ANNEX A

GLOSSARY

**ADHD** (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) relates to learning and behavioural problems which are not caused by any serious underlying physical or mental disorder. It is frequently characterised by difficulty in sustaining attention, impulsive and disruptive behaviour, and excessive activity. Say: a person with ADHD.

**AIDS** (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) is an infectious disease resulting in the loss of the body’s immune system to ward off infections. The disease is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). A positive test for HIV can occur without symptoms of the illnesses that usually develop up to ten years later, including tuberculosis, recurring pneumonia, cancer, recurrent vaginal yeast infections, intestinal ailments, chronic weakness and fever, and profound weight loss. Do not say: AIDS victim. Say: a person living with HIV; a person with AIDS; or a person living with AIDS.

**Autism** is a mental disorder originating in infancy that is characterised by self-centre subjective mental activity, especially when accompanied by withdrawal from reality, inability to socially interact, repetitive behaviour, and language dysfunction. Do not say: autistic. Say: a person with autism.

**Blind** describes a condition in which a person has loss of vision for ordinary life purposes. Visually impaired is the generic term used by some individuals to refer to all degrees of vision loss. Say: a person whose sight is impaired or a person who has low vision.

**Brain injury** describes a condition where there is long-term or temporary disruption in brain function resulting from injury to the brain. Difficulties with cognitive, physical, emotional, and/or social functioning may occur. Do not say: brain damaged. Say: a person with a brain injury.

**Chronic fatigue syndrome** is also called chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome. It describes a serious chronic condition in which individuals experience long periods of fatigue accompanied by physical and cognitive symptoms. Never ever use terms such as: Yuppie Flu; malingering; or hypochondria; as they inappropriately imply personality disorders. Say: a person with chronic fatigue syndrome.

**Congenital disability** describes a disability that has existed since birth but is not necessarily hereditary. The terms birth defect and deformity are inappropriate. Say: a person with a congenital disability.

**Deaf** refers to a profound degree of hearing loss. Hearing impaired or hearing loss are generic terms used by some individuals to indicate any degree of hearing loss—from mild to profound. These terms include people who are hard of hearing and deaf. Hard of hearing refers to a mild to moderate hearing loss that may or may not be corrected with amplification. Say: a person who is deaf or who has a hearing impairment/loss.
Guidance on Prosecuting Cases of Disability Hate Crime

Developmental disability is any mental and/or physical disability usually starting in childhood or teens and continuing indefinitely. It limits one or more major life activities such as self-care, language, learning, mobility, self-direction, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. This includes individuals with mental retardation, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy and other seizure disorders, sensory impairments, congenital disabilities, traumatic injuries, or conditions caused by disease (polio, muscular dystrophy etc). It may also be the result of multiple disabilities. Say: a person with a developmental disability.

Disability is a general term used for a functional limitation. It may refer to a physical, sensory or mental condition. Do not refer to disabled people as: the handicapped; handicapped persons; or being in special need. Impairment details can be used when citing laws and situations, such as access issues.

Disfigurement refers to physical changes caused by such events as burns, trauma, disease, or congenital conditions. Do not use the term ‘victim’. Say: a person with burns.

Downs syndrome describes a chromosome disorder that usually causes a delay in physical, intellectual and language development and which usually results in incomplete mental development. Calling a person a mongol, mongoloid or a Downs child/person is unacceptable. Say: a person with Downs syndrome.

Learning disability describes a permanent condition that affects the way individuals take in, retain and express information. The term is favoured because it emphasises that only certain learning processes are affected. Do not say: slow learner; retarded. Say: a person with a learning disability.

Mental disability generally comprises mental disability, psychiatric disability, learning disability or cognitive impairment, which are acceptable terms. Always precede these terms with: “a person with …”

Non-disabled is the appropriate term for people without disabilities. Normal, healthy (compared to unwell or disabled people), or even the word “whole”, are inappropriate.

Psychiatric disability, psychotic, schizophrenic and other specific terms should be used only in the proper clinical context and should be checked carefully for medical and legal accuracy. Words such as crazy, maniac, lunatic, demented, schizo and psycho are highly offensive and should never be applied to people with mental health problems. Say: a person with psychiatric disabilities, emotional disorders, or mental disorders.

Seizure describes an involuntary muscular contraction, a brief impairment or loss of consciousness resulting from a neurological condition, such as epilepsy or from an acquired brain injury. The term “convulsion” should be used only for seizures involving contraction of the entire body. Do not say: a person has fits; or a person is spastic; or a person is a spastic. Say: a person with epilepsy; or even a person with a seizure disorder.
Small/short stature describes people generally under 4’10” tall. Never refer to dwarfs or midgets, which imply a less than full adult status is society. Dwarfism is an ‘accepted’ medical term, but it should not be used as general terminology. Beware of the (joke) term “vertically challenged”. Say: a person of small (or short) stature.

Speech disorder is a condition in which a person has limited or difficult speech patterns. Never use mute or dumb. Say: a person who has a speech disorder or a person with a speech impairment.

Spinal cord injury describes a condition in which there has been permanent damage to the spinal cord. Quadriplegia denotes substantial or significant loss of function in all four extremities. Paraplegia refers to substantial or significant loss of function in the lower part of the body only. Do not use the term: someone with back pain. Say: a person with paraplegia; a person who is paralysed; or a person with a spinal cord injury.

Stroke is caused by interruption of blood to the brain. Hemiplegia (paralysis on one side) may result. Do not say: a person is a stroke victim. Say: a person is a stroke survivor; or a person who has had a stroke.

Substance dependence refers to patterns of substance use that result in significant impairment in at least three life areas (family, employment, health etc). Substance dependence is generally characterised by impaired control over consumption; preoccupation with the substance; and the denial of impairment in life areas. Substance dependence may include physiological dependence/tolerance withdrawal. Although such terms as: alcoholic and “addict” are medically acceptable, they may be derogatory to some individuals. Say: a person who is substance dependent; or a person who is alcohol dependent.

An individual who has a history of dependence on alcohol and/or drugs and is no longer using alcohol or drugs may identify themselves as “recovering” or as a person in recovery.