

## PRESS RELEASE

No: 235/2018

Date: 24th April 2018

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### **Ministry of Equality holds further training on Learning Disabilities and Autism**

The Ministry of Equality organised, for the third time due to popular demand, a repeat of the seminar titled “Learning Disabilities and Autism”.

This training is specific for volunteers of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and community groups and leaders of sporting and cultural groups. The objective of this introductory training is to learn and understand more about Autism, Learning Disabilities and Mental Health in order for the volunteer groups to be better prepared when working with their members who have learning disabilities and for those which currently do not have members with disabilities also wanted to learn so as to be ready to expand their membership.

The training was once again delivered by Colin Smith, who had previously delivered this particular training on the 11th November 2017 and on the 20th January 2018. Colin Smith, RMNH, DipMHS, BSc (Hons) is an Independent Consultant within Learning Disabilities, Autism, Mental Health and Positive Behaviour. Colin is the Managing Director, Trainer and Speaker at Care and Support (UK).

The training provided focused on the following points:

- Understanding learning disabilities, autism and mental health
- Causes associated with these diagnoses
- Understanding links between certain conditions
- Understanding behaviour within these conditions
- Positive approaches to working with people with learning disabilities.

Any volunteers or members of community groups interested in attending future sessions should register their interest with the Ministry of Equality at [equality@gibraltar.gov.gi](mailto:equality@gibraltar.gov.gi)

The Minister for Equality, The Hon Samantha Sacramento, MP said: “The enthusiasm with which the groups and their volunteers have embraced the availability of this training has been beyond our

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expectation. I cannot but overstate the importance of the work that these leaders and volunteers provide and the commitment that they continuously demonstrate and I am encouraged that they also wish to learn about working with people with disabilities so as to be able to provide for them better and integrate them into their respective groups. The discussion workshops highlighted their desire to learn and improve their work with their members. These seminars have also acted as a networking forum for those in attendance, it gave them the opportunity to exchange experiences and brainstorm ideas. Approximately 80 volunteers have attended these seminars and have shown their commitment to participate in future training and awareness seminars. With this in mind the Ministry of Equality has been, for the last months, planning Tier 2 of the programme, which will delve more into each of the topics.

“The work undertaken by NGOs should not go unrecognised and I would therefore like to thank both leaders and volunteers for giving up more of their free time, particularly on Saturday mornings, in order to attend these seminars and form part of our holistic approach to making our community more inclusive. I would also like to acknowledge the amount of work that goes into the planning and coordination of these seminars and therefore thank my Ministry for Equality for organising them.”