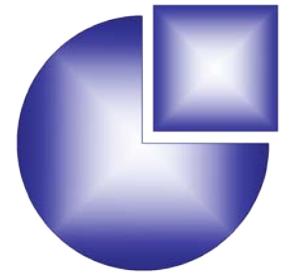


Freenev Williams Limited



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THE DISABILITY AND EQUALITY AGENDA E-BULLETIN – APRIL 2008

For information about how Freenev Williams Ltd can help your organisation achieve the disability and equality agenda please contact

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1. CONCERNS OVER WELFARE PRIVATISATION PLANS

Plans to contract out welfare employment services to private companies could lead to abuse of the system, according to a new report. The news has prompted concerns about how privatisation, an idea that has been embraced by the government and the opposition and has been touted to save about £1 billion a year on the welfare bill, will affect disabled people in the light of welfare reform. For the full story click:

<http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/latest-news2/concerns-over-welfare-privatisation-plans>

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2. BEST PRACTICE EMPLOYERS LOOK BEYOND ABSENCE LEVELS

The government has recently announced plans to tackle Britain's 'sick note' culture. The Employers' Forum on Disability (EFD) has welcomed the Government's efforts to encourage GPs to concentrate on what a patient can do at work, rather than what they can't, with the creation of the 'well note'.

EFD also agrees with the Government that employment is good for people's health and wellbeing. However, employers who adopt best practice and ensure that their line managers are trained to understand disability, are more able to look beyond absence levels and manage attendance in a way that benefits the business and the individual.

A groundbreaking 'Attendance management and disability' guide published by EFD and sponsored by Unum, sets out how line managers should approach attendance management. Read more at:

<http://www.employers-forum.co.uk:80/www/press-and-media/2008/02/absence-levels.html>

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3. LEARNING DISABILITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

"For many adults with a learning disability, the violation of their human rights is seen as a normal part of their everyday lives", states the Joint Committee on Human Rights in a report published earlier this month. Find out more at:

<http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/17938>

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4. LOCAL AUTHORITY WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY PLUMMETS IN 2008

The accessibility of UK local council websites has fallen by almost 50 per cent since last year, new research from the local government Society of IT Management (Socitm) shows.

Just 37 out of the UK's 468 council websites achieved the most basic standard of accessibility in 2008 - level 'A' of the World Wide Web Consortium's web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG 1.0). This compares with 64 achieving level A the previous year; and 62 the year before that, according to the society's annual 'Better Connected' review. For more information click:

<http://www.socitm.gov.uk/socitm/Library/Better+connected+2008.htm>

(This article originally appeared in E-Access Bulletin, the free monthly email newsletter on access to technology by blind and visually impaired people supported by RNIB. To receive a copy each month (there is no charge) send an email to: <mailto:eab-subscribers@headstar.com>)

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5. STIFFER SENTENCES FOR DISABILITY HATE CRIME

The body which advises judges on sentencing decisions has told judges that they should impose stiffer sentences on those who assault disabled people. For further information click:

<http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/latest-news2/stiffer-sentences-for-disability-hate-crime>

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6. NEW WEBSITE HELPS SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DYSLEXIA

A website has been launched which aims to help the three million people with dyslexia in the UK workforce. The website points to new consultancy and training services to help both employers and employees with the condition. To view the site click:

<http://www.re-adjust.co.uk/>

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7. MEN SUFFER MORE WORK-RELATED STRESS

Men are more prone to suffer from work-related stress, but it is less likely to affect their health compared to women, according to research today. For the full story click:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7203088.stm>

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8. HIGH COURT RULING SETS THE STANDARD AND SERVES AS A REMINDER FOR PUBLIC AUTHORITIES OF THEIR DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTIES

A recent ruling in the High Court has gone against a local council for failing to take full account of its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act. The judge ruled that Harrow Council's decision to introduce a policy to provide services to people with

critical needs only was unlawful and had been taken without sufficiently considering the "seriousness and extent of the duties".

This ruling serves as a reminder for public authorities of their obligations under the disability equality duty and shows how seriously it is being taken by the courts. Guidance is available on the ODI website:

www.c-f-1.com/d.aspx?e=ODg4ODMzMDkw&c=2&linkID=664217

and Equality and Human Rights Commission website

www.c-f-1.com/d.aspx?e=ODg4ODMzMDkw&c=2&linkID=664218

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9. JUSTICE SYSTEM FAILS SEX VICTIM

A woman with a learning disability who was sexually assaulted has been denied justice because she was not judged a reliable witness, a report has said. For the full story click:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/7349900.stm>

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10. RECENT CASES

Below are outcomes of three recent cases taken under the Disability Discrimination Act:

Bald teacher loses disabled claim

A retired schoolteacher who claimed he was a victim of disability discrimination because he is bald has lost his claim.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/tayside_and_central/7350523.stm

ME sufferer wins claim for disability discrimination

A worker with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) has won her claim for unfair dismissal, victimisation and disability discrimination.

<http://www.workplacelaw.net/news/display/id/14466>

Tribunal victory for depressed worker

A woman with clinical depression has won her unfair dismissal claim in a tribunal judgment that mental health campaigners hope will act as a reminder to employers of their obligations to staff with mental health problems.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/apr/16/mentalhealth1>

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