**Media Release**

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**Islanders invited to attend Guernsey’s first ever digital accessibility drop in**

For the first time, Guernsey will be celebrating Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) **Thursday, 20th May**. Access for All (GDA) is focusing on Digital Accessibility for April May and June. Partnering with members of the Guernsey Disability Association (GDA) they will host a drop-in session at the Digital Greenhouse between 12.30 and 1.30 to showcase the apps and digital accessibility tools they use.

GAAD began a number of years ago, to focus attention on the fact that people with a disability or impairment are being disadvantaged by the digital environment and can find websites and the wider digital world hard to navigate and use effectively. In Guernsey, 13,500 people are affected by disability. Common digital issues include low contrast text, missing text around images and empty links.

Guernsey Disability Association member Michael Ellis, who has a visual impairment, will host this Thursday’s drop-in session and there will be a number of GDA members there alongside him. Michael has a variety of tools to enable him to use his computer and smartphone effectively. These include a magnifier and screen reader on his laptop and a phone app that can read text and use the inbuilt camera to describe the environment around him, identifying colour, people and barcodes. Another app links the user to a remote helper who again uses the phone’s camera to see for the person and relay information via the phone.

Michael Ellis says: “Technology is available to help us use the digital world and I’d like people to come to the Digital Greenhouse so that I can explain face to face how to get the most out it. It’s far easier and more effective to do this in person and people can then try out the technology I’m now familiar with. I’d urge anyone with an impairment to come along. These days, everybody needs to access the digital world for everyday goods and services and so from a social, moral and economic perspective everyone should be able to use it without unnecessary barriers.”

**Notes**

**Access for All**

<https://matter.gg/access/>

Access for All works in partnership with the community to improve accessibility, in its widest context, for islanders and visitors alike. We provide signposting to access resources, facilitate training and presentations. Topics include: physical access, digital accessibility, hidden disabilities, and Customer Service.

Since May 2021 Access for All is under the GDA Partnership team, with We All Matter, Eh?

This quarter Access for All have also partnered with the GTA for the Digital Accessibility course - technology for all and in June will focus on providing more resources and factsheets to the new website in June.

**Note: Disability Needs survey of 2012** (prepared by BMG Research and the University of Nottingham ) <https://www.gov.gg/article/154882/Disability-Needs-Survey>

In 2012, the States conducted a Disability Needs Survey which estimated that there are 4,000 Islanders in Guernsey and Alderney with a long-term condition and who experience **significant difficulty in everyday life**. That's an estimated 6% of the population.

People experiencing significant difficulty are part of an estimated total of just under 14,000 people (21% of the population) in Guernsey and Alderney with a long term condition that affects their day to day life. Potentially anyone with such a condition might experience discrimination, therefore, when developing disability equality legislation, all people with a long-term condition need to be considered.

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**Global Accessibility Awareness Day (#GAAD)**

https://globalaccessibilityawarenessday.org

