

Motion from Councillor MacLeod - Hidden Disabilities

Preamble:

We ask that this Council formally recognises the Hidden Disability Sunflower scheme. Before covid-19 the sunflower lanyards, badges and wristbands could be seen on some train services and national airports as a way of recognising that an individual has a hidden disability, who may find particular situations/environments difficult and stressful, causing them to act differently.

Since Covid-19, in some areas the sunflower has become a recognised symbol of support for those with hidden disabilities, yet in the Lewes District only Sainsbury's and Morrison's have officially recognised it and have actively promoted it. Covid-19 has created a wide range of barriers for those with hidden disabilities and as we come out of national lockdown, they are faced with having to wear face coverings in almost all settings, from public transport to shopping in our local stores and this could be extended further in the months ahead. For those with hidden disabilities this can create several complex issues, they may face stigma when they are not seen to be wearing a face covering despite being exempt due to current government guidance.

What is a hidden disability?

A hidden disability is a disability that may not be immediately obvious, Hidden disabilities do not have physical signs and include learning difficulties, autism, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments. They can also include asthma, COPD, and other lung conditions as well as chronic illnesses such as renal failure, diabetes, and sleep disorders when those diseases significantly impact day-to-day life.

Living with these conditions can make daily life more demanding for many people. They affect each person in different ways and can be painful, exhausting, and isolating. Without visible evidence of the hidden disability, it is frequently difficult for others to acknowledge the challenges faced and as a consequence, sympathy and understanding can often be in short supply.

Summary

We live in a strange new world and for a number of years to come our way of life will be different to what it was 6 months ago. We feel by recognising this symbol and promoting what it means we can make life easier for those who otherwise might face stigma in the years ahead.

Proposed Motion:

We call on the Council:

- To officially recognise the Hidden Disabilities sunflower;
- To actively promote what it stands for and its importance in breaking stigma;
- To help promote Hidden Disabilities sunflower to local businesses and encourage them to formally look at recognising it.

- To promote that the Council offices are Hidden Disability friendly and promote the sunflower on its buildings so people can identify the Council as Hidden Disability friendly.



[Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Website - https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com](https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com))