



PRESS RELEASE

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Government to Introduce Disability Act and Building Rules

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar will shortly introduce new disabilities legislation in the form of the Disability Act, modelled on the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

In addition, Government will also be introducing specific legislation in the context of the Building Rules that will require that all new buildings are accessible and take into account the needs of individuals with physical disabilities at the planning stage.

To date, it has been this Government's policy that all Government building projects are accessible and to encourage all other new projects to also be accessible. As from next year, the new building regulations will make it compulsory for all new building projects to be accessible.

With the new legislation in mind the Government, through the Department of Equality, will provide awareness information and training to ensure that everyone is properly informed of their new legislative responsibilities and duties, and what is expected of them in practice.

The Department of Equality will organise a series of information lectures, seminars and workshops called Equality Means Business, which will be organised to specifically support the private sector.

Next week there will be a training session on physical access to buildings which will provide an outline of the requirements of the new legislation as well as advice on changes that can be made to existing buildings. The seminar will provide an overview to those attending to understand the main barriers to access and how to identify solutions to making businesses accessible. Businesses will be advised on how to ensure their customer base includes people with disabilities: if an individual with a disability cannot use facilities or a service, they will stay away and it is likely that their family will do the same.

The training will be delivered by Ian Streets, Managing Director of About Access, a UK company that specialises in accessibility audits. In the UK he has advised on the Disability Discrimination Act, the Equality Act and access to buildings and sites for people with disabilities. Mr Streets is no stranger to Gibraltar and this is the third time that the Department of Equality has engaged him to deliver training in as many years.



This training session goes hand in hand with intense training provided to the public sector officials at different levels throughout the week.

The training seminar on accessibility will take place on Wednesday 30th November from 9am to 1pm at the O'Callaghan Elliott Hotel. This training is expected to be very popular and spaces are limited. Anyone interested in attending should register in advance with the Department of Equality on 200 70112 or by email to: equality@gibraltar.gov.gi

Minister for Equality, the Hon Samantha Sacramento, said: "Inclusive design should now be everyone's business. The Government is about to introduce new building legislation that will make it compulsory for all new builds to provide for individuals with disabilities. Undertaken properly at the planning stage, this should not represent additional costs. Certainly, costs are minimised by having an understanding of the requirements for people with disabilities at the outset: by fully understanding the needs of the end user at the start of the design, their needs will be better met.

"We also encourage business to look at how they meet the needs of individuals with disabilities overall and how inclusive environments break down barriers. This training session will particularly demonstrate to those in the private sector how having business premises that are inclusive and accessible can actually improve their business, and how simple changes can make a huge difference to staff and customers.

"While this is the first in the new series of training and awareness sessions that we are offering to the private sector, the Department of Equality will be offering further information and training sessions on other aspects of disability legislation and policy as part of its Equality Means Business series. The Equality Means Business series aims to fully support and inform both the private sector and the public in respect of changes to come".