

## **Disability Laws Strengthened**

On the 7th April 2005, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 received Royal Assent. The Act will make a number of important amendments to the DDA 1995. The amendments will be introduced in December 2005 and more will be introduced in December 2006.

From December 2005 the following came into effect:

- Extend the DDA 1995 to cover, effectively from the point of diagnosis, people with HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis.
- End the requirement that a mental illness must be "clinically well-recognised" before it can be regarded as impairment under the DDA 1995.
- Make third party publishers (e.g. newspapers) liable for publishing discrimination advertisements.
- Amend the way that the DDA 1995 applies to group insurance to clarify the responsibilities of those concerned with its provisions.
- Make it unlawful for private clubs with 25 or more members to treat disabled people less favourably.
- Make it unlawful for local authorities and the Greater London Authority to treat their disabled members less favourably.
- Clarify where liability falls if police officers discriminate under Part 3 of the DDA 1995.

From 4th December 2006 the following came into effect:

- Functions of public authorities not already covered by the DDA 1995 to be brought within its scope.
- Land based public transport vehicles to be brought within scope of Part 3 of the DDA 1995.
- Provide for all rail vehicles to comply with rail vehicle accessibility regulations by 1 January 2020, apply accessibility regulations to refurbishment of rail vehicles and introduce certification and enforcement provisions.

- Subject to consultation, formalise recognition of disabled persons' parking badges issued by other countries.
- Extend the duty of reasonable adjustment, other than in respect of physical features, to those who let or manage rented premises, and to common hold premises.
- Ensure landlords cannot unreasonably withhold consent for a disability-related improvement to certain rented dwelling houses.
- Extend duties of reasonable adjustment to private clubs with 25 or more members.
- Extend duties of reasonable adjustment to local authorities and the Greater London Authority in respect of their disabled members.