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PRESS RELEASE

Turning a new page in customer service – Libraries NI sign up to ‘Every Customer Counts’ initiative

The Equality Commission has welcomed Libraries NI as the latest signatory to its ‘Every Customer Counts’ initiative. The initiative was designed to encourage organisations and businesses across Northern Ireland to consider if they can improve the service they offer to clients and customers with a disability.



‘Every Customer Counts’ exists because a significant proportion of our population may not be receiving the same standard of service that those without a disability enjoy every day. In Northern Ireland 21% of the adult population and 5% of children have a disability. ‘Every Customer Counts’ offers a toolkit to assist organisations reduce any visible gap in service experienced by disabled people and identify ways in which they can improve their service.

The Equality Commission's Chief Executive Dr Evelyn Collins CBE and Irene Knox, Chief Executive of Libraries NI formally signing up to the Every Customer Counts initiative

Dr. Evelyn Collins, CBE, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland said: “It is very encouraging that a public sector body such as Libraries NI, with almost 100 branches throughout Northern Ireland, is signing up to our ‘Every Customer Counts’ initiative. We are pleased to have Libraries NI as a signatory and we also acknowledge the work they have already done to make their facilities more accessible to people with a range of disabilities, including sensory and intellectual disabilities as well as physical mobility disabilities.

She continued: “‘Every Customer Counts’ gives organisations and businesses across the public and private sectors the opportunity to really think about how they offer their service to those with a disability. The changes they make can be small and subtle or big and bold but all will ultimately be changes which will improve the service offered to their

disabled clients and customers. We are delighted that an organisation which has so many outlets all over Northern Ireland sees the value of this initiative and we hope many others follow their lead.”

Irene Knox, Chief Executive of Libraries NI said: “I am delighted, on behalf of Libraries NI, to sign up to the ‘Every Customer Counts’ initiative. Public libraries are safe, welcoming and accessible environments where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can enjoy a wide range of high quality services with support and encouragement from our staff, if necessary.

“Our services now include downloadable eBooks, audio books and eMagazines; there is free WiFi available in every library, enabling library members to use their own devices to access information; adaptive software, such as ZoomText and JAWS, is available on public computer terminals in every library and Browsealoud software, which magnifies text, adds text-to-speech and offers spoken and written translations, is being piloted in a number of libraries.

“We recognise, however, that we need continuously to review how we do things to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all our customers, including those with disabilities. Participating in the ‘Every Customer Counts’ initiative is an important means of assisting us in that work.”

Further information on the Every Customer Counts initiative is available online:
www.equalityni.org/EveryCustomerCounts