



PRESS RELEASE

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Ministry for Equality Delivers Awareness Training on Learning Disabilities to Voluntary Organisations and NGOs

The Ministry for Equality recently delivered a new training session that is focused for NGOs and the voluntary sector who work with, or would like to welcome, people with learning disabilities to their organisation. The aim of this new training programme is to promote the participation of and integration of individuals with learning disabilities through a better understanding of the subject matter by leaders and organisers.

There was a high turnout at the seminar, titled “Introduction to Learning Disabilities and Autism; Good Practices and Strategies” which offered volunteers an introduction to the general principles of learning disabilities and provided key information thereby assisting the vital work they do with individuals with learning disabilities in their respective organisations.

The seminar was focused on 5 key points:

- Understanding learning disabilities, autism and mental health
- Causes associated with these diagnoses
- Understanding links between certain conditions
- Understanding behaviour within these conditions
- Positive approaches to working with people with learning disabilities

The seminar was fully subscribed, with over 30 volunteers. The NGOs represented were Special Olympics Gibraltar, Gibraltar Girl Guides Association, Gibraltar Scouts and Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Gibraltar.

The feedback from those who attended the seminar was extremely positive with many volunteers expressing a desire to attend further follow up training to build upon what they had learnt. Further training which will provide a higher level of understanding is being commissioned and a follow up seminar will be provided early in the new year.

In the meantime, a repeat of the introductory seminar will be offered to other volunteers interested in attending and will take place in mid-January. Attendance is limited to 30 places and registration with the Ministry for Equality is required in advance.

Ministry of Housing and Equality

HM Government of Gibraltar • 14 Governor’s Parade • Gibraltar GX11 1AA

t +350 20066481 (Centrex 2364) f +350 20042509 (Centrex 2368) e equ&h@gibraltar.gov.gi w gibraltar.gov.gi



The seminar was delivered by Mr Colin Smith who is no stranger to Gibraltar having been engaged by the Ministry for Equality five years ago and has worked with Minister Sacramento on various projects. He has in the past delivered training on learning disabilities to professionals in the public sector organised by the Ministry for Equality. Colin Smith, RMNH, DipMHS, BSc (Hons) an Independent Consultant within Learning Disabilities, Autism, Mental Health and Positive Behaviour. Colin is the Managing Director, Trainer and Speaker at Care and Support (UK).

The Minister for Equality, The Hon Samantha Sacramento, MP said: "I am very encouraged by the positive feedback received for this seminar and the speaker and especially with the high attendance. This shows the dedication that local volunteers of these organisations have not only for their voluntary work but also shows their commitment and their desire to be inclusive of people with learning disabilities. Volunteers who already give up so much of their time, also gave up a Saturday morning to attend this very productive session. I cannot stress the importance of the voluntary work undertaken by the NGOs for our local community and the importance of organisations being inclusive all, both my Ministry of Equality team and I look forward to further interaction with these key community stakeholders in the very near future."