

PRESS RELEASE

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Government publish Command Paper to enhance rights of disabled persons

In line with the commitment in its general election manifesto, the Government will publish a Command Paper for legislation which will further enhance and protect people with disabilities. The terms of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been used as a model for a Bill which will make provision for the betterment of persons with disabilities within Gibraltar.

This Bill introduces a standalone piece of legislation for persons with disabilities setting out several principles and obligations that should be considered by the Government or any public body before taking policy decisions or actions. The ultimate purpose being to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all fundamental rights and freedoms by persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

The main drive of the Bill is to create a structure upon which persons with disabilities have a stronger say in the policies that affect their lives, establishing standards that public and private entities should meet in order to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are protected and promoted, increasing the possibility of participation in all aspects of life, to promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities and to obtain a greater level of protection against discrimination.

These aims are met by committing the Government to take practical action to make the rights a reality by –

- a) taking steps so that persons with disabilities can enjoy the same rights as everyone else;
- b) looking at existing legislation and revoking or amending if necessary;
- c) ensuring that professionals who work with persons with disabilities have training to understand how to respect their rights;
- d) promoting accessibility including the development of standards; and
- e) gathering information and statistics about the position of persons with disabilities in society so that progress may be tracked and policies developed and improved as necessary.

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Commenting on the publication of the Command Paper, the Minister for Equality and Social Services Samantha Sacramento said:

“The Government has given much thought as to the method that would be employed to take this important matter forward. I am delighted that we will further enhance and protect the rights of disabled persons. A Command Paper is a consultation document which is issued before the publication of a Bill. As with other important Command Papers, there has been consultation and discussion with relevant stakeholders. I am very proud to have led on this matter as Gibraltar’s first Minister for Equality.”