

Julie James AC/AM
Arweinydd y Tŷ a'r Prif Chwip
Leader of the House and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-806
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/00284/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.
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8 March 2018

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 21 February setting out the details of a petition from Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People (Petition P-05-806). The petition calls for all premises in Wales to be awarded an Access Certificate number similar to the Food Hygiene Certificate.

As Minister responsible for equality, I am committed to addressing social barriers to equality and to increasing levels of inclusion so that disabled people have access to the same opportunities as everyone else. I want to see disabled people having equal access to shops, restaurants and other public places, something which most of us take for granted.

While the Equality Act 2010 includes provision that environments and services should be designed to be accessible to all people to the greatest possible extent, it is clear that progress is much slower than I would wish. I understand that, for some smaller shops and businesses in older buildings, it may not be possible to make all of the 'reasonable adjustments' that are ideally required. However, for most it is possible to at least make some changes to make their businesses more welcoming to disabled people.

An inclusive approach with a positive attitude by staff would benefit all customers, not just disabled people, but also people with prams or pushchairs, people with temporary injuries, or heavy bags, or older people who may need some help. Businesses which provide such a service should be recognised and be held up as an exemplar to others.

The proposed scheme therefore seems to have merit and I am not surprised that it has gained a good deal of attention. I am very supportive of the principles behind this proposal and I am keen that the practical issues associated with such a scheme should be explored. For example, who would be responsible for carrying out the assessments, or is it envisaged

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

that businesses would self-assess? Would it be more practical to develop a digital solution so that service users themselves could provide comments or ratings on the accessibility of services? How could such a scheme be monitored and protected from malicious interference?

These are issues that I am confident the Petitions Committee will explore with the petitioners, and I look forward to seeing your conclusions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Julie James AC/AM

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