

# PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MP CALLS FOR BETTER ACCESS FOR THE DISABLED

Julie Morgan, MP for Cardiff North, has used this year's **Make a Difference Day** to highlight just how difficult it can be for people with disabilities to do everyday things -- in this case, to visit a shopping area. She visited Whitchurch Village with the Cardiff Access Group.

Julie Morgan MP said:

"It is not until you make a conscious effort to look at a subject like this that you realise just how difficult it can be for people with disabilities to do what the rest of us consider to be everyday things. It is important to remember that anything that makes things better for a disabled person will also improve matters for others.

"We looked round the main shopping area in Whitchurch. It is a busy area and is the main non-hypermarket shopping in the area and we know that people come from a long way around to use it. It is important to remember that nothing we saw or report on is aimed at the shopkeepers in the area in a derogatory way. Most of what we found we needed to make a comment about is not their fault. In their own way, shopkeepers do everything that they think they can for people with disabilities.

"There are some things which need to be rectified – some shops cannot be entered at all by anyone in a wheelchair because of a step or steps. And there are often things that cause a dilemma. For example, the benches in the village are positioned at right angles to the main road and stick out into the pavement. This is the ideal positioning for people of all ages and abilities to sit and rest and chat, but it causes an obstacle for people with impaired vision. The same is true of advertising boards on the pavement. These can be helpful to customers, but again are obstacles for people with sight problems.

"I was most disappointed with the quality of some drop-down kerbs. It is what I gather are the newest that we considered most appalling and I am writing to the Council to find out why they passed the work that has been done near Brook Rd.

"The Cardiff Access Group were most helpful in this audit in bringing matters that many of us would never have thought of to my attention. They were particularly impressed with one side of the road that has had most of the problems removed. I know that this was due to the work of former Councillor Sophie Howe -- she fought for new paving in this area and she has shown that all it needs is some people with the will to fight to make matters better for everybody."

Wendy Ashton, Chair of Cardiff Access Group, said:

“We were delighted to give our support to Julie’s initiative for this year’s **Make a Difference Day** and we would like to thank Julie for her ongoing support for disability issues. We feel the best way to gain support for the growing disabled community is to educate everyone. Initiatives like this can only help. During our visit we saw examples of some very good practise which complies with the Disability Discrimination Act and Part M of BS 8300, building regulations. Sadly these practises were not consistent throughout the Whitchurch Village. This we felt was not always the fault of shopkeepers, but mainly some landlords who need to take a second look at their properties. I would also like to respectfully suggest that some planning decisions might be open to question!”

The full report and photographs will be available on Julie Morgan’s web site:  
[www.juliemorgan.org](http://www.juliemorgan.org)

ENDS

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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