

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-598
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05158/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

13 October 2014

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 30 September regarding the petition from Visualise Training and Consultancy, which calls for compulsory disability awareness training across any organisation providing face to face customer service.

As the petition acknowledges, those who provide services to the public are already under a duty to make reasonable adjustments in how they provide services, to ensure disabled service users are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled users of those services. This duty covers private and public sector service providers.

The law largely leaves it to service providers themselves to find the best way of ensuring they and their staff are able to make reasonable adjustments in the particular context in which they provide services. This may be through training, though may be through other means, depending on the nature of the service.

The Assembly has powers to legislate about equal opportunities in relation to the devolved Welsh public sector, while the Welsh Government has powers under the Equality Act 2010 to place duties on devolved Welsh public authorities which help them to meet the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Act.

The Welsh Government has used the latter power to require devolved Welsh public authorities to make such arrangements as they consider appropriate for promoting knowledge and understanding of the public sector equality duty, and for using any performance assessment procedures they have for identifying and addressing the training needs of their employees in relation to the duty.

Beyond the above provision, at this time the Welsh Government's view is devolved Welsh public authorities should continue to be allowed discretion and flexibility in how they ensure their staff are equipped to comply with equality legislation, which of course covers a number of protected characteristics. We do not consider prescriptive training requirements would be able to take account of the variety of services which are provided by a range of different public authorities, or the ways in which particular services need to be adjusted to make them accessible to disabled users.

Equal opportunities outside the devolved Welsh public sector is not a devolved area.

Regards
Lesley Griffiths

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty