



PRESS RELEASE

No: 343/2017

Date: 24th May 2017

Equality Means Business: making the business case for being inclusive

The Ministry of Equality, as part of its Equality Means Business series of lectures, hosted a working breakfast seminar for over 60 attendees this morning to look at why being inclusive makes business sense.

The session was opened by Minister for Equality, Samantha Sacramento MP, who explained that the rationale for the lecture series was to inform the business community of their forthcoming obligations once the Disability Act is introduced so that businesses are aware of their responsibilities towards people with disabilities. The Minister also took questions from the floor.

A presentation was delivered by Paul Hawkins, from British charity Attitude is Everything, who provided case studies and explained how it makes good business sense to engage and provide for people with disabilities and make businesses inclusive.

All attendees were also provided with the guidance booklet on disability language and etiquette that was launched by the Ministry of Equality earlier this week.

The event was organised with the Gibraltar Chamber of Commerce and the Gibraltar Federation of Small Businesses, whose members were invited, and the Government's initiative was positively endorsed by both organisations.

Also speaking at the opening, Julian Byrne, Chair of the GFSB, said that it is important that we be as helpful and accepting of people with disabilities as we can. He said that the GFSB appreciated and endorsed this kind of initiative by the Government to advise on opportunities that can arise from this change. When referring to the new disability legislation he said, "we cannot fear it, we have to embrace change and we have to look at what we can get out of it the best that we can."

Edward MacQuisten, Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce said, "Being inclusive really does make good business sense. Being aware of all potential customers and treating them well speaks volumes about you. Being aware of people with disabilities will make you a better business in terms of looking for new opportunities, not just in providing a service but also as to how your staff perceive you as a better employer, or how your suppliers view you as a business partner. The Chamber welcomes this initiative today, as well as tomorrow's training that is aimed at front line staff and encouraged businesses to attend."



Minister Samantha Sacramento, MP said: “I am absolutely delighted to see how this initiative has been so positively embraced by the business community and the turnout this morning was impressive and encouraging: the level of engagement speaks volumes of us a community. We want to encourage businesses to see how they can meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

“We all have an individual and a shared responsibility to make Gibraltar more inclusive. I am mindful that having a successful business is a concern at the forefront of everybody’s mind in the current Brexit climate, so in addition to supporting business on how to achieve their obligations we are also trying to educate on new business opportunities.

“Through my Ministry for Equality we will continue to provide bespoke training to educate different sectors in our community on disability equality ahead of the introduction of the new legislation and always offer our support.

“I am grateful for the commitment demonstrated by the Chamber and the GFSB and we will continue to work together to achieve the best outcomes for the business community.”