

Press Release

5 November 2014

Every customer counts: promoting accessible services

“Are you open for business... for everyone?”

That’s the question for Northern Ireland’s business men and women as our new initiative ‘Every Customer Counts’ launches on 4 November.

Frank Fleming of the Equality Commission explains: “Every business has a legal duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled people can access its services, but there are many other reasons why you should stop and consider how accessible your business currently is.



Photo caption: Leigh Nelson, Chair of Newtownards Chamber of Trade, Aaron Jamison, Equality Officer, Ards Borough Council, Mayor of Ards Councillor Philip Smith and Frank Fleming, Equality Commission.

“You can widen your customer base, build customer loyalty and plan ahead for the future. Official population projections suggest that by 2022 – just eight years away – while the population aged under 65 will have grown by 1.5%, the population aged 65 or more will rise by 26%.

“Reasonable adjustments should aim to provide equality in service provision for everyone, with the same level of access, dignity and choice. This doesn’t have to mean massive physical changes. Small changes to the way you work, how you present information and your premises can have a big impact on your customer numbers. Making sure that your staff can provide great customer service to disabled people often makes the biggest difference of all.”

Frank concludes: “The aim of Every Customer Counts is to encourage businesses to do something to improve their service to disabled people. While we are asking people to register commitment to the idea, we are here to help them achieve improvements.”

All the Equality Commission’s advice, documents and useful links are now available online at www.equalityni.org/everycustomercounts