

Equality and Diversity Newsletter Summer 2010

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Opening Comment



In this newsletter we look at disability awareness with a focus on autism. Look at the woman on the left. She has autism. Could you tell from looking at her? What do you know about autism? What 'reasonable adjustments' could we make if she started working for the council? What would support for her and her colleagues look like?

There are three linked elements of autism which show as an impairment in the ability to:

- Interact socially
- Communicate (verbal and non-verbal)
- Think and behave flexibly – lack of imagination which may show as restricted, obsessional or repetitive behaviour

What could YOU do to support her?

Law updates

The Autism Act of 2009 has recently passed through Parliament and in March 2010 the Government produced the 'Strategy for adults with autism in England (2010)'. New responsibilities are being placed on public bodies to improve services and employment opportunities. Read the whole document [here](#).

The Equality Act 2010 has also just passed through Parliament and brings some changes, particularly with respect to disability. The new reactive elements (prevention of discrimination etc) come into force October this year. The new proactive elements (public authority duties) come into force April 2011. For more information and a detailed timeline click on the scales



Equalities and the Council

Hampshire County Council has for some time adopted the ‘social’ model of disability. This model takes the view that disability is caused by the barriers that exist within society and the way society is organised, which discriminates against people with impairments and excludes them from involvement and participation.

Medical Model	v	Social Model
What’s medically wrong with the individual?		What’s wrong with society and the built environment?
How can we make the individual ‘better’?		How can we remove barriers in society and the environment?
Need to ‘look after’ the individual = dependence		Individual can function in society = independence

- A person has an impairment, e.g. mobility impairment, visual impairment etc.
- People with impairments are disabled by barriers in society and the built environment.
- So a person with an impairment is a ‘disabled person’ – a person disabled by society (not a ‘person with a disability’)

Some disabled people do prefer the term ‘person with a disability’, often because emphasis is first on the person rather than the disability. If that is the case then you should respect their wishes and that is the term you should use - for that individual.

Useful links

For Hampshire County Council’s disability information – click [here](#)

The Hampshire coalition of disabled people’s website has lots of useful information and you can reach it [here](#)

Information about dyslexia in the workplace can be found [here](#)

Quote

“The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life...the children; those who are in the twilight of life ...the elderly; and those who are in the shadow of life...the sick ...the needy...and the disabled”

Hubert H Humphrey

