

Citizens' rights that the charter ignores

THE announcement by John Major of the Government's Citizen's Charter falls well short of basic requirements. The consumer-led charter provides many secondary rights but neglects to address the issue of providing basic rights and services for all citizens.

The primary aim should be to ensure that every individual in the country has a roof over their head. The charter does not give any guarantees to the homeless and those living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation; it does not reassure those who are unemployed and on the verge of having their homes repossessed by the mortgage agencies.

The charter should ensure that the elderly and the disabled receive adequate and regular attention. The delay in implementing the Government's proposals for Care in the Community means that the elderly and the disabled continue to be dependent on the resources of

family and neighbours. And the charter does not set out to guarantee nursery care access to all families who want it, which seems to suggest that the Government does not put great emphasis on providing better opportunities for women and one-parent families.

For many of the people mentioned above, the Government's charter provides no real hope for a better future. If the political agenda for the nineties is being set now, it is important to put these basic citizen's rights near the top of the agenda.

Paresh Motla.
41 Glanville Road,
Oxford.