

Why Guernsey businesses need not fear a disability law



1. When the Disability and Inclusion Strategy is debated in November, the States will only be deciding whether to **start** work on disability equality legislation. The process will take at least two years and there will be a further vote before implementation.
2. Small and large businesses will be involved in the development of the law. As will disabled islanders and their families.
3. Guernsey will start from scratch. Our legislation will **not** be a duplicate of the UK's - we will learn from others' mistakes. It will be based on what has worked well for different countries around the world – we've already done the research.
4. Our legislation will be simple and right for Guernsey. That's important for disabled islanders as well as businesses. A complex law that no one understands won't be used and won't work.
5. Our law will be firmly based on the principle of 'reasonable adjustment'. That means organisations will only be required to make changes that are proportionate to their size and resources.
6. Reasonable adjustments often don't involve physical alterations to buildings. Many are just simple changes to the way you operate, like adjusting someone's hours. 44% cost less than £50. 95% cost less than £5000.
7. The Disability & Inclusion Strategy recommends that the States create a central fund to help small businesses to cover the cost of reasonable adjustments.

8. Most discrimination is not deliberate. It happens because people aren't aware that the way their business operates may be excluding disabled people. The Strategy includes information, advice and training for businesses.

9. In the past five years, C&E has had thirty sex discrimination complaints, leading to six tribunals. Using the 5:2 ratio that applies in the UK, Guernsey can expect one disability discrimination tribunal every two years.

10. Disabled islanders are loyal customers and employees. In the UK, the government estimates that the annual spending power of disabled people is £80bn. Disabled people have less time off sick and stay in their jobs for longer.

11. 95% of the population of the world live in countries who have already signed up to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Guernsey is in the remaining 5%.

www.disabilityalliance.org.gg
info@disabilityalliance.org.gg or 07781 467316

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