

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY THE CONNÉTABLE OF ST. MARTIN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 9th MARCH 2020**

Question

What strategies, if any, are used by the Government of Jersey regarding neurodiversity, both internally with the public sector workforce and externally with Islanders; how are any such strategies factored into the development of Key Performance Indicators and workplace engagement; and are there any plans to introduce initiatives in this area similar to those found in the United Kingdom, such as the U.K. Civil Service Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Network?

Answer

Neurodiversity refers to the different ways the brain can work and interpret information. It highlights that people think about things differently, have different interests and motivations, and are naturally better at some things and poorer at others.

Most people are neurotypical, meaning that the brain functions and processes information in the way society expects. Others are neurodivergent, meaning that the brain functions, learns and processes information differently.¹ These differences can include those labelled with Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder. Neurodiversity has its roots in the social model of disability.²

This notion is encapsulated by the Disability Strategy for Jersey which adheres to the social model of disability. This is in line with Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: *“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”*³ That is to say, what makes someone disabled is not their medical condition, or neurodivergence, but the attitudes and structures of society.

Furthermore, Discrimination law in Jersey also recognises “neurodiversity” as it affects people’s everyday lives: *“A person has the protected characteristic [of disability] if the person has one or more long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which can adversely affect a person’s ability to engage or participate in any activity in respect of which an act of discrimination is prohibited under this Law.”*⁴

Progress on the Disability Strategy for Jersey at a population level, can be measured through Jersey’s Performance Framework on sustainable wellbeing.

People and Corporate Services are currently in the process of recruiting a Diversity and Inclusion consultant. The Disability Inclusion Officer (also in the process of recruitment) will work with them to explore issues relating to diversity in the public sector workforce in terms of disability and neurodiversity.

¹ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/disabled-staff-support/neurodiversity-support>

² <https://www.learningdisabilitytoday.co.uk/a-beginners-guide-to-neurodiversity>

³ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-1-purpose.html>

⁴ <https://www.jerseylaw.je/laws/enacted/Pages/RO-026-2018.aspx>