

Media Release

Date: Tuesday 29 January 2018

New initiatives to be delivered through grant-funding scheme

The Committee *for* Employment & Social Security is pleased to announce three new educational initiatives relating to equality, inclusion and accessibility that will be delivered through its grant-funding scheme.

The scheme, launched in November 2018, invited charities, businesses and individuals to apply for grants to deliver training or awareness-raising on up to four themes: Reasonable adjustment; What does disability mean?; Human rights & equality in Guernsey; and Discrimination in Guernsey.

The Committee has a duty under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and other international Conventions, to raise awareness of human rights, combat myths and stereotypes about disability, and promote respect, dignity and inclusion. It felt that by commissioning training, instead of delivering it directly, it would be able to reach a wider range of audiences with more useful and effective information.

The Committee supported a bid by the Guernsey Society for Physically Disabled People to develop awareness-raising videos related to disability and reasonable adjustment, primarily for use on social media. Once developed, the Centre will make the materials available for future awareness raising campaigns and training.

Rob Harnish, Manager- Ron Short Centre said:

“The Guernsey Society for Physically Disabled People is thrilled that the States of Guernsey have supported a collaboration between The Ron Short Centre and The Potting Shed to help raise awareness and improve understanding of issues surrounding disability. We are planning to launch several short animations on youtube and facebook. We’d like to tell you more, but it would spoil the surprise. So look out for the first one in March!”

The Committee supported a bid from Walkers to provide short seminars to businesses on the four themes. These training sessions will be targeted principally at employers. The first three sessions will take place from March to June with the final session on Discrimination to be scheduled in the Autumn.. Further details of each of the sessions will be advertised soon..

Sarah Ash, Senior Counsel at Walkers said:

"I am delighted that our Employment team at Walkers has been successful in all four of our applications to run Employer focused training sessions for each of the awareness raising topics that the States of Guernsey has identified. As discrimination law extends in Guernsey to include disability, and the introduction of further protected characteristics will also be considered in the Autumn, it is going to be imperative that Employers are informed and prepared for what these changes will mean for their businesses. We are looking forward to delivering practical and interactive sessions for Employers to help them navigate the changes ahead effectively, without disruption to their businesses and in the most positive and constructive way for their employees."

The Committee also agreed to support a bid from a coalition of 13 charities organised through the Equality Working Group, for a six month program of online and face-to-face training and resource development, culminating in a major conference in early summer. The Committee felt that the combined bid offered the opportunity for significantly greater impact and a broader reach than individual bids.

Alan Brown, Chair of the Equality working Group said:

"The Equality Working Group are delighted to have the opportunity to collaborate with the Committee for Employment and Social Security in designing a series of raising awareness and changing attitudes events. We recognise that this is just the start of a very important conversation that we hope will touch every individual in the Guernsey community."

Deputy Michelle Le Clerc, President of the Committee *for* Employment & Social Security, said:

"Equality legislation will be an important step forward for Guernsey, and we want our community to understand what it means and to feel prepared for it. I am especially keen to make sure that small businesses and employers are supported and don't feel intimidated by the change. I'm delighted that these projects will allow us to reach a much wider audience, including employers and businesses of all shapes and sizes, with education about non-discrimination, human rights, and reasonable adjustments. I believe it will help to give people confidence that the changes that are coming are manageable, affordable, and positive for business; and it will get all of us thinking about what it means to treat everybody with dignity, inclusion and respect."

The Committee is still to finalise the details of other awareness raising applications. Details on these other initiatives will follow in due course.

Ends

Notes to Media

Please contact gill.evans@gov.gg for further info.