



Cayman Islands Human Rights Commission

promoting, protecting and preserving human rights

HRC's Statement on Recognising 20 Years of the UK's Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Human Rights Commission ("**the Commission**") joins the world in congratulating the United Kingdom on advancing equal rights and accessibilities for Persons with Disabilities over the past two decades. This Sunday, 8th November, represents 20 years since the enactment of the UK's Disability Discrimination Act (1995), legislation which was introduced to improve persons with disabilities' access to employment, as well as access to the use of goods, facilities and services, both public and private.

Disability legislation in the UK was preceded just a few years earlier by the US and Australia, which instituted the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, and Disability Discrimination Act in 1992 respectively. Since the early 1990s, other countries have followed suit to make it unlawful to discriminate against disabled persons, most notably Turks and Caicos in 1998 (with a 2009 revision), South Africa in 2000, Pakistan in 2002, and the Bahamas and Jamaica in 2014.

On 7th October 2014, the Cayman Islands Government approved the country's first Disability Policy referred to as *The Cayman Islands Disability Policy 2014 – 2033: Ensuring persons with disabilities live with dignity, are respected, and have the opportunity to participate fully in society*. The Honourable Premier of the Cayman Islands, Honourable Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP noted that "the Cayman Islands Disability Policy aims to advance the rights and obligations of Persons with Disabilities through policies, supporting legislation and practices". Premier McLaughlin further reiterated the government's commitment to implementing legislation that will allow Persons with Disabilities to have equal access to quality education, employment opportunities, and the highest standard of health care to ensure their independence and full inclusion in society.

The Cayman Islands should be proud of our first national disability policy and the Honourable Premier's commitment to enacting legislation to protect people with disabilities is to be commended. However, this legislation has been promised by successive governments for many years and as yet a bill has still not been laid before the Legislative Assembly. Whilst this legislation remains outstanding people with disabilities continue to face unnecessary challenges on a daily basis. Currently, nothing prevents a private business from inadvertently discriminating against someone simply because they have a disability, indeed, even to do so deliberately is not currently illegal in Cayman. The Commission supports the Cayman Islands Government's commitment to secure the equal treatment for Persons with Disabilities throughout our islands and urges it to implement legislation to achieve this as a matter of priority.

Ends.