
Motion on Hidden Disability

- 1** The Chairman of the County Council referred the notice of motion on Hidden Disability (see Appendix) submitted to the County Council on 6 November 2020, to the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, Cllr Amanda Jupp. The motion calls on the Cabinet to officially recognise the Hidden Disability Sunflower Lanyard, to promote what it stands for, to help promote the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower to local businesses and encourage them to formally look at recognising it, to promote County Council offices as Hidden Disability friendly advertising the Sunflower on its buildings and to actively promote and encourage local district and borough councils and town and parish councils to recognise the scheme.
- 2** The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower was launched in 2016 and since then has been adopted by many airports, including Gatwick, by major retailers, small independent stores, by a growing number of visitor attractions and train operators. There are other schemes with a similar objective e.g. Gatwick Airport also uses a JAM card (Just a Minute) which allow those with learning disabilities, autism and communication barriers to tell others they need a little longer and Sussex Police use a Pegasus card for those with disabilities. Businesses and organisations register to join the scheme and members of the scheme are expected to train their staff to identify the Sunflower, to gain a deeper understanding of hidden disabilities and learn how to approach customers with a hidden disability. Training videos are provided once an organisation has purchased a starter pack or spent more than £500 on Hidden Disabilities Sunflower products. Organisations are then asked to make these products freely available to customers.
- 3** The Cabinet Member met Cllr Edwards on 20 November 2020 to discuss the motion. The Executive Director Adults and Health and the Operations Manager, Lifelong Services, were also in attendance.
- 4** Implications for West Sussex County Council are:
 - The Council has a responsibility to ensure all people with disabilities or who are vulnerable receive appropriate support, including those with hidden disabilities.
 - To prioritise a specific campaign or group could undermine the principle that all individuals and vulnerable groups receive fair and equitable support or services.
 - All staff in customer facing roles receive training to ensure they are able to provide appropriate support and help, including those assessing individual social care need. The training provided by the council can be reviewed to ensure issues relating to hidden disabilities are properly understood and taken into account.
 - Any person we are working with can highlight in a way of their choosing their needs and wishes, including through the use of a Hidden Sunflower, so staff would need to be alert to this and understand its purpose.
- 5** Through the discussion, it was noted that the County Council aims to be as inclusive as possible without prioritising any individuals or groups over others. It was explained that there would always be an acknowledgement of the existence of hidden disability whilst ensuring parity to all individual circumstances.

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- 6** The Cabinet Member is supportive of the County Council using training opportunities to ensure staff identify, understand and respond to signs of hidden disability. More broadly the use of Equality Impact Assessments will help the Council understand the needs of individuals and communities when making strategic decisions about the development of services. Hidden disability can be identified for particular attention in such assessments.
 - 7** The Cabinet Member agrees with elements of the motion but cannot support the motion in its entirety for the reasons set out above and therefore, reserves the right to propose an amendment to the motion prior to debate at County Council on 11 December 2020. The response to the motion was published via the Bulletin on 25 November 2020.

Amanda Jupp

Cabinet Member for Adults and Health

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Background papers

None