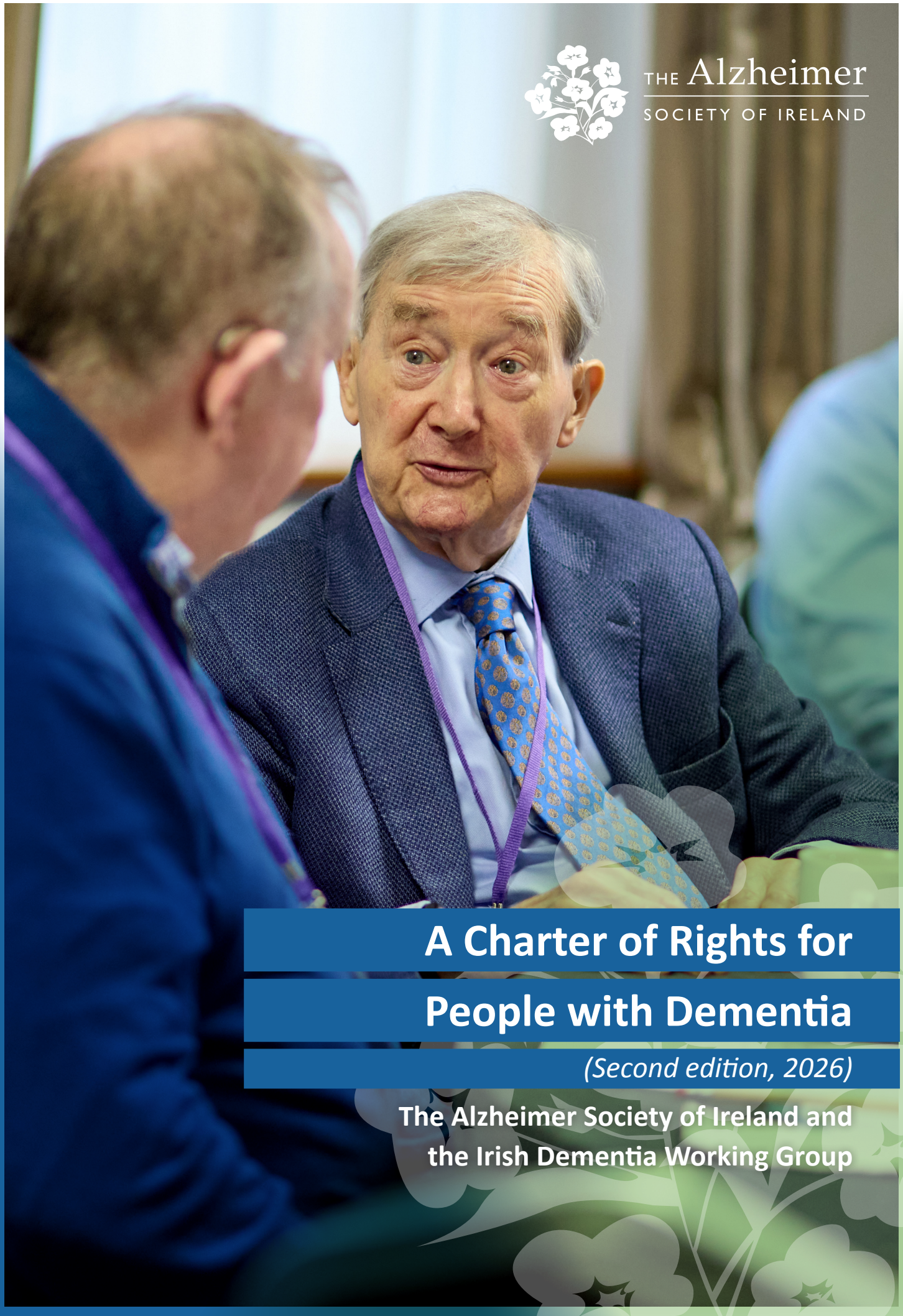


THE Alzheimer SOCIETY OF IRELAND

A Charter of Rights for People with Dementia

(Second edition, 2026)

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland and the Irish Dementia Working Group

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Introduction:

The first edition of A Charter of Rights for People with Dementia was published in April 2016 by The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) and the Irish Dementia Working Group (IDWG). The Charter was developed to highlight the rights that matter most to people with dementia and affirmed that a diagnosis does not remove or reduce a person's human rights.

To mark its tenth anniversary, in 2026, the Charter has been refreshed by the IDWG to reflect the perspectives, priorities and experiences of people with dementia a decade later.

People living with dementia are leaders and co-producers of this Charter, with support from The Alzheimer Society of Ireland. Both editions of the Charter reflect the views of the members of the IDWG who took part in consultations carried out by The ASI.

A diagnosis of dementia does not diminish a person's identity, citizenship, dignity, autonomy, agency or human rights. People living with dementia remain equal members of society and must be supported to direct their own lives.

This Charter applies to every person living with dementia, at every stage and in every setting, including people living at home, people using health and social care services, and people living in residential settings.

It is widely recognised that people with dementia face cultural, social and economic barriers to fulfilling their rights. The purpose of this Charter is to promote the respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights of people with dementia. It can be used as a resource and support to empower people with dementia to understand and exercise their rights in everyday life. It also serves as a practical tool for those who support them, as well as for policymakers and service providers.

No two people experience dementia in the same way. Every single person living with dementia is an individual, with their own set of needs, preferences, and life experiences.

It is important to recognise that people with dementia are not a homogeneous group. No two people experience dementia in the same way. Every single person living with dementia is an individual, with their own set of needs, preferences, and life experiences.

This Charter is grounded in internationally recognised human rights standards, including those set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). It also reflects key provisions of Irish law, including equality legislation, the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, and standards developed by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).



PANEL Principles:

This Charter is guided by the **PANEL** principles, a human rights-based approach endorsed by the United Nations. It emphasises the following principles:

- **Participation**
- **Accountability**
- **Non-discrimination and equality**
- **Empowerment**
- **Legality**

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Participation

People with dementia have the right to have their voices heard, their opinions valued, and their needs expressed and respected.

People with dementia have the right to participate in all decisions which affect their lives, including decisions about health, support, housing, relationships, finances, employment, daily routines and future plans.

People with dementia have the right to accessible information and necessary supports to enable them to exercise their right to participate in decisions and policies which affect them.

People with dementia have the right to be included in political life and discourse.

People with dementia have the right to social participation and inclusion, including the opportunity to remain connected with family, friends, and the wider community.

People with dementia have the right to live as independently as possible with access to recreational, leisure and cultural life in their community.

People with dementia have the right to full participation in care needs assessment, planning, deciding and arranging their care, support and treatment.

Accountability

The State, public and private bodies, voluntary organisations and dementia care providers must be accountable for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of people living with dementia.

People with dementia have the right to receive care from individuals who are competent, informed, and aware of their responsibilities in supporting people with dementia.

People living with dementia have the right to be free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, coercion, degrading treatment and unnecessary restraint or restriction.

Non-Discrimination

People with dementia have the right to be free from discrimination based on any grounds such as age, disability, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, membership of the travelling community, civil and family status.

People with dementia have the right to social protection and to the enjoyment of that right without discrimination.

People with dementia have the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including appropriate housing, food, heating, income support and assistance with disability-related costs.

People with dementia have equal employment rights, including the right to reasonable accommodation, support to remain or return to work, prevention of discrimination, and protection against unfair dismissal following diagnosis.

People with dementia have the right to live in a society where effective and appropriate measures are taken at a national and local level to raise dementia awareness challenge stereotypes, prejudice and misunderstanding while promoting the capabilities, contributions and citizenship of people living with dementia.

People with dementia have the right to reasonable accommodation when using a service. Practical and suitable steps must be taken by a service provider to help a person with dementia to use that service.



Empowerment

People with dementia have the right to access appropriate levels of care providing protection, rehabilitation and support.

People with dementia have the right to access the assistance necessary to attain and maintain maximum independence, physical, mental, social and vocational ability, and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life.

People with dementia have the right to access education and lifelong learning opportunities.

People with dementia have the right to health and social care services provided by professionals and staff who have had appropriate training on dementia and human rights to ensure the highest quality of service.

People with dementia have the right to use public transport safely, equally and with dignity.

People with dementia have the right to early diagnosis and early intervention.

People living with dementia have the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including equal access to prevention, treatment, medication, rehabilitation, palliative care and end-of-life support.

Legality

People with dementia have the same civil and legal rights as everyone else, both before and after their diagnosis.

Every person living with dementia is presumed to have capacity and the ability to make their own decisions.

Where someone lacks capacity to take a specific action or decision due to their cognitive condition, anyone acting for them must have regard for assisted decision-making legislation in Ireland.

People with dementia have the right to accessible information on the assisted decision-making legislation so that so they can exercise autonomy, give informed consent, and make voluntary choices.

Where rights are not observed, the right to seek remedy through effective complaint and appeal procedures.


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The Irish Dementia Working Group is involved in a wide range of work and activities including:

- Awareness raising activities to challenge stigma and improve the understanding of dementia including local and national media work
- Presenting at conferences nationally and internationally
- Sitting on a variety of national steering groups to influence public policy
- Influencing the internal work of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland
- Member of the European Working Group of People with Dementia
- Lobbying political representatives
- Contributing to training and education programmes for health care professionals
- Supporting the fundraising work of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland and ambassador roles for significant campaigns such as Tea Day
- Engagement with arts practitioners to share the experience of dementia in new and innovative ways.

If you would like more information about the Irish Dementia Working Group, please email **advocacy@alzheimer.ie**

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Please call our **National Helpline** on **1800 341 341** with any dementia-related queries.