



PRESS RELEASE

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Ministry of Equality Reminds Parents and Volunteers of its Autism Seminar Next Week

The Ministry of Equality would like to remind parents of children and adults with Autism and volunteers of who work with people with Autism of further seminar in its Understanding Autism series being held next week titled 'Adolescence and Puberty: the emotional difficulties experienced during this transition.'

This will be the third seminar under the National Autism Strategy and will focus on the transition of an autistic child into adulthood: the neurotypical experiences of change during adolescence and puberty, sexuality/relationships, body changes, social media influences and strategies in managing this potentially difficult period. This seminar will provide important information that will assist parents and volunteers during this period. As adults we can all recall when our bodies were changing, our friends were changing, and all of the rules around us were changing. People who are on the autism spectrum rely on consistency and predictable social environments. Supporting them during adolescence requires an understanding of autism and knowledge about strategies that will give them the skills they will need to thrive and reach their potential. Without the right support, adolescents on the autism spectrum may retreat into themselves during this period.

The speaker will be Ms Linda Woodcock, she has previously delivered two seminars as part of the National Autism Strategy in March and September earlier this year. Linda is a Director at AT-Autism, a training and consultancy company in the UK. She has a BA (Hons) Applied Social Sciences and PG Diploma in adults with Intellectual disability and severe and complex needs. She has been instrumental in devising and delivering innovative person-centred training courses for parents and families in understanding autism and managing challenging behaviours, she also delivers training to professionals within health, social care, education and criminal justice systems. Linda is the co-author of the book 'Managing Family Meltdown, the low arousal approach and autism' and numerous journal articles. Ms Woodcock also manages a person centred service for her adult son who has autism and severe learning disabilities needs.

The Ministry of Equality has organised for the same session to be offered in the morning and afternoon to facilitate attendance for parents and volunteers.



Participation is free and interest expressed to date is high, however, there are still some available places remaining. Anyone wishing to attend should register with the Ministry of Equality via email equality@gibraltar.gov.gi or on telephone 200 70112.

The Minister for Equality, the Hon Samantha Sacramento MP, said: “The upcoming seminar focusses on a subject which has been widely requested by parents and volunteers who have attended previous sessions and is also a subject which forms part of our National Autism Strategy programme. I am delighted with the response to all our seminars so far and the eagerness to learn more from those who have attended previous sessions, this represents a strong desire, not only to learn, but also to provide the best for their children in the case of parents and to give the best care to their service users in the case of volunteers.”