

The Citizen's Charter

Research Paper 95/66

25 May 1995



In July 1991, the Government set out its first set of initiatives under the Citizen's Charter, in the White Paper *The Citizen's Charter* (Cm 1599). Since then, forty charters have been published, setting the standards of service that individuals have a right to expect from the full range of public services. This Research Paper summarises each of these, and provides a short discussion of the Charter programme as a whole. It updates and replaces Reference Sheet No 92/8 *The Citizen's Charter*.

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Note : Parts I and II of this Paper were written by Antony Seely; Part III was written by Peter Jenkins.

I Introduction

John Major announced the launch of the Citizen's Charter in a speech to the Conservative Central Council in Southport in March 1991: "It will work for quality across the whole range of public services. It will give support to those who use services in seeking better standards. People who depend on public services - patients, passengers, parents, pupils, benefit claimants - all must know where they stand and what service they have a right to expect."¹ In July that year, a White Paper, *The Citizen's Charter* (Cm 1599), was published, setting out the Government's proposals. The Charter was to be a ten year programme to improve the standard and efficiency of public services significantly, and, as such, would "be at the heart of government policy in the 1990s."²

Since then, the Government's continuing commitment to the Citizen's Charter has been restated on a number of occasions. The Queen's Speech following the Conservative Party's election victory in 1992, announced: "My Government will give priority to improving public services through the Citizen's Charter which will be at the centre of decision making."³ In November 1994, this sentiment was repeated in the Queen's Speech for the current Parliamentary Session: "My Government will continue to implement policies and programmes responsive to the needs of the individual citizen, in line with the principles of the Citizen's Charter."⁴

Indeed, Mr Major's willingness to be personally identified with the Charter, and his determination that it have a high profile, has been a consistent theme in the Charter's development over the past four years. The Citizen's Charter Unit, which is responsible for the implementation, development and co-ordination of the Charter initiative, is part of the Cabinet Office. One of its tasks is to agree on the exact wording of any given charter with the public service concerned. It should be pointed out that although the privatized utilities, as well as the Post Office, have issued standards of service agreements, these are not counted as part of the Charter initiative itself.

The 1991 White Paper was a wide-ranging document, discussing, among other things, existing practices in the public sector, the powers of regulators over the privatized utilities, the use of market testing and contracting out to improve the quality of public services, and future legislation to privatize some parts of the public sector (notably, British Rail and London Buses). Arguably the most distinctive aspect of these proposals concerned the creation of charters. Each public service would be required to issue a charter, with two linked aims: first, to enable consumers to determine what were acceptable standards of service for that particular institution; and, second, to tell them how to go about complaining, and obtaining redress, if

¹Speech by John Major to Annual Conservative Central Council Meeting 23 March 1991.

²*The Citizen's Charter* Cm 1599 July 1991; p.4.

³HC Deb 6.5.92 c.9.

⁴HC Deb 16.11.94 c.6.

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the service they were given fell below this benchmark. In short, charters would empower those who relied on public services to ensure they obtained the standard of service they were entitled to receive.

In a written answer in July 1992, William Waldegrave - then newly appointed as the Cabinet Minister with responsibility for the Charter programme - stated this principle clearly:⁵ "The Citizen's Charter aims to provide better quality service, greater customer choice, published standards of service and accessible means of redress, to all users of public services. Published, measurable standards ensure the public know what quality of service they can expect to receive, compare this with other service providers, and measure performance in achieving the standards required."

In addition to Mr Waldegrave's appointment, two other administrative initiatives in late 1991 gave an indication as to the Charter's importance: the creation of the Citizen's Charter Unit within the Cabinet Office to co-ordinate action arising from the White Paper; and the appointment of eight individuals drawn from outside Government to serve on an Advisory Panel which the Prime Minister and the Citizen's Charter Minister could consult on Charter issues.

Since being set up, the Citizen's Charter Panel of Advisers has convened on a monthly basis, members giving their services on two or three days a month, though members will have additional meetings with the Prime Minister, with other Ministers and with officials. The Panel has an advisory role only; it does not produce or publish its own reports. Panel members usually come from commercial organisations with direct experience of service to the public. For example, the Chairman, Sir James Blyth, has held posts in both Lucas and Plessey, as well as being Head of Defence Sales in the Ministry of Defence; most recently, he has served as both Chief Executive and Deputy Chairman of The Boots Company plc.

Other than the Chairman, each member of the Panel has separate responsibilities for specific areas in the public services. For example, Angela Heylin, who is currently Chief Executive of Charles Barker, one of the UK's best-known public relations companies, has responsibility for, among other things, communications, cultural change, and Charter fora. The Panel's membership through its lifetime was given in a written answer last year:⁶

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: The table gives details of the appointments made to the Prime Minister's panel of advisers on the citizens charter since inception. Those members who have since left the panel did so at the end of their agreed periods of appointment, with the exception of Mr. John Spiers, who resigned as a panel member on 6 September 1994.

⁵HC Deb 13.7.92 cc.428-9W.

⁶HC Deb 19.12.94 c.888W.

<i>Member</i>	<i>Appointment date</i>	<i>End of appointment</i>
Sir James Blyth (Chairman)	28 August 1991	6 May 1995
Dr Madsen Pirie	28 August 1991	6 May 1995
Lady Judith Wilcox	28 August 1991	6 May 1996
Sir Christopher Bland	28 August 1991	6 May 1994
Dr Nancy Lane	28 August 1991	11 May 1993
Christopher Swan	28 August 1991	30 September 1994
Stan Webster	28 August 1991	11 May 1993
Sir Peter Levene	13 January 1992	11 May 1993
Angela Heylin	24 May 1993	23 May 1995
Nick Rawlings	24 May 1993	23 May 1995
Baroness Perry	23 June 1993	22 June 1995
John Spiers	7 May 1994	6 September 1994
Neil Johnson	11 October 1994	10 October 1996
Anne Galbraith	8 November 1994	7 November 1996

Four members of the Panel approached the end of their appointment in May 1995: both Sir James Blyth and Angela Heylin have been reappointed; Dr Madsen Pirie and Nick Rawlings have not. According to the Citizen's Charter Unit, replacements have not been selected for either Dr Pirie or Mr Rawlings, so that the membership of the Panel will slide from eight to six.

To date, forty charters have been published; these are listed and summarised in Part III of this paper. In September 1994 London Transport Buses issued its Passenger's Charter, the fortieth charter, though the majority of charters were published in 1991 or 1992. New charters for further and higher education in Northern Ireland are to be published later this year, to complement those already existing for these sectors in England, Scotland and Wales. A number of charters have been revised - such as the Parent's Charter, the London Underground Customer's Charter and, most recently, the Contributor's Charter. Revised charters for council tenants and for court users are to be issued at some stage during 1995.⁷

There existed a number of precedents for the Charter before the Prime Minister's speech in March 1991. For example, in the mid 1980s, the Labour Party issued two policy documents on the potential for using charters; *At Your Service* (April 1986), and *Quality Street* (April 1989). In 1990 Labour published *Looking to the Future*, which included the proposal to introduce a consumers' charter, and replace the Audit Commission with a "Quality Commission" to cover "value for people as well as value for money." One further example was a paper issued in spring 1991 by the Local Government Information Unit, *Going for Quality*. This discussed the use of service contracts, compensation schemes, complaints procedures and consumer surveys by a number of local authorities - Leicester, Reading, Rochdale, Islington - to improve the standard of their public services. Moreover, York

⁷HC Deb 1.5.95 c.15W.

launched its own charter in April 1989, setting out performance targets for the coming year, and reporting on the authority's success in meeting the previous year's goals.

However, the Citizen's Charter differs in one crucial respect from these initiatives: namely, its sheer scope. A written answer given in November 1992 illustrates the range of organisations that it is intended the Charter should affect:⁸

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which organisations, in each principal sector, have been targeted to receive a copy of the citizen's charter; and what progress has been made to date in ensuring that all public bodies affected by the charter's recommendations have a copy of Cm 1599.

Mr. Waldegrave: In July 1991 the head of the home civil service, Sir Robin Butler, wrote to permanent secretaries of civil service Departments about the citizens charter and its implementation. Copies of the White Paper were made available to them. In addition, agency chief executives, the chairman of British Rail and London Regional Transport, the Association of District Councils, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the Association of County Councils, the London Boroughs Association, the Association of London Authorities and the Convention of Scottish Authorities were also sent copies.

Many other bodies were informed of the White Paper's availability including the general managers of the regional health authorities, district health authorities, family health authorities, special health authorities, chief executives of national health service trust hospitals, the chief officers of police, the chief probation officers and the secretaries of clerks of magistrates courts committees. The White Paper was advertised widely. To date, 20,246 copies of the White Paper have been sold; 455,617 copies of the popular version — "A Guide to the Citizen's Charter" — have been distributed, free of charge.

This has important implications for discussing the success of the Charter as a whole. "The approach varies from service to service in different parts of the United Kingdom. The Charter is not a blueprint which imposes a uniform pattern on every service. It is a toolkit of initiatives and ideas to raise standards in the way most appropriate to each service."⁹ This idea of the Charter as a "toolkit" should be emphasised, for although a number of legislative

⁸HC Deb 5.11.92 c.325W.

⁹*Raising the Standard: Britain's Citizen's Charter and Public Service Reforms* Foreign & Commonwealth Office November 1992; p.5.

changes have been made under the aegis of the Charter,¹⁰ the Charter itself is not a legal entity as such. There are no legal requirements as regards the structure of any charter, or the mechanisms it sponsors for consumer redress. In his foreword to the 1991 White Paper, the Prime Minister noted, "the White Paper sets out the mechanics for improving choice, quality, value and accountability."¹¹ As was made clear in a written answer last year,¹² "under the Citizen's Charter, each public service organisation is responsible for setting its own charter standards and ensuring they are monitored." Indeed, the character of the Charter would appear to have undergone a subtle shift: from requiring individual public services to do certain things - draw up a charter, publish targets for performance, issue statistics on the achievement of those targets, etc - to encouraging and publicising best practice across public services.

In this respect, the Charter has become less centralised, and more diffuse, in its operation, and has received much less attention in the national press as a result. The work of the Citizen's Charter Complaints Task Force, and the annual Charter Mark awards, are both illustrative of this change in emphasis (both are discussed in more detail below). This aspect of the Charter was perhaps insufficiently understood four years ago, and it poses particular problems when one tries to assess the "success" of the Charter as a whole, an issue which this paper now turns to.

II The Citizen's Charter

A. The Charter's Success

The most detailed information on the operation of the Citizen's Charter is to be found in the two *Citizen's Charter Reports*, prepared by the Government, and published in November 1992 (Cm 2101), and March 1994 (Cm 2540) respectively. There is no fixed timetable for the publication of these *Reports*, and, as yet, a *Third Report* has not been issued. Both *Reports* contain a great deal of information on how individual public services have implemented the principles of the Charter in practice, though, as it has already been pointed out, neither the 1991 White Paper, nor any subsequent publication, has set down a single set of criteria for judging all public sectors' performance in this respect. It is arguable that the production of this information is, in itself, proof of the Charter's success, and that five years ago, the idea of the public services publishing their own standards was unheard of. Of course, the opposite point of view has been argued: that by requiring services to publish measurable standards, performance will be skewed toward certain types of activity (those that are easiest to measure, or improve). Aside from this, it has proved more difficult to employ this type of information in assessing the quality of public services themselves.

¹⁰Legislative implications of the Citizen's Charter are discussed in Part II (D) of this paper.

¹¹*The Citizen's Charter* Cm 1599 July 1991; p.2.

¹²HC Deb 16.6.94 c.628W.

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Independent analysis of the Charter, say in the national press, has tended to be either very anecdotal - say, a series of examples taken almost at random from a number of very different organisations - or wholly general. In a perceptive article written back in February 1993, Andrew Marr in the *Independent* claimed "so much writing on this subject is abstract to the point of meaninglessness."¹³ In essence, he argued, the Charter acted as both a means to encourage and highlight good management at the most basic levels of government: "scores of similar stories could come from other councils, from privatised water companies, hospitals and schools. They are small, local stories. But multiply them by several thousand and continue 'entrepreneurial government' for another decade, and you would have a big national story."

One way success might be defined would be the impact the Charter has had, since its inception, on public expenditure. This aim was discussed in the *First Report*, though efficiency gains were linked, not with the operation of charters themselves, but a much wider range of policies associated with the Charter initiative as a whole: namely, privatisation, market testing, improving management, and, performance related pay.¹⁴ By means of the first two methods, certain activities would be transferred out of the public sector, since they could be done more efficiently by private companies. For those areas that remained in the public sector, the *First Report* stated that efficiency would be maximised by devolving management responsibility, and ensuring that each individual's rewards were related directly to their individual performance.

It is notable that in written answers the effectiveness of the Charter has generally been assessed in terms of policy commitments made in the White Paper, rather than any calculation of how it has decreased the average costs of public services.¹⁵ It seems likely that the methodological problems in assessing 'success' in this manner may explain why, in general, less interest has been shown in PQs about the Charter's development in recent months, compared to the first two years of its life.

In March 1994 the *Financial Times* published its own audit comparing the fifteen charters then issued covering public services in England (apparently the first systematic attempt to do so).¹⁶ Its authors argued that the Charter had "failed to achieve central objectives in many of the public services it is intended to improve," and they made three specific criticisms: that the standards of service specified were often too vague to be meaningful; that financial compensation was only offered in a small number of cases; and too limited a role was given to independent audit (either auditing the actual content of charters, or the ways that complaints about service standards were met). Statistics on the amounts of financial compensation paid under the provisions of the Citizen's Charter were given in a written

¹³"A revolutionary stalks Whitehall" *Independent* 23 February 1993.

¹⁴*The Citizen's Charter : First Report : 1992* Cm 210 November 1992; pp.56-67.

¹⁵For example: HC Deb 18.3.93 cc.342-3W.

¹⁶"Major's public-service brainchild fails test" *Financial Times* 14 March 1994.

answer in June 1994; notably, details could not be provided on the amounts of compensation paid under arrangements existing **before** the Charter initiative.¹⁷

Dr. Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much compensation was paid (*a*) under previous compensation arrangements during each of the five financial years before the adoption of the Citizen's Charter provisions and (*b*) under the provisions of the Citizen's Charter (i) in total and (ii) by the relevant Department and agency.

Mr. David Davis: Details of the amount of compensation paid under the provisions of the Citizen's Charter and under previous compensation arrangements before its adoption are not held centrally. However, at 21 January 1994, it was estimated that £9,383,000 had been paid out in compensation under the provisions of the Citizen's Charter. This does not, however, include compensation paid by privatised utilities or local authorities for failure to meet service standards, as details are not held centrally. This figure is broken down in the table shown.

In addition, in the financial year 1992-93, the Inland Revenue paid £389,000 in compensation for "serious error" as defined in the code of practice "Mistakes by the Inland Revenue"; and HM Customs and Excise paid £532,000 in repayment supplements between January 1992 and 31 December 1993.

Department	Compensation paid (nearest £000)	From	To
British Rail	4,427	April 1992	30 November 1993
London Underground	184	August 1992	7 January 1994
Northern Ireland Railways	2	November 1992	19 January 1994
HM Customs and Excise	14	January 1992	31 December 1993
Benefits Agency	4,071	April 1992	March 1993
Contributions Agency	76	April 1991	March 1993
Employment Service	89	April 1992	March 1993
Department of Health and Social Services, Northern Ireland	520	April 1991	20 January 1994

¹ These figures represent payments made from April 1991, four months before the Contributions Agency and Northern Ireland Social Security Agency charters were introduced.

Unsurprisingly, a firm rebuttal of the criticisms contained in the *Financial Times* audit was

¹⁷HC Deb 14.6.94 cc.430-2W.

made by the then Minister for Public Service and Science, William Waldegrave.¹⁸ Mr Waldegrave pointed out that the Charter had always been regarded as a ten year programme; criticisms that the Charter has yet to achieve a promised revolution in public services missed the point. On the matter of standards, he noted that although "the main charters explained to users what the public is entitled to expect", others "act as 'models' which will guide those writing local charters of service for colleges and council departments and many, many others. The local charters will be expected in every case to contain testable performance measures."

Mr Waldegrave also observed that the article "made the common mistake of equating the Charter with the charter documents themselves. It is far wider than that. The documents are only part of the story, one means to the common end of wider choice, higher standards and new ideas. This wider programme is about competition and choice. It covers privatisation and contracting out - putting private sector skills and ideas at the service of the public - just as much as devising mechanisms to improve performance where the service remains in the public sector." The same criticism could, of course, be made of this paper, though analysis of all of these issues is quite beyond its scope. As one commentator has said,¹⁹ "since the Charter was launched it has become an ever-expanding portmanteau - concerned not just about improving the quality of public services but also incorporating the Government's privatisation programme and schemes for contracting out public work to private hands."

Even so, the conditions under which the Inland Revenue and British Telecom now offer service to the public are quite different. It is arguable that the problems of economic efficiency, consumer choice and political control that each organisation deals with are so different that comparing their performance as part of a single policy initiative would be misleading. Of course, the public sector itself still provides a very wide range of services to the general public: in this sense, although charters are but part of the story, they are a distinct part.

One other point to make would be that privatisation and contracting out are both 'supply side' solutions, and, as such, do not involve the general public, the consumers of these services. One of the strongest themes in the 1991 White Paper was that charters provided a method to improve standards in areas where creating a competitive market with different suppliers might prove unsuitable or infeasible. Charters provided customers with a more effective voice in determining standards, and, one might add, a more informed picture of what standards were possible. Indeed, in the Commons debate on the Charter in January this year, Robert Jackson argued that the Charter was important in the context of reshaping public attitudes to what public services the public themselves could afford to have:²⁰ "One of the biggest problems facing Governments in the late 20th century democracies is how to operate successful, good-quality public services when we have more or less reached the limits of taxpayers' willingness to pay for such services ... the Charter [is] an attempt to meet rising expectations of quality

¹⁸"Citizen's Charter - half way there" *Financial Times* 17 March 1994.

¹⁹"Citizen's Charter: some progress, could try harder" *Independent on Sunday* 20 March 1994.

²⁰HC Deb 13.1.95 c.378, c.382.

in the public services when people's willingness to pay ... is strictly limited."

These criticisms about standards and compensation were linked explicitly in the report on maladministration and redress by the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, which was published in December 1994.²¹ In its summary, the Committee reported the views of the National Consumer Council (NCC) on the standards set out in the individual Charters: "the NCC has claimed that there is some confusion among the Charters in their use of language - "... the language of charters is sometimes vague and ambiguous. It can be difficult to tell which statements involve enforceable standards as distinct from unenforceable 'targets', 'aims' and so on. The term 'standard' is sometimes unhelpfully used when all that is being promised is that the organisation will aim to achieve a certain level of service - and there is no guaranteed redress in the event of failure to do so"...²² The relative lack of attention given to redress lead the Committee to recommend that "a 'Redress Team' be established within the Charter Unit to monitor and advise on the granting of redress within departments and agencies ... Such a team would be able to advise on improvements in Charter standards and conduct selective and specific audits of departmental practice."²³

The Committee went on to argue that improving the language used in defining standards had to result in specifying exactly what forms of redress could be expected when those standards were not met: "We endorse the view of the NCC that there is still a need for clear and consistent terminology in all Charters. We agree with the Council's view that a Charter 'standard' should necessitate "some tangible and explicit redress in the event of substandard service." ... Effective redress is itself a service improvement ... We expect every Charter to contain a distinct section in which the reader will find listed those standards which, if not met, entitle the citizen to redress, financial or otherwise. We recommend that the Redress Team conduct a survey of public services in all departments and agencies to identify those which are susceptible to schemes for financial and other redress."²⁴

The Government's response to these recommendations was published in March 1995.²⁵ There was agreement on the need for "close co-operation between the Treasury and the Citizen's Charter Unit in advising departments and agencies on questions of redress and compensation." The Government promised to consider the proposal to set up a Redress Team "in light of the forthcoming Report from the Citizen's Charter Complaints Task Force, which is undertaking a wide-ranging review of public service complaints systems."²⁶ (The work of the Task Force

²¹*Maladministration and Redress* HC 112 First Report Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration 15 December 1994.

²²*op.cit*; pp.xxii-xxiii.

²³*op.cit*; p.xi.

²⁴*op.cit*; p.xxiii.

²⁵*Government Response to the First Report from the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration* HC 316 15 March 1995.

²⁶*op.cit*; p.v.

is discussed in detail below.) On the wider recommendation that existing charters set out means of redress, and that a survey be conducted of public services to help in this matter, the Government's response was the following:²⁷

The Government agrees that Charters should make clear that users of the service in question are entitled to redress, appropriate to the circumstances and from the appropriate authority, when Charter standards are not met. It will seek to ensure that this is made clear when new Charters are produced, or existing ones revised. Some form of redress should in principle be available in response to a failure to meet any Charter standard, but the nature of that redress, (including whether it be non-financial or financial) may depend on other factors eg the extent to which there has been a failure to meet a standard; whether the complainant has suffered financial loss as a result; whether the handling of the original complaint has been maladministrative etc. It would not therefore be useful or cost-effective to revise every Charter in order to list standards in the manner proposed.

On the proposed survey of public services, the Government will consider this recommendation further in the light of the final report of the Complaints Task Force, which is itself carrying out a wide-ranging review of the systems for complaints and redress in public services.

Public opinion surveys have provided one other measure of the Charter's success, though in this case the evidence is rather patchy. One survey carried out in spring 1993 found that although many people had heard of the Charter initiative - seven out of ten among those asked - few seemed convinced that it had had a substantial impact on the quality of services. GP care, local authority refuse collection and customs services at ports and airports were the only three public services singled out for having significantly improved over the previous twelve months.²⁸

More recently, a poll carried out for the Trades Union Congress by National Opinion Polls in autumn 1994 found that two thirds of the 1,000 people asked saw the Charter as a public relations exercise. One in three had seen either a copy of the Charter, or one of the individual charters, but only 2% of respondents had actually used a charter.²⁹ Of course, this type of response may simply reflect the fact that the Charter is such a long term programme. Ruth Evans, director of the National Consumer Council, was quoted in the *Independent on Sunday* making just this point:³⁰ "One of the problems with the way the Charter was launched was that a degree of cynicism set in because the expectations raised were well beyond what could be delivered. The Charter was never going to be a recipe for revolution. It is a recipe for slow change to make improvements."

²⁷op.cit; p.vii.

²⁸"Public services rapped" *Financial Times* 26 August 1993.

²⁹"Citizen's Charter an 'irrelevance'" *Financial Times* 16 October 1994.

³⁰"Citizen's Charter: some progress, could try harder" *Independent on Sunday* 20 March 1994.

B. The Charter Mark Scheme

The Charter Mark Scheme was first discussed in *The Citizen's Charter* (Cm 1599).³¹ Organisations which satisfied selected criteria in their provision of public services would be given an award to recognise excellence in the public sector. The scheme was formally launched in January 1992, and 36 Charter Marks were awarded in September that year. The operation of the scheme was explained in the *First Report* on the Citizen's Charter, published in November 1992:³²

Winners had to satisfy the judges - the Prime Minister's Citizen's Charter Advisory Panel³³ - that they met the Citizen's Charter principles for delivering quality in public services. The winners also had to provide evidence both of customer satisfaction and of measurable improvements in quality of service. And they had to have plans to introduce or have in hand at least one innovative enhancement to their services which could be or is being introduced without increasing the cost either to the taxpayer or to those who use the service. Charter Mark winners can now use the Charter Mark on their products and equipment, on stationery, vehicles and promotional material to show that their achievements have been recognised.

The assessment process is organised and supervised by independent consultants; in 1994, this role was taken by the Touche Ross company. A team of Charter Mark assessors, drawn from the public services, consider the applications for awards made by the organisations concerned. In addition to this, the Advisory Panel will consider evidence received from, among others, Government Departments, independent regulators, and the Audit Commission. The best applications are put on a shortlist, and visited by either members of the Advisory Panel, one of the Charter Mark assessors, or senior staff from the Cabinet Office. The Advisory Panel then draws up a final list of winners, with the aid of the Citizen's Charter Minister, a list which is approved by the Prime Minister.

In 1993 the Government doubled the number of awards that could be made under the scheme, from 50 to 100. As it turned out, Charter Marks were given to 93 organisations in October 1993.³⁴ In October 1994, 98 awards were made, and 123 organisations received commendations; all told, 523 organisations had applied that year for consideration of a Charter Mark.³⁵ In January this year, during a debate on the Charter, David Hunt, Minister for the Citizen's Charter and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, announced that the scheme would be widened so that members of the public could make a direct input to the selection of winners:³⁶ "I believe that we must make the Charter Mark award much more the property of the public and that we must involve many more members of the public in the

³¹*The Citizen's Charter* Cm 1599 July 1991; p.6.

³²*The Citizen's Charter First Report : 1992* Cm 2101 November 1992; p.46.

³³The eight person panel appointed by the Prime Minister to give independent advice on the Charter's development.

³⁴"Public services win 93 'gold awards' for quality" *Cabinet Office press notice* 21 October 1993.

³⁵"98 services get their reward" *Cabinet Office press notice* 5 October 1994.

³⁶HC Deb 13.1.95 c.364.

system. With the introduction of public nominations for honours, the Prime Minister has set up a system which has been a remarkable success. I want to extend that principle. I am pleased to announce that in 1995, for the first time, we will ask the public - the users of public services - to nominate organisations for a Charter Mark award."

In the *Second Report* on the Charter, published in March 1994, it was noted that "the award of a Charter Mark is not a final stamp of approval. Charter Mark winners are expected to go on raising their standards of service year by year and Charter Marks can be taken away if standards fall. Charter Marks are held for three years, and then winners must reapply with evidence of how their service has improved."³⁷ The procedure of withdrawing Charter Marks from organisations whose service standards seriously deteriorated was explained by David Davis, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Office of Science & Technology, in a written answer given in June 1994:³⁸ "No organisations have had their Charter Marks taken away, although the Citizen's Charter Unit reserves the right to take away a Charter Mark from an organisation whose performance subsequently falls significantly below standard."

This issue has been raised recently in connection with British Gas, awarded a Charter Mark in October 1993. The company had introduced a new set of standards in April 1992: 30 at the requirement of Ofgas, and a further 24 at its own initiative (including a standard covering time limits for work to be carried out). In addition, a register of individuals with special needs, such as the elderly, had been developed, so that these customers would receive priority treatment.³⁹ In January this year, the Gas Consumer Council approached David Hunt, concerned that there had been a substantial rise in the number of customer complaints in four areas: account queries, service and repairs, staff manner, and cases where there had been a lack of reply to correspondence or non-answering of telephones.

Mr Hunt agreed a programme of action with both the Council and British Gas, which the company must prove it has met by the end of 1995 if it is to retain its Charter Mark.⁴⁰ John Horam, Parliamentary Secretary for Public Service and Science, argued recently that this case showed the value of the Charter Mark initiative:⁴¹ "The point about Charter Marks is that they are designed to be the Oscars of public service, and a mark of quality for someone who is doing well. It does not matter whether we are talking about British Gas or a local library - if it does not live up to its promises, it should have its Charter Mark removed. British Gas has another nine months to come up to the mark. If it does not do so, we will take its Mark away."

³⁷*The Citizen's Charter Second Report : 1994* Cm 2540 March 1994; p.75.

³⁸HC Deb 14.6.94 c.433W.

³⁹"Focus : Charter Mark awards : new elite makes its mark" *Times* 27 October 1993.

⁴⁰HC Deb 19.4.95 cc.164-5W.

⁴¹HC Deb 1.5.95 cc.15-16.

C. Charterline

The Charterline pilot scheme was launched on 19 May 1993, a telephone helpline to supply information on the provision of public services to residents in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. The Government had announced its intention to pilot such a scheme in its *First Report* on the Charter:⁴²

The Government intends to pilot a telephone helpline - 'Charterline' - to help people who find it daunting or frustrating to get information from large bureaucracies. Charterline will be an advice and information service. It will give:

- information about the Citizen's Charter and about the other Charters and statements of charter standards that have been published;
- contact numbers to help people to find out more about public services;
- contact numbers for making complaints about services.

There are already many successful telephone helplines in service and Charterline will link in with these. It will also direct people to other sources of help such as the various Ombudsmen. We aim to launch the Charterline pilot in 1993. If successful, Charterline will eventually cover all public services nationwide.

The next month, the results of a survey commissioned by the Citizen's Charter Unit were published on the public's view of such a scheme.⁴³ It concluded that "Charterline would be widely welcomed. Nine in ten respondents said it was a good idea and should be set up" (p.8). In February 1993, the pilot area for the scheme was announced, covering Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire; chosen on the basis of its being broadly representative of the country as a whole, in terms of its population, and its range of public services.⁴⁴ It was announced that the scheme would run for six months, and, if successful, would be extended to cover the whole country during 1994. The project was to be managed by the consultants Price Waterhouse, who had estimated a demand of around 30,000 calls a month.⁴⁵ At maximum capacity, the scheme was designed to take 1,000 calls a day. However, the original intention was to gradually build up to this demand, and the initial launch of the Charterline was relatively unpublicised.⁴⁶ For example, it was not until the first week of June 1993 that advertisements for the scheme were placed in the local press.

At that time, the average number of calls received was around 200 per day, but this figure dropped dramatically over the six month trial, fuelling speculation that the whole scheme will

⁴²*The Citizen's Charter First Report 1992* Cm 2101 November 1992;p.49.

⁴³*The Charterline Service* Research International December 1992.

⁴⁴"Pilot area chosen for Charterline" *Cabinet Office press notice* 17 February 1993.

⁴⁵"Manning the hot lines" *Financial Times* 19 May 1993.

⁴⁶"Helpline unravels official mysteries" *Times* 7 June 1993.

be scrapped.⁴⁷ With the average number of daily calls down to about 25 per day, the average cost per call was estimated to be £68.

The latest estimates for the cost of the whole scheme were given in a written answer:⁴⁸

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many calls have been made to Charterline since its inception; what has been the average daily call rate and the average cost per call; how many personnel work on Charterline; and what has been the total cost to date of Charterline, including promotion and all associated costs.

Mr. David Davis: Over 5,530 calls have been made to Charterline since its inception, an average of 25 calls a day.

IBM has nine trained staff available to answer charterline calls, who also perform a wide range of other tasks and answer other calls. Up to four of these are awaiting Charterline and other calls at any one time.

The operational cost per call to date is £68. If call volumes were higher, significant economies of scale could be achieved. The operational costs of a pilot study are always relatively high. One of the purposes of the Charterline pilot study is to assess the demand of the service and the volume of calls and costs that would be associated with a national service. The pilot study will ensure that if Charterline is rolled out, it is done on a high-quality and extremely cost effective basis.

Total set-up costs amount to £1,251,000. These include initial research, project planning and management, system design, contractual advice and data collection, which are all one-off costs. Running costs to date amount to £1,037,679. These include paid advertising research during the pilot study, set up and use of ACORN data - which categorise groups of households into one of 38 types, on the basis of such factors as the ages of the people living there, the size of their home, the type of work they do, their ethnic background and so on - operational costs, and operation of the charterline language service, which is available in Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.

In May, William Waldegrave announced that the scheme would not be extended on a national basis, and, as an alternative, the Cabinet Office would be seeking to improve the distribution

⁴⁷"Citizen's Charter helpline costs £68 for every call" *Times* 17 March 1994.

⁴⁸HC Deb 10.3.94 cc.402-3W.

of existing helpline numbers to the general public.⁴⁹ The failure of Charterline, and the public's presumed preference for taking complaints or inquiries to the particular public service involved, seems to underline this trend in the Charter's character - away from national initiatives affecting public services generally, and toward local or regional developments within individual services.

D. The Charter Complaints Task Force

The creation of a Complaints Task Force was discussed first in the *First Report* in 1992:⁵⁰ "The task force will advise on setting up and improving complaints systems. It will also, if appropriate, identify whether more is needed in the longer term to provide more satisfactory ways of resolving individuals' problems with public services."

The Task Force was launched in June the next year, allocated a budget of £1m for its two year life span, with the following terms of reference:⁵¹

1. To draw up and publish a set of principles for effective public service complaints systems that people can believe in.
2. To encourage public service organisations to adopt these principles where they do not already exist.
3. To review public service organisations' complaints systems.
4. To report to Ministers on the results of its work, and make recommendations:
 - on the effectiveness of public services' complaints systems; and,
 - on any further measures necessary to improve the ways in which public services respond to complaints.

The Task Force is a non-statutory body, chaired by Lady Wilcox, who is also a member of the Citizen's Charter Advisory Panel and Chairman of the National Consumer Council. Its remaining members are:

Judith Allsop	Professor in Health Policy, South Bank University
Rosemary Edwards	Citizen Advice Bureau volunteer
Ros Gardner	Customer Services Manager, Marks and Spencer
Elizabeth Hodder	Bedfordshire Ombudsman
Colin Skeen	Group Secretary, The Automobile Association
David Way	Employment Department: Training, Enterprise and Education Directorate

⁴⁹"Better access to public service information" *Cabinet Office press notice* 6 May 1994.

⁵⁰*The Citizen's Charter First Report 1992* Cm 2101 November 1992; p.49.

⁵¹"Complaints task force launched" *Cabinet Office press notice* 10 June 1993.

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In October 1993, the Task Force met the first of its terms of reference, publishing *Effective Complaints Systems: Principles & Checklist*, and in February the next year, it issued an *Interim Report* on its work. In its report, the Task Force made a series of observations about dealing with complaints:

- any complaints system should be easy for people to use
- speed of response is very important to satisfying those who have complained
- well trained staff provide the lynch-pin to this type of work
- accurate information about all types of complaints should be collated

The group went on to argue that "there are clearly identifiable benefits for the public services in handling complaints well - for instance, good will between service users and staff; savings in time and resources otherwise spent dealing with dissatisfied users of the service; greater staff satisfaction; the ability to improve services as a result of feedback; and a better image for the organisation. However we have found little evidence so far that public service organisations calculate the current costs of dealing with complaints, let alone measure the potential advantages of effective complaints handling."⁵²

The Report went on to say that the Task Force would be reviewing a wide range of public service organisations across Great Britain, surveying opinion on how complaints were dealt with in practice, and publishing a series of six discussion papers on key issues. By December 1994, all six of these had been issued: *Access to Complaints Systems*, *Simplicity & Speed*, *Fairness, Attitude & Motivation*, *Information*, and *Redress*. In addition, it published *Complaints: Literature Review* in November 1994, a bibliography of work published on complaints within the public service which the Task Force had found relevant. The other purpose of the review was to find out if there were any gaps in the literature. At the time, Lady Wilcox argued "it is clear that some public services have not been the subject of a great deal of research. I would be pleased if this review encourages people to research those areas."⁵³ Although the *Review* lists many books and articles discussing the National Health Service and local authorities, it found much less material on other services, such as the Employment Service and Social Security.

The Task Force is to make its final report to ministers by summer 1995, having drawn up a list of recommendations and good practice. Lady Wilcox pointed out in the introduction to the *Interim Report* that the nature of public services was such that any list could not be too deterministic:⁵⁴ "It is extremely unlikely that we will come forward with a single all-embracing 'answer' to how to deal with complaints. Public services are too varied in their nature and scope to allow such a simplistic approach. Whatever the Task Force concludes from its programme of reviews, and the issues it raises in its discussion papers, we would like to see public services keeping their complaints systems under review and looking for

⁵²*The Citizen's Charter Complaints Task Force : Interim Report* February 1994; p.14.

⁵³"Task force looks at how complaints can improve public services ..." *Cabinet Office press notice* 29 November 1994.

⁵⁴*The Citizen's Charter Complaints Task Force : Interim Report* February 1994; p.2.

opportunities to improve them. The Task Force will do what it can to encourage and advise."

E. Legislative Implications

The 1991 White Paper, *The Citizen's Charter* (Cm 1599), covered a wide variety of issues in setting out the purpose of the Charter: general policy aims, current working practices, previous Government action, and proposals for new legislation. It has already been noted that the creation of charters by the individual public services was not something embodied in statute; in this sense, the Charter did not require any specific legislation to bring it into existence. That said, the White Paper did include a number of proposals that would require legislation, and a written answer given in October 1991 listed thirteen specific measures:⁵⁵

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list those proposals in the citizens charter for which new legislation will be necessary.

The Prime Minister: Legislation will be needed to extend the powers of the Audit Commission and require local authorities to respond to auditors' reports; to extend compulsory competitive tendering; to require regular independent inspection of schools and the publication of information about the performance of all schools; to require lay members independent of local education authorities to be appointed to appeals tribunals; to give the citizen a right to challenge unlawful industrial action affecting public services; to extend delegation in the civil service and deal with the problems relating to technical redundancy; to privatise British Rail; to deregulate London buses; to change arrangements for the provision of motorway service areas; to limit the Post Office monopoly, establish a new regulator for postal services and give the Secretary of State powers to set standards and targets; to bring the powers to set and ensure service standards of the regulators of the privatised utilities up to the standards of the strongest; and to make other smaller changes to the law, for example allowing juries considering their verdict to go home overnight.

To date, legislative progress on these proposals has been the following:

1. The Audit Commission's powers over local authorities; and, 2. the extension of compulsory tendering: both measures were covered by the *Local Government Act 1992*.
3. The independent inspection of schools; 4. the publication of information held by schools; and, 5. the appointment of independent lay members on educational appeals tribunals: both

⁵⁵HC Deb 14.10.91 cc.7-8W.

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3 and 4 were carried out under the *Education (Schools) Act 1992* (though the appointment of inspectors by individual schools was not passed); 5 was covered by the *Education Act 1993*.

6. The "citizen's right" to prosecute public service unions for unlawful strike action: this was covered by the *Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993*.

7. Measures to improve delegation and redundancy procedures in the Civil Service: these initiatives were covered by the *Civil Service Management Functions Act 1992*, and the *Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993*.

8. The privatisation of British Rail: the legislation required for the privatisation of the railways is contained in the *Railways Act 1993* (though the sale of franchises to run rail services is at an early stage).

9. The deregulation of London bus services: in November 1993, the then Transport Secretary, John Macgregor, announced that deregulation would not go ahead in the current Parliament, though it remained a long term aim.⁵⁶ It was also announced that the ten subsidiary bus companies owned by London Buses Limited were to be sold off to the private sector, and this was completed by the end of 1994.

10. New arrangements for the provision of motorway service areas : in August 1992 it was announced that private operators would be allowed to identify and develop new motorway service areas (MSAs) provided they obtained local authority planning permission.⁵⁷ Advice to planning authorities and developers was issued through Departmental Circulars, supplemented by more detailed guidelines on minimum standards issued in May 1994.⁵⁸ In June 1994 it was also announced that the Highways Agency would sell its interest in MSAs in England.⁵⁹ Bids were invited for the first 30 (out of a total of 53) in March the next year; tenders are due back in June 1995.⁶⁰

11. The limitation of the Post Office monopoly, the creation of a new regulator, and the establishment of new powers for the Secretary of State to set standards and targets: following the Government's decision in autumn 1994 not to privatise the Post Office, no proposals for new legislation in this area have been made (the statement made on 11 May this year by the Secretary of State dealt solely with changes to be made in the Post Office's financial regime).⁶¹

⁵⁶"Delivering the best bus services for London" *Department of Transport press notice* 8 November 1993.

⁵⁷"Macgregor announces new regime ..." *Department of Transport press notice* 6 August 1992.

⁵⁸"New guidelines issued on MSAs" *Department of Transport press notice* 9 May 1994.

⁵⁹"Key announces sale of MSAs" *Department of Transport press notice* 10 June 1994.

⁶⁰"Highways Agency announces sale of 30 MSAs" *Highways Agency press notice* 30 March 1995.

⁶¹HC Deb 11.5.95 c.885.

12. The equalisation of the formal powers held by privatised utility regulators : this was achieved under the *Competition and Service (Utilities) Act 1992*.

13. The right of juries to go home at night when considering a verdict : under the *Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994*, a court may now, should it think fit, permit a jury to separate once the jury has begun its deliberations (previously courts had been able to do this, up to the time when a jury was directed to consider its verdict).

In light of the developments discussed in the preceding pages, it is notable that neither the *First* nor the *Second Report* discuss the Charter's legislative implications in this manner. Similarly, the Charter's effect on legislation has not been set out in a written answer, subsequent to that answer given in October 1991 and cited above. In this sense, the emphasis put in the most recent Queen's Speech on **existing** policy is telling: "My Government will continue to implement policies and programmes responsive to the needs of the individual citizen, in line with the principles of the Citizen's Charter."⁶²

⁶²HC Deb 16.11.94 c.6.

III The Individual Charters

Forty charters have been issued under the Citizen's Charter initiative; these are listed below, and summarised in the following pages. The Citizen's Charter Unit oversees the work of each government department in drawing up and revising these charters. Charter statements or service standards, issued by the privatized utilities, are not part of this list, as the Charter Unit does not play a direct role in their publication. Charters are published in booklet or pamphlet form, though in November 1994 the Government pledged that all charters would be available in braille or on tape.⁶³

Twenty charters deal with public services in just Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, and these are listed separately. Five charters cover the United Kingdom as a whole: three relating to the work of the tax authorities (the two Taxpayer's Charters, along with the Traveller's Charter); two dealing with the work of the Social Security Contributions Agency (the Contributor's and Employers' Charters); these are given the suffix : UK. The application of the remaining charters is indicated in the following list using one of three other suffixes: England, Scotland & Wales - GB; England & Wales - EW; England only - E.

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19. London Bus Passenger's Charter : E	50

⁶³"Hunt says all charters now to be available ..." *Cabinet Office press notice* 16 November 1994.

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1. Passenger's Charter

Issued By: British Rail

Date: 3 May 1992

Major Points: Commitment to safe, high quality service. Promise to:

1. Set standards - including Network South East's 15 groups of routes.
2. Tell the passenger what the standards are and how BR are measuring up to them.
3. Ask for the passengers' views on questions such as: Are stations clean? Are Staff performing well?
4. Tell the passenger more about what is going on - "especially when things go wrong."
5. Link the prices of season tickets more closely with performance.
6. Give discounts of up to 10% when renewing annual, quarterly and monthly season tickets if performance "falls more than a small margin below published standards."
7. Give compensation if passenger is not eligible for season ticket discounts and the train has been "seriously delayed or cancelled, or your seat/sleeper reservation has not been honoured."

Note: The first discounts will be available from 10 January 1992. All other provisions should have been introduced by 3 May 1992.

Standards: Standard for all Intercity services, and Regional Railways long distance routes = that 90% of trains should arrive within 10 minutes of scheduled time.

On Regional Railways short distance routes 90% of trains should arrive within 5 minutes of scheduled time. The reliability target for both Intercity and Regional Railways is that 99% of services should run.

Form of Charter: 20 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: Press Office
Euston House
24 Eversholt Street
London. NW1 1DZ

Telephone: 0171-922 6901

2. Taxpayer's Charter

Issued By: HM Customs and Excise

Date: 13 August 1991

Text of Charter:

YOU ARE ENTITLED TO EXPECT
H M CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

TO BE FAIR

by settling your tax affairs impartially
by expecting you to pay only what is due under the law
by treating everyone with equal fairness

TO HELP YOU

to get your tax affairs right
to understand your rights and obligations
by providing clear leaflets and forms
by giving you information and Assistance at our enquiry offices
by being courteous at all times

TO PROVIDE AN EFFICIENT SERVICE

by settling your tax affairs promptly and accurately
by keeping your private affairs strictly confidential
by using the information you give us only as allowed by the law
by keeping to a minimum your costs of complying with the law
by keeping our costs down

TO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT WE DO

by setting standards for ourselves and publishing
how well we live up to them

IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED

we will tell you exactly how to complain
you can ask for your tax affairs to be looked at again
you can appeal to an independent tribunal
your MP can refer your complaint to the Ombudsman

IN RETURN, WE NEED YOU

to be honest
to give us accurate information
to pay your tax on time

For Further Information Contact:

Local VAT Enquiry Office
Listed in phonebook under Customs & Excise

3. Traveller's Charter

Issued By: HM Customs and Excise

Date: 29 January 1991; revised 30 March 1993

Main Points: This Charter sets out 17 separate standards under numerous headings, including:

- Anti-smuggling checks
- Customs law and your rights
- Our performance
- Travellers arriving from non-EC countries may have duty and tax to pay
- If you have a complaint
- Advice

Form of Charter: Small pamphlet

For Further Information Contact:

HM Customs & Excise
London South
Excise and Inland Customs Advice Centre
Dorset House
Stamford Street
London. SE1 9NG

Telephone: 0171 202 4227

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4. Parent's Charter

Issued By: Department for Education

Date: 1 September 1991; revised 14 June 1994

Main Points: The Citizen's Charter and Parent's Charter have brought:

On Standards:

- New rights to information on how schools are performing
- Better arrangements for inspecting them
- Clear National Targets for Education and Training - for schools and colleges, employers and Government

On Choice:

- New types of school
- More rights for parents
- Improvements for parents of children with special needs

This Charter also provides information under the following titles:

- The right to know
- A school place for your child,
- Once your child is at school
- What to do if things go wrong
- Partnership in education

Form of Charter: 29 page booklet

For Further Information Contact:

Parent's Charter Unit
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
Westminster
London. SW1P 3BT

Telephone: 0171-925 6155

5. Redundancy Payments Service Charter

Issued By: Employment Department

Date: 1 October 1992

Main Points: This Charter outlines your rights and tells you what the Redundancy Payments Service can do for you and how to get our help.

This includes:

Our standards of service

- We aim to pay your claim accurately.
- We aim to pay your claim as quickly as possible. You can expect to get your payment within 12 weeks of the date we receive your claim. Most claims take less than 12 weeks, but there is sometimes a delay - for example, if we have difficulty getting the information which proves your entitlement, especially if a business is changing hands. Please tell us if you are concerned about the progress of your claim. We will explain the reason for any delay and do our best to speed things up.

Our performance

- In the first half of 1993, we received 149,000 claims. We met our target of paying 80% within 13 weeks. Our 1994 target is to pay 80% in 12 weeks or sooner. In the same period, we dealt with 39,000 telephone enquiries on the free Helpline and replied to 99% of written enquiries within 5 days.

Keeping in touch

- *If you want information or advice* please ring our free Helpline (0800 848489) or write to our Customer Service Unit.
- *If you write to us*, we will reply within 5 working days of receiving your letter.
- *If you call us*, your enquiry will be answered promptly and courteously. If we cannot help immediately, we will call back.

- *If you want to ask about your claim*, ring our free Helpline or write to your nearest Redundancy Payments Office. We will pass your enquiry to the person dealing with your claim, who will respond to it. You can ask for that person by name if you need to make any further enquiries.

If you are not satisfied

- *If you are unhappy about the service, we give you*, write to our Customer Service Unit and tell us why. We will investigate, give you a full explanation and do our best to put the matter right. If you feel things have still not been resolved, you can telephone or write to the Manager of the office dealing with your claim.
- *If you do not agree with our assessment of your claim*, tell us and we will check and reconsider it. *If you are still dissatisfied*, you have the right to ask an independent Industrial Tribunal to review it.

Keeping up the standard

- The 1993 survey showed that 84% of our customers felt that our service standards were reasonable. We continue to seek improvements, however - for example, we have reduced our target for payment from 13 to 12 weeks.
- We have revised the Charter and will keep it under regular review to take account, as far as we can, of the standards of service you require. Our Customer Service Unit welcomes suggestions and we will also be doing more customer surveys.

Form of Charter: 3 page leaflet

For Further Information Contact:

Customer Service Unit
The Redundancy Payments Office
7th Floor, Hagley House
83-85 Hagley Road
Birmingham. B16 8QG

Telephone: 0800 848489

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6. Jobseeker's Charter

Issued By: Employment Service

Date: 17 December 1991; revised 13 June 1994

Main Points: The Charter contains information under the following headings:

- The standards of service you can expect
- Consulting our clients
- Whenever you contact us
- How you can help us as a jobseeker
- Benefits
- The Employment Service and the Benefits Agency
- The services we provide when you are looking for work
- If a job is hard to find
- We welcome your comments

Form of Charter: 14 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: Local Jobcentre & Unemployment Benefit Office
Listed in phonebook under Employment Service

7. Tenant's Charter

Issued By: Department of the Environment

Date: 24 January 1992

Main Points: Information is provided under a number of sub-headings:

1. Courteous and efficient customer service:

- all housing officers in contact with tenants and prospective tenants should wear name badges
- prompt answers to letter and phone calls, target dates for substantive replies and acknowledgements where no full answer is possible before that date, with an indication of when the tenant can expect an answer
- names, locations and telephone numbers of officers responsible locally for each function issued to each tenant, together with information on reception and appointment arrangements.

2. Clear information in plain language on services available:

- tenants must be told about the terms of the tenancy, about the landlord's statutory obligations to do certain repairs, and about the right to repair and to carry out improvements; the right to security of tenure; the right of succession; the right to exchange and to take in lodgers
- tenants should have assistance to enable them to exercise the above rights
- tenants also have the right to information about their landlord's management performance
- tenants, and those who have applied for tenancies to the local authority, also have the right to know what information the local authority holds about them as tenants, and to confidentiality about personal circumstances.

3. Publication of service standards, targets and policies:

- landlords are encouraged to set standards and targets and publish their policies on a range of indicators. Tenants should be able to compare the performance of their own landlord with the performance of other neighbouring landlords.

4. Evidence of consultation in setting standards:

- tenants have the right to be consulted about management changes which substantially affect them
- tenants are consulted at the earliest possible stage of proposals for physical works
- an adequate time for response is offered to individual tenants or groups of tenants consulted.

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5. Well sign-posted avenues of complaint:

- the procedure should be conciliatory, have a positive approach, be approachable and accessible
- it should be fair and impartial
- it should explain how claims for compensation are dealt with
- the landlord should include details of its complaints procedure in information given as standard to tenants.

Form of Charter: 29 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: Department of the Environment
Room N13/09a
2 Marsham Street
London. SW1P 3EB

8. Patient's Charter

Issued By: Department of Health

Date: 1 April 1992

Aim: The Charter sets out 'rights' and 'standards' as part of the Government's programme to "improve and modernise the delivery of the service to the public whilst continuing to reaffirm the fundamental principles of the NHS."

Main Points:

1. The Patient's Charter Rights:

7 existing rights to:

- receive health care regardless of ability to pay
- be registered with a GP
- receive emergency medical care at any time
- be referred to a consultant/second opinion
- be given a clear explanation of proposed treatment
- have access to health records
- choose whether or not to take part in medical research/student training.

3 new rights from 1 April 1992 to:

- be given detailed information on local health services, including quality standards and maximum waiting times
- be guaranteed admission for treatment no later than 2 years after being placed on a waiting list
- have any complaint investigated and receive a prompt written reply from the chief executive/general manager.

2. Nine national Charter standards:

These are the titles of the 'standards of service' the Government is aiming to provide for the patient:

1. Respect for privacy, dignity and religious and cultural beliefs
2. Arrangement to ensure everyone, including people with special needs, can use services
3. Information to relatives and friends
4. Waiting time for an ambulance service

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5. Waiting time for initial assessment in accident and emergency departments
6. Waiting time in outpatient clinics
7. Cancellation of operations
8. Named qualified nurse, midwife or health visitor responsible for each patient
9. Discharge of patients from hospital.

Form of Charter: 23 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London. SW1A 2NS

9. Taxpayer's Charter

Issued By: Inland Revenue

Date: 13 August 1991

Text of Charter:

The Taxpayer's Charter

You are entitled to expect the Inland Revenue

To be fair

- By settling your tax affairs impartially
- By expecting you to pay only what is due under the law
- By treating everyone with equal fairness

To help you

- To get your tax affairs right
- To understand your rights and obligations
- By providing clear leaflets and forms
- By giving you information and assistance at our enquiry offices
- By being courteous at all times

To provide an efficient service

- By settling your tax affairs promptly and accurately
- By keeping your private affairs strictly confidential
- By using the information you give us only as allowed by the law
- By keeping to a minimum your costs of complying with the law
- By keeping our costs down

To be accountable for what we do

- By setting standards for ourselves and publishing how well we live up to them
-

If you are not satisfied

- We will tell you exactly how to complain
- You can ask for your tax affairs to be looked at again
- You can appeal to an independent tribunal
- Your MP can refer your complaint to the Ombudsman

Research Paper 95/66

In return, we need you

- To be honest
- To give us accurate information
- To pay your tax on time

For Further Information Contact: Local Tax Office or Tax Enquiry Centre
Listed in phonebook under Inland Revenue

10. Courts Charter

Issued By: The Lord Chancellor's Department
in conjunction with Home Office & Crown Prosecution Service

Date: 25 November 1992

Main Points: This Charter sets the standard of service you can expect from staff who work in the courts; explains what will happen when you come to court and what you should do if something goes wrong. The Charter tells you what is being done to improve the service and the steps being taken to make it easier for you to carry out business in the courts.

Standards of performance:

- Courts will display all standards in the public area of the court building.
- Courts will carry out regular surveys of court uses to find out how we can continue to improve the standards to make sure they meet your needs.

When things go wrong:

- The name of the Chief Clerk and the procedure for dealing with complaints in all courts will be displayed.
- If a mistake occurs, you will be told what went wrong and how the service is being put right.
- Leaflets will be available in Court telling you how to contact the Crown Prosecution Service.

Small claims:

- Leaflets are available to help both plaintiffs and defendants through the various stages of a claim. We will give you the forms you need and will be available to explain what to do next.

Children and parents involved in family cases can expect:

- less formal arrangements for hearing their case
- magistrates and judges who specialise in children
- all proceedings in which they are involved to be heard at the same time
- their case to be heard as quickly as possible
- forms which are easy to understand.

Research Paper 95/66

Form of Charter: 16 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: The Court Service Secretariat
Lord Chancellor's Department
Trevelyan House
30 Great Peter Street
London. SW1P 2BY

Telephone: 0171-210 8832

11. London Underground Customer's Charter

Issued By: London Underground

Date: 20 July 1992; revised 1 June 1993; revised further 28 June 1994

Main Points:

- Displaying regular reports on train services at stations.
- Advertising in advance interruption of services for engineering works.
- If we are unable to run the timetabled last train, we will do our best to get you to your destination.
- If we seriously delay your journey we will refund your fare with a voucher.

The Refund Pledge states:

"If because of our failure, you wait on a platform for more than 15 minutes longer than advertised, or the Underground train you are on is delayed by 15 minutes, we will refund you with a voucher to the value of the delayed single journey."

If you contact us we will:

- give our name
- respond within 7 working days
- keep you informed if we have to conduct an investigation
- tell you what we have done and why.

Form of Charter: 12 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: Customer Services Centre
London Underground Ltd
55 Broadway
London. SW1H 0BD

Telephone: 0171-918 4040.

12. Benefits Agency Customer Charter

Issued By: Social Security Benefits Agency

Date: 27 January 1992

Main Points: You have a right to expect a service which is professional, efficient and courteous; which actively seeks and responds to your views, and takes them into account.

Information is provided under the following titles:

- When you contact us
- Prompt and accurate
- Listening to you
- Help and information
- If things go wrong
- Decisions about your benefit
- Special payments
- Working with others to improve services to you

Form of Charter: 8 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: Customer Charter
BA Customer Service Branch
Room 2S25
Quarry House
Quarry Hill
Leeds. LS2 7NA

Telephone: 01132 324601

13. Contributor's Charter

Issued By: Social Security Contributions Agency

Date: 1 August 1991; revised April 1995

Main Points: This new Contributor's Charter:

- Sets out the new and improved standards of service you can expect
- Tells you what we do
- Tells you how to get more help and information

What you can expect from us:

- carry out checks on national insurance records to ensure they are as complete, accurate and up-to-date as possible
- if there are any problems with your national insurance, we will tell you what we are doing, or you can do, to put things right
- whether on the phone or in letters, our staff will tell you their name and be courteous and helpful

We will also:

- deal with your national insurance affairs fairly and impartially
- treat any information you give us in confidence

The Charter covers the following issues:

- A message from the Chief Executive
- Our key standards
- Advice and information
- What to do if things go wrong
- Independent advice
- Letting you know how we perform
- What you can do
- Further information

Form of Charter: 20 page booklet; issued jointly with 8 page booklet on *Useful Contacts and Leaflets*

For Further Information Contact: Vic Hillier
Corporate Customer Services Manager
Room 76J
Contributions Agency
DSS Longbenton
Newcastle Upon Tyne. NE98 1YX

Telephone : 0191-225 5134

14. Employer's Charter

Issued By: Social Security Contributions Agency

Date: 1 August 1991

Main Points: This Employer's Charter:

- Sets out the standard of service you can now expect
- Gives you more information about the Contributions Agency
- Tells you what we do
- Explains how we will put into practice the principles of the Citizen's Charter, and the Prime Minister's initiative *Working with Business: a code for Enforcement Agencies*.

Form of Charter: 17 page leaflet

For Further Information Contact: Corporate Customer Services Manager
Contributions Agency
Room 87B
DSS Longbenton
Newcastle Upon Tyne. NE98 1YX

Telephone: 0191-225 5134

15. Child Support Agency Charter

Issued By: Child Support Agency

Date: 5 April 1992

Main Points: The Charter sets out the commitments to provide a service of the highest quality and include:

- a brief outline of the main services provided;
- all the standards of service that parents and employers can expect from us, including:
 - how to appeal against our decisions on maintenance assessment
 - how to get further advice
 - how we will deal with comments or complaints about our service and consult you about service improvements.

Form of Charter: 12 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: Child Support Agency
PO Box 55
Brierley Hill
West Midlands. DY5 1YL

Telephone: 0345 133133.

16. Charter for Further Education

Issued By: Department for Education

Date: 21 September 1993

Main Points: This Charter explains what is being done to promote high standards of, service for all who use colleges in the new further education sector in England - students, employers and other members of the local community.

This Charter provides information under 3 headings:

PART I - STUDENTS

If you want to become a full-time or part-time student you have the right to expect:

- reliable and impartial advice about the choices available, given at the right time (see section A)
- clear and accurate information about:
 - courses, qualifications, facilities and entry requirements
 - how courses will be taught and assessed, and how your learning will be managed
 - colleges' policies and arrangements for students with learning difficulties or disabilities
 - accommodation if you will have to live away from home
 - how well colleges are doing, including published reports on the quality of what they provide (see section A).

You can also expect:

- to have your application for a place handled fairly and efficiently (see section B)
- to be shown where you would be taught and the facilities available for students (see section B)
- to be told about the fees and other charges a college makes, and any financial help that is available (see section C).

Once you are accepted as a student you have the right to expect:

- prompt payment of grants and access fund payments if you are eligible (see section C)
- high quality teaching and effective management of your learning, subject to independent inspection (see section D)
- regular information on your progress and achievements (see section E)
- access to reliable and unbiased careers advice and other guidance and counselling (see section E).

The Government proposes, subject to Parliament's approval, to:

- replace automatic involvement in the student union with an opt-in system. Access to a range of core student services will be retained for all students (see section F)
- give you a right of appeal to an outside authority if you think your student union has acted unfairly (see section F).

At all times you have the right to be treated equally regardless of your sex or ethnic background, and to have any learning difficulties or disabilities taken into account (see section G).

PART 2 - EMPLOYERS & THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

If you are an employer or a member of the local community you have the right to expect:

- enquiries to be handled efficiently
- the local college to be a responsible and responsive part of the community
- information to help you:
 - recruit suitable employees
 - send employees on the right courses
- high quality teaching and effectively managed learning for your employees
- information about any facilities you can use and any charges made.

PART 3 - WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG

Everyone has the right to expect:

- open, fair and effective complaints procedures if they are not satisfied with the services they receive.

The Charter also explains how to contact the various organisations involved in further education.

By summer 1994 every college will have developed its own Charter, in consultation with its customers, spelling out how it meets the requirements in this Charter. Look out for it!

Form of Charter: 29 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London. SW1P 3BT

Telephone: 0171-925 5000

17. Charter for Higher Education

Issued By: Department for Education

Date: 21 September 1993

Main Points: This Charter explains the standard of service that students, employers and the general public can expect from universities and colleges and other bodies involved in higher education in England. This includes those bodies which provide financial help for students.

This Charter promises:

If you are considering becoming a student, you should receive clear and accurate information about:

- universities and colleges and the courses they offer;
- the usual entry requirements;
- the quality of what they provide;
- the residential accommodation available; and
- any facilities for people with disabilities or learning difficulties.

When you apply for a place, your application should be handled fairly and efficiently.

If you apply for financial help, you should receive full and accurate information about what is available. Once you become a student, you should get prompt payment of grants, loans and any available 'access funds' if you are eligible.

Your university or college should explain the aims and structure of your course. You should be able to register your views about your course. You should receive a high standard of teaching, guidance and counselling. There should be proper arrangements for student security and safety.

The Government has also announced proposals to reform student unions, replacing automatic involvement with an opt-in system; all students will still have access to a range of core student union services. The Government will seek Parliament's approval for these reforms. The Government's plans will also give you the right of appeal to an outside authority if you think your student union has acted unfairly.

At all times you are entitled to equal treatment regardless of your sex or ethnic background.

If you are an employer, you should receive information about what graduates and holders of diplomas have been taught and can do; and clear explanations about the purpose of work placements and the arrangements for supervising students. Names of the people to contact should be available and you should receive prompt responses to any queries. You are also entitled to ask for contracts for any research or consultancy work you ask the college or university to do.

If you live near to a university or college, you should know what facilities are open to the public and at what charge.

If the standard of service you receive is poor, there are steps you can take to get it put right.

Separate Charters cover Scotland and Wales.

Form of Charter: 23 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London. SW1P 3BT

Telephone: 0171-925 5000

18. Road User's Charter

Issued By: The Highways Agency

Date: 30 March 1994

Aim: This Charter sets out the standards of service we have set for our network and the improvements we are determined to achieve. One of the Agency's key objectives is to striking a balance between any environmental loss arising from the use, construction and maintenance of trunk roads and the overall benefits of an efficient road network. We are also committed to reducing the accident rate on motorways and trunk roads.

Main Points: Information under seven titles:

1. Safety and security on the road network
2. Information service
3. Roads and the environment
4. Maintaining and improving the existing network
5. Cones Hotline
6. Providing a more pleasant environment (see Number 2)
7. Answering your queries and complaints

Form of Charter: 16 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: The Highways Agency
St. Christopher House
Southwark Street
London. SE1 0TE

Telephone: 0171-928 3666.

18. Your Home and Trunk Road Proposals **(issued jointly with Road User's Charter)**

Issued By: The Highways Agency

Date: 30 March 1994

Aim: To provide efficient, reliable, safe and environmentally acceptable roads. We will do our best to reduce any unwanted effects which our road schemes might have on homes, communities and the environment.

Main Points: This Charter provides a step by step guide to:

- how our road schemes are developed
- the system for consulting members of the public
- public inquiries
- compensation paid to people who own and occupy houses and flats that are affected by our schemes

The Charter also provides information under seven titles:

1. Guide to trunk road planning
2. A fair deal
3. Blight
4. Compulsory purchase
5. Compensation
6. A commitment to be helpful
7. If you have a complaint

Form of Charter: 20 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: The Highways Agency
St. Christopher House
Southwark Street
London. SE1 0TE

Telephone: 0171-928 3666

19. London Bus Passenger's Charter

Issued By: London Transport Buses

Date: 12 September 1994

Main Points: The Charter deals primarily with London Transport Buses, though all ten of the individual bus companies which were privatized during 1994 are committed to its provisions.

In the introduction to the Charter, it is made clear that London Transport Buses is to remain responsible for:

- fares
- Travelcards and Bus Passes
- bus stops, including bus stations and shelters
- information about bus services and timetables

London Transport Buses aims to provide:

- a Londonwide service with at least one bus route within 400 metres of most Londoner's homes, and a direct service to the local town centre
- services that meet the needs of elderly and disabled people in particular
- simple routes to make all timetables and bus routes as easy to remember as possible
- a reliable service so that you won't have long to wait at bus stops (although heavy traffic can disrupt timetables)

Furthermore, there is an explicit pledge to monitor performance against tough targets.

The Charter also provides information under the following titles:

- Before you set out
- At the bus stop
- A reliable bus service
- Updating the service
- The bus
- Lost property
- Your suggestions, comments and complaints
- Keeping you informed
- Bus companies operating services for London Transport
- Summary of our performance

Form of Charter: 25 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: Passenger Services
London Transport Buses
Freepost
London. SW1Y 0YH

Telephone: 0171-918 4300

20. Justice Charter for Scotland

Issued By: Scottish Office

Date: 1 April 1992

Main Points: This Charter explains what is being done to:

- Improve the quality of service
- Give the citizen more information about the services that are available
- Set and publicise the standard of service that individuals can expect, and respond properly when the standards are not met
- Make sure that the service provided give good value for money.

The Charter also describes in turn what the citizen is entitled to expect from the five main public service in the justice system:

- The Police
- The Courts
- Procurator Fiscal Service
- Prison Service
- Social Work Services

Form of Charter: 16 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: The relevant public service directly

21. Parent's Charter In Scotland

Issued By: Scottish Office

Date: 1 September 1991

Aim: To ensure that you will have clear and comprehensive information about your child's progress, about your child's school and about the quality of schools in your area. It also describes the action being taken to ensure that quality and standards are improved where needed.

Main Points: This Charter sets out information under the following headings:

- Your rights and responsibilities
- Your right to information
- Your right to choose
- Your assurance of quality
- Running the school
- If things go wrong
- A partnership with your school

Form of Charter: 16 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: The Scottish Office Education Department
Room 4/10
New St Andrew's House
Edinburgh. EH1 3JY

22. Patient's Charter for Scotland

Issued By: Scottish Office

Date: 1 April 1992

Aims:

THE PURPOSE OF THE NHS IN SCOTLAND IS

- to promote good health
- to diagnose and treat those who are ill
- and
- to provide health care for those with continuing needs

irrespective of the individual's ability to pay, in partnership with people and with other organisations, and within the resources that the country makes available.

THE VALUES OF THE NHS IN SCOTLAND ARE

- to provide fair entitlement and access to its services
- to identify and seek to meet people's needs and wishes
- to set out to achieve the highest standards possible
 - of care and respect for each person
 - of results
 - of value for money
- to improve standards through research, education, monitoring and review

while enabling those who work in the Service

- to achieve its purpose
- to share its values
- and
- to feel valued themselves

Main Points: Additional information is provided under the following headings:

- Improving health in Scotland
- Improving care for patient

Research Paper 95/66

- Reducing waiting times
- Tell us what you think
- Telling you more about the NHS

Form of Charter: 12 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: Telephone: 0131-556 8400 x 6800

23. Tenant's Charter for Scotland

Issued By: Scottish Office

Date: 9 December 1991

Aim: This Tenant's Charter is for all public sector tenants in Scotland. The Government believe you are entitled to a high quality standard of service from your landlord.

Main Points: This Charter sets out your existing rights and how the Government want to improve them by:

- Making it quicker to buy your home under the Right to Buy and Rent Mortgage Schemes
- Ensuring that your landlord tells you the standard of service you can expect
- Giving you more say in how the housing service is run and stronger rights if something goes wrong
- Improving the way your landlord manages your housing so that it is more in line with what you want.

Form of Charter: 16 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: The Scottish Office
Room 404
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh. EH1 3DE

Telephone: 0131-244 2020

24. Further and Higher Education Charter For Scotland

Issued By: Scottish Office

Date: 22 September 1993

Aim: To improve access to information about educational opportunities; to help intending students and employers choose the institution and course appropriate to their needs; and to encourage all users of the service to feel free to make their views known.

This Charter also aims to encourage institutions:

- To maintain high standards of service
- To provide accurate information about courses and about the range of services and facilities for students - eg. welfare and careers guidance.

Main Points: This Charter provides information under a number of main and sub-headings, including:

- Standards of service in further and higher education
- Keeping students informed
- Choice of institution
- Choice of course
- How to apply
- Student services
- Financial support
- Equal opportunities
- Keeping employers and the community informed
- How to make your views known

Form of Charter: 27 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: Further Education : Room 228
Higher Education : Room 325
43 Jeffrey Street
Edinburgh. EH1 1DN

Telephone : 0131-244 5426/5396 Further/Higher

25. Parent's Charter for Wales

Issued By: Welsh Office

Date: 1 September 1991

Main Points: It explains your rights as a parent in the education of your children, the choices you can make, information you can obtain about the performance of schools, and influence you can have in the ways schools are run.

The Charter explains certain information under the following headings:

- The right to choose
- Choosing the right school
- Once your child is at school
- What to do if things go wrong
- A partnership with your school

The Charter also incorporates the *National Curriculum: A guide for parents*. The Welsh Office Education Department has also issued a separate charter: *Children with special needs*.

Form of Charter: 18 page booklet (bilingual)

For Further Information Contact: Schools Administration Division 3
Welsh Office Education Department
Further & Higher Education Division
Phase 2, Government Buildings
Tŷ Glas Road
Llanishen
Cardiff. CF4 5WE

Telephone: 01222 761456 x 5386

26. Patient's Charter for Wales

Issued By: Welsh Office

Date: 1 April 1992

Main Points:

The Charter explains:

- the kind of service you can expect from the NHS;
- the various stages through which you may come into contact with the NHS - from your family doctor through to discharge from hospital - and the rights you have;
- how you can help and make your views known;
- what to do if things go wrong;
- where you can get further information.

The aim of the NHS in Wales is, working with other organisations, to take the people of Wales into the 21st century with a level of health on course to compare with the best in Europe.

Form of Charter: 23 page booklet (bilingual)

For Further Information Contact: Local Family Health Services Authority
Local District Health Authority

27. Tenant's Charter for Wales

Issued By: Welsh Office

Date: 28 September 1992

Main Points: This Charter is for all secure Council Tenants in Wales and sets out certain principles which make up the Charter Standard. These principles can be applied to the way in which your Council provides its housing service. These include:

- Publication of the standard of service
- Consultation with those who use the service
- Clear information about the service provided
- Courteous and efficient service
- Avenues for complaint
- VFM.

The Charter also provides information under the following headings:

Clear Information Courteous and Efficient Service Avenues for Complaint

- Applying for a Council House
- Buying your Home
- Changing Landlord
- Consultation
- Estate Environment
- Estate Partnership
- Eviction
- Improvements by the Local Authority
- Improvements by the Tenant
- Lodgers
- Moving House
- Rent
- Repairs by the Local Authority
- Security of Tenure
- Standards of Service
- Sub-letting
- Succession
- Tenant Participation
- Transfer of Tenancy
- Value for Money

Form of Charter: 44 page booklet (bilingual)

For Further Information Contact: Housing B Division
Welsh Office
Cathways Park
Cardiff. CF1 3NQ

Telephone: 01222 825282

28. Charter for Further Education

Issued By: Welsh Office

Date: 21 September 1993

Main Points: This Charter identifies the standards and targets which colleges and other organisations involved in further education should work to. It sets out what the people of Wales can reasonably expect from the further education sector and provides a useful reference guide to the information or service they need.

This Charter provides information under 3 headings:

PART I - STUDENTS

If you want to become a full-time or part-time student you have the right to expect:

- reliable and impartial advice about the choices available, given at the right time (see section A)
- clear and accurate information about:
 - courses, qualifications, facilities and entry requirements
 - how courses will be taught and assessed, and how your learning will be managed
 - services provided by colleges to users of the Welsh language and courses which are available through the medium of the Welsh language
 - colleges' policies and arrangements for students with learning difficulties or disabilities
 - accommodation if you will have to live away from home
 - how well colleges are doing, including published reports on the quality of what they provide (see section A).

You can also expect:

- to have your application for a place handled fairly and efficiently (see section B)
- to be shown where you would be taught and the facilities available for students (see section B)
- to be told about the fees and other charges a college makes, and any financial help that is available (see section C).

Once you are accepted as a student you have the right to expect:

- prompt payment of grants and access fund payments if you are eligible (see section C)
- high quality teaching and effective management of your learning, subject to independent inspection (see section D)
- regular information on your progress and achievements (see section E)
- access to reliable and unbiased careers advice and other guidance and counselling (see section E).

The Government proposes, subject to Parliament's approval, to:

- replace automatic involvement in the student union with an opt-in system. Access to a range of core student services will be retained for all students (see section F)

- give you a right of appeal to an outside authority if you think your student union has acted unfairly (see section F).

At all times you have the right to be treated equally regardless of your sex or ethnic background, and to have any learning difficulties or disabilities taken into account (see section G).

PART 2 - EMPLOYERS & THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

If you are an employer or a member of the local community you have the right to expect:

- enquiries to be handled efficiently
- the local college to be a responsible and responsive part of the community
- information to help you:
 - recruit suitable employees
 - send employees on the right courses
- high quality teaching and effectively managed learning for your employees
- information about any facilities you can use and any charges made.

PART 3 - WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG

Everyone has the right to expect:

- open, fair and effective complaints procedures if they are not satisfied with the services they receive.

The Charter also explains how to contact the various organisations involved in further education.

By summer 1994 every college will have developed its own Charter, in consultation with its customers, spelling out how it meets the requirements in this Charter. Look out for it!

Form of Charter: 29 page booklet (bilingual)

For Further Information Contact: Further and Higher Education Division 1
Welsh Office
Companies House
Crown Way
Cardiff. CF4 3UT

Telephone: 01222 380768

29. Charter for Higher Education

Issued By: Welsh Office

Date: 21 September 1993

Main Points: This Charter explains the standards of service that students, employers and the general public can expect from universities and colleges and other bodies involved in higher education in Wales. This also includes the standards of service expected from bodies which provide financial help for students.

This Charter promises:

If you are considering becoming a student, you should receive clear and accurate information about:

- universities and colleges and the courses they offer;
- courses that are available in universities and colleges in Wales through the medium of the Welsh language;
- the usual entry requirements;
- the quality of what they provide;
- the residential accommodation available; and
- any facilities for people with disabilities or learning difficulties.

When you apply for a place, your application should be handled fairly and efficiently.

If you apply for financial help, you should receive full and accurate information about what is available. Once you become a student, you should get prompt payment of grants, loans and any available 'access funds' if you are eligible.

Your university or college should explain the aims and structure of your course. You should be able to register your views about your course. You should receive a high standard of teaching, guidance and counselling. There should be proper arrangements for student security and safety.

The Government has also announced proposals to reform student unions, replacing automatic involvement with an opt-in system; all students will still have access to a range of core student union services. The Government will seek Parliament's approval for these reforms. The Government's plans will also give you the right of appeal to an outside authority if you think your student union has acted unfairly.

At all times you are entitled to equal treatment regardless of your sex or ethnic background.

If you are an employer, you should receive information about what graduates and holders of diplomas have been taught and can do; and clear explanations about the purpose of work placements and the arrangements for supervising students. Names of the people to contact should be available and you should receive prompt responses to any queries. You are also entitled to ask for contracts for any research or consultancy work you ask the college or university to do.

If you live near to a university or college, you should know what facilities are open to the public and at what charge.

If the standard of service you receive is poor, there are steps you can take to get it put right.

The Welsh Language Bill, currently before Parliament will, if enacted, require public bodies to propose Welsh language schemes which will govern their use of Welsh in dealings with the public. All higher education institutions in Wales will have to produce schemes which will set out the services and courses available in Welsh and to make this information available to you on request.

Form of Charter: 23 page booklet (bilingual)

For Further Information Contact: Further and Higher Education Division 1
Welsh Office
Companies House
Crown Way
Cardiff. CF4 3UT

Telephone: 01222 380768

Also available from the Welsh Office are:

The Citizens Charter and Development Control - A guide to good practice
Heritage Charter Statement - Cardw - Welsh Historic Monuments

30. Northern Ireland Charter

Issued By: Department of Finance and Personnel

Date: 5 February 1992

Main Points: This Charter includes the following information:

What is the Citizen's Charter?

The Citizen's Charter in Northern Ireland covers all our public service. Its four aims are:

- work for better quality
- give people more choice
- make sure that everyone is told what kind of service they should expect to receive
- make sure that people know what they can do if things go wrong.

How service will be improved in:

- Health & Personal Social Services
- Public Transport
- Education
- Local Authorities
- Housing
- Social Security
- Training and Employment
- RUC

Protecting the customer's interests

Is the service improving?

The Charter Mark

Charter Advisory Panel

The way ahead

Form of Charter: This leaflet is just a summary of our main proposals.

For Further Information Contact: Telephone: 0800 243174

31. Parent's Charter

Issued By: Department of Education Northern Ireland

Date: 28 September 1992

Aim: This Charter aims to help you play a more active part in your child's education. It is important that you and the school should view the education of your child as an activity in which both of you have parts to play, and responsibilities to face. You, as a parent, will wish to ensure that your child receives the best possible education. To do this you need to know the types of education which are available for your child, and the ways in which you can influence them. For this reason, the Government is committed to extending the range of information which will be made available to you.

Main Points: This Charter sets out your rights and responsibilities in respect of your involvement in the education of your child. It aims to help you to understand more about the education system and to work in partnership with it.

In addition:

The Charter helps to fulfil that commitment by setting out your rights to information about:-

- * the education to which your child is entitled;
- * the education which is provided at your child's school;
- * your child's performance at school and how it is assessed;
- * the educational performance of all schools and how this is assessed;
- * the types of schools in your area, and
- * how education services are organised in your area by the education and library board and other agencies.

The Charter also explains how you can exercise your right to:-

- * name the school which you would like your child to attend;
- * appeal against decisions made about your child's education which you think are wrong, and
- * influence or participate in decisions affecting the education of your child.

Research Paper 95/66

Form of Charter: 21 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: The Parents' Charter
Policy Division
Room 503
Department of Education for Northern Ireland
Rathgael House
Ballon Road
Bangor. BT19 7PR

Telephone: 01247 270077 x 2366

32. Charter for Patients and Clients

Issued By: Department of Health and Personal Social Services, NI

Date: 13 March 1992

Main Points: This Charter for Patients and Clients sets out the standard of care and treatment you can expect if you are ill or in need of care, and what you can do if these standards are not met.

This Charter sets out numerous rights and entitlements under the following headings:

- A Right to Care and Treatment
 - You and Your Doctor
 - You and Your Dentist
 - You and Your Pharmacist
 - You and Your Optician
 - Other Services in the Community
 - Services for Families and Children
 - Hospital Services
- A Right to Information
- A Right to be Consulted
- If Things Go Wrong
- Charter Mark

Form of Charter: 16 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: Office of the Chief Executive
HPSS Management Executive
Room 3E
Dundonald House
Belfast. BT4 3SF

Telephone: 01232 650111 x 282

33. Northern Ireland Tenant's Charter

Issued By: Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Date: 23 September 1992

Main Points: This Charter is about your rights and responsibilities, our services and the exact standard you can expect from us. We are committed to giving you high quality service which is:

- Fair
- Confidential
- Accessible
- Good Value

This Charter promises standards in a number of areas, including:

- Before you become a tenant
- Secure in your home
- Repairs and improvements to your home
- The area around your home
- Moving to another home
- Buying your home
- Your personal housing file
- Consulting you
- Getting involved

Form of Charter: 20 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Telephone: 01232 240588

34. Railway Passenger's Charter

Issued By: Northern Ireland Railways

Date: 16 November 1992

Main Points: This Charter includes information on:

Our Standards of Operation

- Reliability and punctuality

Improving and Maintaining Standards

- Cleanliness
- Seating
- Advance seat reservation
- Heating & lighting
- On-train catering
- Smoking/non-smoking area
- Response time at sales and information
- Centres and travel centres

Looking After You

- Our staff
- Keeping you informed

Claims for Service Delays or Cancellations

- Cash refund
- Tickets not issued by NIR
- Seat reservation fee refund
- Discount vouchers
- Discount for season ticket holders

Working with You

- Timetable
- If you have a mobility handicap
- Major engineering work

Questions and Complaints

Form of Charter: 22 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: Belfast Central Station
East Bridge Street
Belfast. BT1 3PB

Telephone: 01232 235282.

35. Charter for Social Security Agency Clients

Issued By: Northern Ireland Social Security Agency

Date: 24 July 1992

Main Points: This Charter provides information under a number of main and sub-headings:

Quality Service

- Courteous
- Confidential
- Private

Standards

- Prompt
- Accurate
- Measurable
- Suitable

Fairness

- Impartiality

Information and Advice

- Enquiries
- Freeline
- Benefit Enquiry Line
- National Insurance
- Employers

Choice

Accessibility

Easy to use Complaints Procedures

- Mistakes
- Financial Loss
- Appeals
- Reviews

Form of Charter: 14 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: Customer Services Unit
Annex 1
Castle Buildings
Stormont.

Telephone: 01232 763939 x 2290

36. Training and Employment Agency Customer's Charter

Issued By: Training & Employment Agency, Northern Ireland

Date: 14 September 1992

Main Points: This Charter sets out what you can expect from each of the main services provided by the Training and Employment Agency.

1. What we offer you

If you are unemployed; already in work; an employer.

2. How we can help you

To increase your skill; to find a Job; as an employer.

3. The standard of service you can expect from us

4. Your views count

If you wish to make a complaint, you would first speak to the Manager of the Office concerned. We will send a reply within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.

Form of Charter: Small pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: Clarendon House
9-21 Adelaide Street
Belfast. BT2 8DJ

Telephone: 01232 239944

37. RUC Charter

Issued By: Royal Ulster Constabulary

Date: 14 January 1993

Aim: To provide a high quality, effective police service to all the people of Northern Ireland. We will work to achieve this in partnership with the community and in co-operation with other agencies.

Main Points: This Charter covers a whole range of commitments and undertakings, including:

- Our standards and behaviour
 - we will perform our duty with integrity, common sense and sound judgement and be sensitive to the views of the community in our actions.
 - we will offer assistance to members of the public irrespective of their age, sex, their political or religious beliefs or their ethnic or social background.
 - we will manage our organisation in the most professional manner, seeking the opinions of our staff, promoting equal opportunity for all and showing a willingness to change where such change is necessary.
 - we will adhere to our code of professional policing ethics.
- Our commitments to providing a quality service
- Contact with the police
- The RUC and victims of crime
- Rights of detained persons
- Checking progress
- The citizen's responsibility

Form of Charter: 14 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: RUC Force Control and Information Centre
Brooklyn
Knock Road
Belfast. BT5 6LE

Telephone: 01232 650222

38. Bus Passenger's Charter

Issued By: Ulsterbus

Date: 15 February 1993

Aim: Ulster Bus & Citybus continually aim to provide a quality service to the travelling public. The Citizen's Charter now gives us a chance to set out, clearly and precisely, the level of service you can expect when travelling by our regular bus services within Northern Ireland.

Main Points: This Charter provides information under a number of main headings:

A service you can depend on

Travelling in safety

Travelling in comfort

Courteous and helpful staff

A convenient service

Monitoring the bus service

Complaints

Form of Charter: 13 page pamphlet

For Further Information Contact: Head Office
Milewater Road
Belfast. BT3 9BG

Telephone: 01232 351201

39. Child Support Agency Charter

Issued By: Northern Ireland Child Support Agency

Date: 22 April 1993

Main Points: This Charter contains a brief guide to the work of the Agency, and sets out our commitments to provide you with a professional service of the highest quality.

This Charter explains:

The main services provided, include:

- Assessing the level of child support maintenance
- Collecting and paying maintenance
- Enforcement

The standards of service that parents and employers can expect

- How to appeal against our decision on a maintenance assessment, and how to get further advice.
- How we will deal with your comments or complaints and consult you about service improvements.

Form of Charter: 8 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: Client Service Manager
C.S.A. Northern Ireland
Great Northern Tower
17 Great Victoria Street
Belfast. BT2 7AD

Telephone: 01232 896896.

40. Northern Ireland Courts Charter

Issued By: Northern Ireland Court Service

Date: 1 December 1993

Main Points: "Despite the difficulties faced by those involved in the administration of the courts in Northern Ireland, I believe that the system generally serves you well. I recognise, however, that there is room for improvement and all those who work in the courts are committed to raising standards. This Charter explains what is being done to make sure that the administration of justice in Northern Ireland complies with the principles of public service" (MacKay of Clashfern Lord Chancellor).

This Charter provides information on the NI Court Service under a number of headings:

The Courts

- a brief explanation of the work of the courts

Coming to Court

- court users generally
- witnesses
- victims
- jurors
- court facilities

Court Standards

- the general standards of performance you can expect

Complaints

- how you make a complaint about a member of staff of the NI Court Service
- the committee which oversees improvements for court users

For Your Information

- published leaflets and booklets

Form of Charter: 16 page booklet

For Further Information Contact: Court Service Headquarters
Windsor House
9-15 Bedford Street
Belfast. BT2 7LT

Telephone: 01232 328594

Miscellaneous