



Provincial Grand Lodge & Chapter  
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To: Lodge Secretaries and Chapter Scribes E

**Re: Applicants with Disabilities**

It appears that the website referral system is attracting an increased number of expressions of interest from men with disabilities. Many will be welcomed and initiated. However, sometimes the nature of his disabilities means that a man is not able to participate in Freemasonry or would only be able to participate if his proposed Lodge made significant and unreasonable adjustments. A Lodge or a Province which does not take care in these cases may inadvertently breach disability discrimination law.

The Equality Act requires that Lodges and Provinces do not treat someone differently for a reason related to his disability unless there is an objective justification. An individual will be protected by this requirement at all stages after submitting his expression of interest on the website. If a Lodge or Province is unable to show it had an objective justification for any rejection it could be the subject of a discrimination claim, with reputational and financial consequences. Even if there is no claim the rejected individual may feel that he was wronged by Freemasonry.

If an individual does not appear to be a suitable candidate for initiation because of a disability related reason, the justification for this conclusion should be recorded and kept for at least 9 months from the date the rejection was communicated to him. Unless his participation in Freemasonry would be impossible, the Lodge or Province should consider whether there are any reasonable adjustments that could be made to overcome the barriers to participation caused by the disability. Normally, the individual should also be given the opportunity to consider the barriers identified and asked if he can suggest any reasonable adjustments to facilitate his inclusion.

A sensible Lodge or a Province in these circumstances will involve the individual in a good faith attempt to find a solution before making any decision to reject and will keep a written record of the objective justification for the eventual rejection.

**Please note that this is brief, generic guidance on a complex topic and is not intended to be relied upon as legal advice.**

Yours Sincerely and Fraternally

*Anthony D. Miller*  
Provincial Grand Secretary

*Adrian J. Joyce*  
Provincial Grand Scribe E