums (Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole) would be very happy to take part.

Best Wishes,



Clare Garrard
Dorset People First

Bill of Rights



On 8th October 2004, members of the Poole, Bournemouth and Dorset Forums had a "big meeting". Visiting speaker Dave Hingsburger ran a workshop, where the Forum members wrote this Bill of Rights. At the end of the session, the members felt that this message should be spread to as many people as possible; especially to other people with learning disabilities, their families, friends, carers, staff, social services... the list goes on and on.

1. The right to feel safe when going out.

- from strangers, from burglars and from bullying

2. The right to feel safe in our own homes.

- to learn how to be safe in our home
- to feel safe from staff
- to be able to report staff when they are mean

3. The right to confidentiality.

- when making a report it won't come back on you
- we decide who sees our life plan
- around health issues (patient - doctor)

4. The right to relationships.

- to learn about friendships
- marriage
- engagements
- sex education

5. The right to have feelings.

- the right to grief
- the right to get mad

6. The right to say NO!

- bullying
- drugs or drink
- strangers
- to parents
- to staff

7. The right to adulthood.

- make our own decisions
- to get married
- have children
- have sex
- birth control
- to vote
- to have a drink

8. The right to live where you want to live.

- to live where you want to
- to live with who you want to

9. The right to independence

- to make decisions
- to go out
- take care of our own stuff
- run our own business
- to choose what to do
- come and go when we want
- be the boss of our own life

10. The right to transportation

- accessible transportation
- the right to learn to drive

We feel that this is a very, **very** important step for the rights of people with learning disabilities. We need to make sure this message is read and understood by AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE!!!