



Scrutiny Management Committee

DISABILITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY

Key Findings from the Disability & Inclusion Strategy Public Hearing

Held on 31st January 2018

Progress was slow between 2013 and early 2018, but the strategy is now gathering some momentum.

During the last States' term the Policy Council failed to provide effective leadership and support regarding the implementation of the Disability & Inclusion strategy.

The Committee for Employment and Social Security (CfESS) since 2016 has provided some leadership and tempo recently to move the strategy forward, specifically with regards to the core strategic objectives: disability discrimination legislation and the Equality & Rights Organisation (ERO).

The recent appointment of the Irish legal academics from the University of Galway, Centre for Disability Law and Policy, who will advise on future legislation, is a positive step. However, the Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) is very mindful that they need to liaise closely with staff who have a detailed knowledge of the local legal landscape. In addition, the timeline for progressing the legislation appears challenging to say the least.

All parties need to be aware that the choice regarding the legislative framework may impact on the cost and timescale associated with its delivery.

Resources will need to be found - both in terms of staff time and financial support - to ensure that this strategy is fully implemented.

It is important that the remit of the ERO is clarified at an early stage and an effective impact analysis is carried out to assess how this body will function once established. The costs of setting up and then running the ERO should not be underestimated going forwards either, notwithstanding how worthwhile the Organisation can be.

The concept of "reasonableness" is essential to ensure that local business can work within the proposed equality and rights framework. Policy makers need to make it extremely clear how "reasonable adjustment" will operate in practice and impact upon business and employers.

The Disability Audit carried out in 2017 in relation to the States of Guernsey's own practices should be acted upon. The SMC will follow this up as part of their ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the strategy.

Having a clear political lead for the strategy is important; plainly, the change to a definite CfESS lead for this strategy does seem to have led to some signs of progress. That progress must now be consolidated. Regular public updates on progress will help to improve transparency and build public confidence in an area where frustrations on slow progress are already apparent.

-ENDS-

Date issued: 15 March 2018
Issued by: Lisa Wonnacott, Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 01481 213076
Email: lisa.wonnacott@gov.gg