

Date: 20th February 2018

Deputy R J Renouf
Health & Social Security Scrutiny Panel
Scrutiny Office
States Greffe
Morier House
St Helier
JE1 1DD

Dear Deputy Renouf

Draft Discrimination (Disability) Jersey Regulations

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to meet with the panel to share my views with regard to the following proposed definition around addictions in the above regulation:-

Addiction to alcohol, nicotine or any other substance is not a disability, unless the addiction was originally the result of the administration of medically prescribed drugs or other medical treatment

As a professional working directly with individuals that suffer with the illness of Addiction, I cannot stress enough that inclusion of the above alone will be a huge set back for our society here in Jersey and could potentially have catastrophic effects for those that suffer with this illness together with their families. I must highlight that an alcoholic / Addict does not choose to be dependant on a mood altering substance.

Over recent years, there has been a lot of work carried out within our community to raise the awareness of addiction as an illness and to remove the stereotypical attitudes towards alcoholics and drug addicts. By not including reference to those that suffer with addiction to mood altering substances, the minister is potentially putting a lot of lives of individuals and their families at risk, as excluding this illness is itself discriminating against those that have an illness that maybe many people do not understand.

I am struggling to understand how it is correct to include the provision for medically prescribed drugs but not illegal drugs or alcohol which is legal. The impact of both scenarios is the same where the outcome for many leads to Chemical Dependency, whereby treatment options are sought. Failure to recognise addiction to non prescriptive drugs and alcohol could ultimately deter people from seeking help as there would be a possibility that they might be discriminated against due to them not being protected by the law. This in itself would undo the years of great work carried

out in this sector by both ourselves (Silkworth Charity Group), other voluntary organisations and the statutory Drug & Alcohol Service.

Within the corporate environment here on the island, organisations are seeking guidance on how to manage staff that suffer with this illness and are working towards implementing comprehensive drug and alcohol policies in line with best practice. I once again highlight that this draft law potentially will set this progressive thinking back many years.

In summary, as A professional working in this field with over ten years experience treating people that suffer with this illness, I must ask in the best interests of many people within our community, that this regulation does not exclude the many thousands of people within Jersey that suffer with the illness of chemical dependency to mood altering substances. The impact would be catastrophic and would be felt for many years to come

Thank you once again for allowing me the opportunity to share in person my views on this extremely important and complex matter.

Yours sincerely

Jason Wyse
CEO – Silkworth Charity Group