

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Monthly Newsletter by Saint Helena Equality and Human Rights Commission

APRIL

On this day in Saint Helena history:

22nd April 1834:

St Helena transferred from The East India Company to His Majesty's Government, for which HMG pays £100,000. The East India Company agrees to administer the island's affairs for a further year in the name of the Crown. The Royal Standard is hoisted at Ladder Hill Fort.

29th April 1946:

The island's first secondary school, the 'Secondary Selective', opens to pupils.

16th April 1983:

The new 600-line automated telephone exchange is commissioned, though only serving half the island. Residents of Blue Hill, Sandy Bay, Levelwood, Longwood and Guinea Grass are to be connected later.



EHRC JOINS AS A MEMBER OF CFNHRI



The Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions is a member-led network of human rights institutions, ombudsmen, and public defenders who protect, promote and advance human rights in their respective countries. Through shared expertise and collaboration they are working to ensure a Commonwealth in which the rights of all our 2.4 billion citizens are respected, protected, and enjoyed.

It is a diverse network with global reach, united by shared values and aspirations. Its members contribute a wealth of expertise across a wide range of human rights issues, sharing this insight and experience with other members and stakeholders.

On Thursday 18th March 2021 the CFNHRI voted unanimously first to alter their mandate to include the Overseas Territories and then, again unanimously to admit the St Helena EHRC as a member, so far the first and only such organisation to achieve this status.

Annina van Neel the acting Chair of the EHRC said

"By providing a united voice on human rights priorities, together we are able to influence the regional and global human rights agenda and learn from our colleagues to develop the access to human rights and best practice on St Helena."

Catherine Turner CEO of the EHRC added "It has taken almost two years to achieve this status as we had to demonstrate we meet the required standards. We are very proud of what we have achieved. It will be fantastic to be part of a wider organization and a great opportunity to get St Helena onto the world stage in a human rights setting."

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY



World Autism Awareness Day aims to increase people's awareness about people, especially children, with autism. The day often features educational events for teachers, health care workers, and parents, as well as exhibitions showcasing work created by children with autism.

Autism is a developmental disability that remains with a person for his or her whole life. This condition affects the brain's functions. The first signs usually appear before a child is three years old. People with autism often:

- Find social interaction difficult.
- Have problems with verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Demonstrate restrictive and repetitive behavior.
- Have a limited set of interests and activities.

Autism affects girls and boys of all races and in all geographic regions and has a large impact on children, their families, communities, and societies. The prevalence is currently rising in many countries around the world. Caring for and educating children and young people with this condition places challenges on health care, education and training programs.

On November 1, 2007, the United Nations (UN) called for one day each year to be designated as World Autism Day. On December 18, 2007, the UN General Assembly designated April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day. It was first observed in 2008.

The theme of World Autism Awareness Day 2021 is "Inclusion in the Workplace: Challenges and opportunities in a Post-Pandemic World".

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and heightened glaring inequalities around the world, especially when it comes to income and wealth distribution, access to health care, protection under the law, and political inclusion. Persons with autism have long faced many of these inequalities, which have only been further exacerbated by the pandemic. It's a problem made worse by long recognized discriminatory hiring practices and workplace environments that present major obstacles for persons with autism; all of which contribute to the unemployment or severe underemployment of a large majority of adults on the autism spectrum.

The pandemic has undoubtedly impacted the efforts of companies to implement these new models, at a time when the international economy is undergoing the worst economic recession since the great depression, with the loss of hundreds of millions of jobs. At the same time, new ways of working, including remote working and the use of new technologies, have created opportunities for employees on the autism spectrum that previously found it difficult to thrive in traditional workplace environments.