



# Reach: Support for living an ordinary life *It's My Life*

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# What is Reach?

*'The right support, at the right time from the right person.'*

(Self-advocates in Wandsworth)

No two people have the same desires, expectations, wants or needs. Each and every person is a unique human being. What we share is our humanity, our desire to be loved and to belong.

The challenge laid down by the self-advocates in the quote above is for everyone to understand and value the fact that what is 'right' is different for each of us.

Support for living is about getting the support (paid and unpaid) you need to live the life you want.

First launched by Paradigm in 2002, Reach was developed to ensure that there were clear standards for supported living. These were voluntary standards that are used by many supported living services across the UK and beyond. The 2006 edition, developed by Paradigm along with Skills for People and partners including regulatory bodies, supported service providers and commissioners, can be used to help organisations meet the relevant requirements.

Reach: Support for living an ordinary life is NOT an assessment tool. Reach is a resource and set of standards to encourage people to explore what support for living an ordinary life looks like for a person.

If changes are needed in a person's life, Reach helps you agree the desired changes, plan them and take action together.

Reach: Support for living an ordinary life is NOT a model. No two lives should be the same.

Reach defines what support for living is through a set of 11 standards and helps to ensure people receive, or are moving towards, support for living their ordinary life.

Reach: Support for living an ordinary life, used honestly, will help support providers and commissioners to meet their responsibilities to the people they support and the relevant regulatory bodies. One life, one set of standards, one process.

## The 11 standards

**1** I choose who I live with



**2** I choose where I live



**3** I have my own home



**4** I choose how I am supported



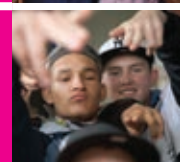
**5** I choose who supports me



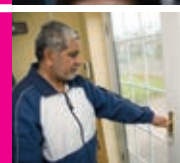
**6** I get good support



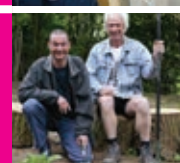
**7** I choose my friends and relationships



**8** I choose how to be healthy and safe



**9** I choose how I am part of the community



**10** I have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens



**11** I get help to make changes in my life



# Why Reach: Support for an ordinary life?

Supported living has developed rapidly in the UK, but not always in the way it should. It has, in many organisations, become a *service type* rather than a way of supporting people to have real choice and control over their lives. We think that this needs to change.

We want Reach: Support for living an ordinary life to achieve the following:

- ▶ To clarify the standards of support for living to ensure that 'supported living' doesn't become a model that people can simply tick as 'achieved'.
- ▶ To ensure that in the current climate of dwindling financial resources and tightening budgets we remain committed to quality support that values the range of resources available to people, for example the community, family, skills exchanges and friends.
- ▶ To show how Reach can be useful to people with direct payments or personal budgets.
- ▶ To ensure that as we work to drive up quality in relation to care and support, we focus on supporting ordinary lives based on Human Rights.

The focus of Paradigm's 'Ensuring an Ordinary Life for All' programme and the principles of Reach: Support for living an ordinary life (both this It's My Life manual and the Service Review) are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As David Towell explains<sup>1</sup>, this convention is much more than a statement of rights. It suggests three main building blocks summarised as:

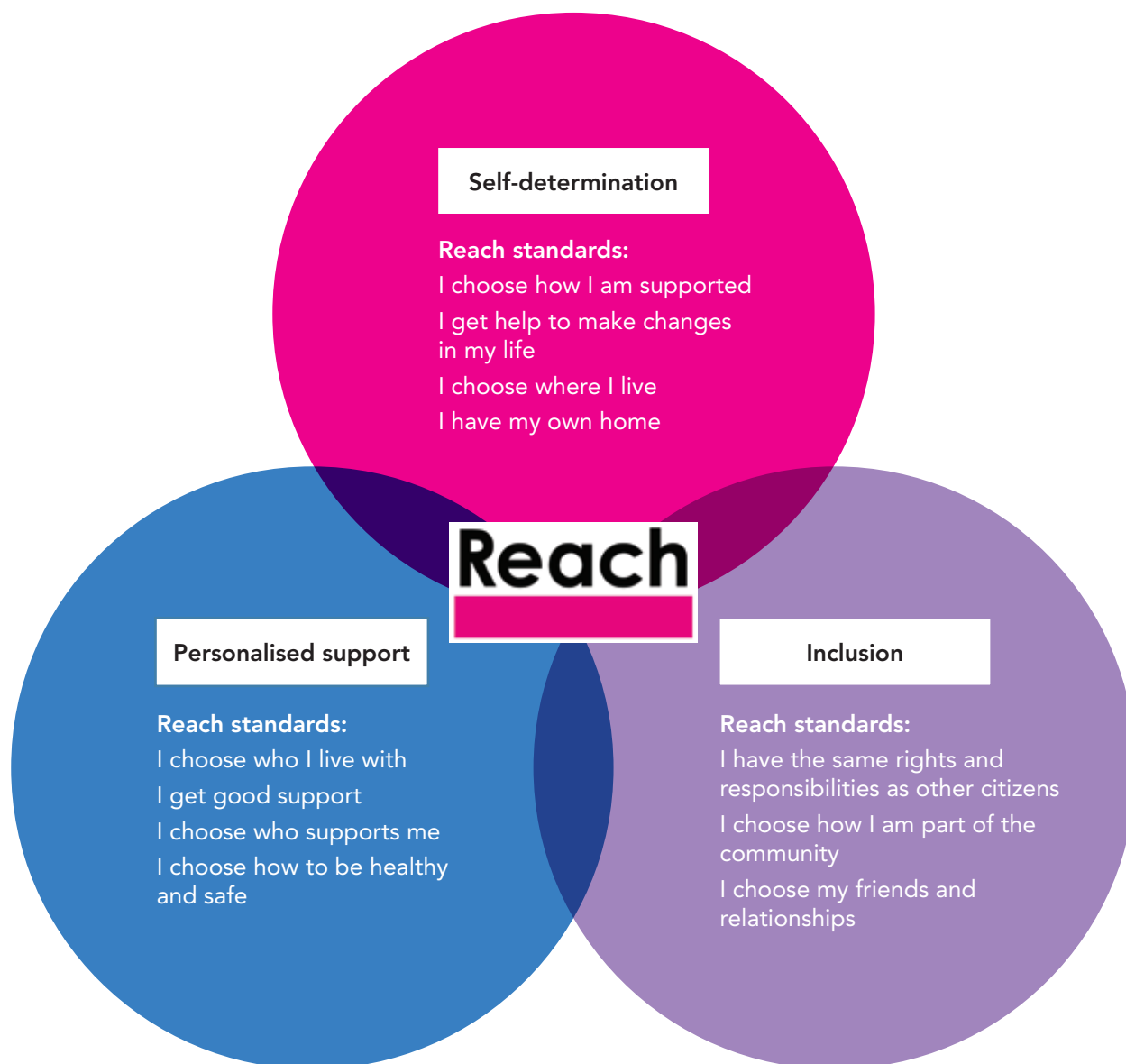
**Self-determination:** *'I can say what matters to me and how I want to live.'*

**Inclusion:** *'I'm included in my community and benefit from the services everyone uses.'*

**Personalised support:** *'I get the assistance I need to live as I want.'*

<sup>1</sup> Towell D (2012) *Delivering the Promise of an Ordinary Life*. London: Paradigm.

# Reach and the Human Rights Convention



# What do we mean by an 'ordinary life'?

The goal of the Ordinary Life movement in the 1980s was to see disabled people 'in the mainstream of life, living in ordinary houses, in ordinary streets, with the same range of choices as any citizen, and mixing as equals with others, and mostly non-disabled members of their own community'<sup>2</sup>.

There has undoubtedly been progress. Good person-centred practice has led to people achieving more of their own goals. A greater focus on the variety of resources in people's lives (eg. friends and community) has encouraged everyone to look beyond just paid support. People with personal budgets and the freedom to truly self-direct are living fuller, more meaningful lives.

However, the reality for many people accessing support from organisations is that there is often a worrying lack of control over who supports them, when the support is received and how this attends to what really matters to them as individuals. The care and support industry has placed so much importance on meeting minimum

standards and professionalising that the most important aspects of care and support, such as human connection and listening to what people want and doing it, have been lost.

An 'ordinary life' is about having the same opportunities as everyone else: the chance to work, love, have friendships, happy times, sad times, a home, to live with people you want to live with. It's not complicated, but somehow the systems we have created have made achieving something ordinary difficult.

<sup>2</sup> Towell D (1988) *An Ordinary Life in Practice: Developing comprehensive community-based services for people with learning disabilities*. London: King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.

# An Ordinary Life

Jobs  
Being allowed to express my feelings  
Simple instructions e.g. bus timetables  
Being allowed to grow and change  
Having my freedom  
Learning from mistakes  
Not always having to be happy, enjoying good days and bad days  
Experiencing the highs and lows  
Sense of purpose  
Going to church  
Taking responsibility for my actions  
Going out for food  
Deciding what you can afford  
Doing chores  
Budgeting, paying bills  
Family  
Spontaneity  
Having a voice  
Not doing something 'cos I don't want to!  
Watching the adult channel  
Going out for a pint  
Going out in the evenings  
Being a part of my community  
Being me  
Having a duvet day  
New places and opportunities  
Taking and giving advice  
Not doing the gardening  
Love  
Sad times  
Relationships with a mix of people

People who receive support and their families stress that good support from a range of people, paid and unpaid, is essential in ensuring quality good support for living an ordinary life. When asked to define the core elements of good support, people have highlighted that good support:

- ▶ is there for the rollercoaster ride of life – the ups and downs
- ▶ values love, friendship and families
- ▶ encourages choice and opportunity, with people supported to navigate obstacles
- ▶ keeps the fun alive in the relationship

- ▶ encourages community connections
- ▶ shares stories NOT just reports
- ▶ knows what makes sense to ME
- ▶ is flexible and creative
- ▶ allows for challenging and courageous conversations
- ▶ celebrates courageous, creative plans.

Reach: Support for living an ordinary life is designed to ensure we value and aspire to ordinary lives for all.



# About the Reach pack

## Who is Reach designed for?

The full Reach: Support for living an ordinary life pack has two main parts, which are designed to be used independently of each other as well as together. It is important that people, families and supporters know that the It's My Life manual can be used independently of a service review. In fact, it is encouraged.

People use Reach for a number of reasons and can be used by:

- ▶ anyone who receives support in order to live an ordinary life. They may be living in their family home or their own home with the support that they want. It is up to the individual who they live with, whether that be alone, with family or with friends.
- ▶ the families and friends of individuals who receive support to find out if the support they are getting is as good as it should be.
- ▶ supporters and their team (if you have a personal budget or direct payment) to find out if the support you are getting is as good as it should be.
- ▶ people living in a residential care home who have been thinking of change. Reach can be a good way to help people, their family,

friends and providers work out what they would need to be doing to move towards an ordinary life.

- ▶ organisations that support individuals in order to help people improve the support they receive.
- ▶ the people who fund support to find out how good an individual's support is. The Reach Standards can be included in an individual's support plan.
- ▶ the organisations that are responsible for monitoring the organisations who provide an individual's support.

## The It's My Life manual

- ▶ This part is designed mainly for use by or with people who receive support and their family and friends.
- ▶ Organisations will also use this part to find out how they are doing in supporting individuals.
- ▶ It is designed to help individuals figure out if they are getting good support and if they have the home and lifestyle they want.
- ▶ It explains to individuals what rights they should expect from the support they have in their life. This may be paid support,

but it also includes the support provided by friends, families and the wider community.

## Service Review manual

- ▶ The Service Review manual is designed for use by Reach review teams within organisations. Teams should include support staff, people supported, families and management.
- ▶ Questions to understand if you are getting the basics right.
- ▶ Questions to understand how you can move on from the basics and shift towards supporting people to have ordinary lives.
- ▶ What practices need to change.
- ▶ What you need to do to get it right.
- ▶ How this applies to all parts of the organisation and those you work with.
- ▶ Templates for action planning.

For additional ideas and resources, visit [www.paradigm-uk.org](http://www.paradigm-uk.org)

# Using the Reach: It's My Life manual

Reach is a resource to encourage you to explore what support for living an ordinary life looks like for individuals.

This manual is designed to be used by a person, their supporters and/or family whenever they want to review their support and make plans for their future. People don't need to wait for permission from an organisation!

We encourage you to think about what your support is like now, and plan actions together to ensure things get better.

This part of Reach: Support for living an ordinary life contains:

- ▶ a guide for you as a person who receives support.
- ▶ a guide for the people who provide your support.
- ▶ Reach: Support for living an ordinary life checklist.
- ▶ Reach Standards with information to help you understand them.
- ▶ a space to record notes from your conversations when discussing Reach.
- ▶ action plans so you and your supporters can write down what they want to make happen to make their support better.

## People receiving support

If you receive support, you can use It's My Life to:

- ▶ **think** about your life, your home, who you live with and the support you get. It helps you to see if these are good enough for you and if your life is as you want it to be.
- ▶ **tell** people what you think and how you want things to get better.
- ▶ **make** sure that you make plans to make the changes you want.
- ▶ **check** that your life keeps changing as your ideas, needs and hopes do by using Reach every year.

You can use It's My Life on your own or you can get help to use it. It's up to you. You can choose anyone you trust to help you. It could be your support staff, a friend or a member of your family. You can also ask an advocate, a support broker or a social worker for help.