



## PRESS RELEASE

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### World Autism Day 2017 – Launch of Further Inclusive Cinema Screenings

The Minister for Equality, the Hon Samantha Sacramento MP is pleased to announce a further partnership between the Ministry of Equality and Leisure Cinemas. Inclusive Cinema Screenings will be launched on 2 April 2017 to commemorate World Autism Day and, will thereafter be available at noon on the first Sunday of every month.

This new initiative commences with the screening of the new film *Beauty and the Beast* (PG Cert) on Sunday 2 April. The second sensory screening will be held on Sunday 7 May with the showing of 'A Dogs Purpose' (PG Cert). Further details may be obtained by contacting Leisure Cinema on 200722725 or 20041933 or on [www.leisurecinemas.com](http://www.leisurecinemas.com)

Inclusive Cinema Screenings are screenings to which a number of adjustments are introduced to reduce over-stimulation and thereby create a welcoming place for people with autism and dementia to enjoy films with their families, friends and carers. Lights are left low, sound is turned down, there are no trailers or advertisements unless embedded in the film and there is freedom to move around and sit wherever individuals like.

Leisure Cinemas will make available, at no charge, a seat for the accompanying adult of the person with autism on the basis that the accompanying person is able to provide appropriate assistance.

The Minister for Equality, the Hon Samantha Sacramento MP said, "Being inclusive of people with disabilities is not just about making facilities accessible to individuals with physical disabilities or limited mobility, it is also about welcoming those with sensory or learning disabilities.

'The introduction of this scheme by Leisure Cinemas is one of the ways a cinema can make reasonable adjustments for disabled guests. For people on the autism spectrum, it is important to allow them to be in a comfortable, low-stress environment where they can simply be themselves. Sensory screenings act as a judgment-free zone where people with autism are allowed to move around, make noise and act in ways that could otherwise be regarded as disruptive. Sensory-sensitive screenings can, because of their relaxed environment, benefit more than just people with autism. Relaxed screenings can also be beneficial to individuals with learning disabilities, movement disorders, young children and their families, as well as those with neurological conditions like Tourette

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syndrome and those in the early stages of dementia.'

The Minister concluded by adding that the Ministry of Equality was very grateful for the continued commitment by Leisure Cinemas to a community inclusive of people with disabilities and was eager to see other organisations in the private sector introducing initiatives which also promote inclusion.

Odette Benatar, Director of Leisure Cinemas said "This initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to bringing the Cinema experience to the whole of our community. I sincerely hope it proves successful in providing enjoyment to all."