



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 750/2018

Date: 3rd December 2018

### **New Initiative by the Ministry of Equality: Disability Information Card**

Today, 3rd December is International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD). This day aims to promote an understanding of disability issues, mobilise support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to raise awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of social, economic, political and cultural life.

Marking it this year, the Ministry for Equality are looking at a unique disability initiative for improving the lives of people with disabilities particularly those with hidden disabilities by way of issuing a Gibraltar Disability Information Card.

Many people live with learning disabilities and/or “hidden disabilities” - conditions such as autistic spectrum disorders or sensory disorders - which are not immediately apparent to the outside observer.

The main purpose of this card is to clarify any misunderstanding which may arise with first responders because of the person’s disability. The Disability Information Card is neither a medical alert card nor an allergy alert card. It also does not confer any legal rights to the cardholder and it will not offer holders anything that they are not entitled to.

The availability of this card could be a useful communication tool and will be of particular importance in instances of an emergency or one in which the person may feel threatened or unsafe.

Other additional benefits in having this card are:

- To boost the confidence of people with disabilities going to places.
- Provide some peace of mind for parents/guardians.
- Service providers will be able to note the specific requirements of its clients.
- Card may contain information that could be helpful in an emergency situation such as names and contact details of 2 persons contactable 24/7.
- Enable positive contact with authorities.

Ministry of Housing and Equality

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- Possibly reduce potential number of altercations.

A booklet, which provides information on aspects of the Disability Information Card, will be made available and we would advise people read this beforehand if they are considering applying.

The Ministry of Equality is in the process of consulting with the key stake holders in order to finalise this initiative.

Minister for Equality, the Hon Samantha Sacramento, MP said *“This card will be beneficial to most people with disabilities but most of all for people with hidden disabilities. The Disability Information Card may act as a tool to assist communication and to safely and discreetly disclose disability traits and specific requirement of the card owner. All of this will promote heightened communication, clearer interaction and inclusion.”*