

Success for Edinburgh Businesses in the Go Shop Awards

Two Edinburgh businesses have won prizes in a special award scheme to highlight companies that do more to help blind and partially sighted people.

The Go Shop Awards scheme – launched by the Royal National Institute of Blind People Scotland – aims to encourage improvements that make services more accessible.

The Filmhouse cinema and Edinburgh City Private Hire Taxis are among 21 Scottish businesses to receive the award, announced today. All were nominated by service users with sight loss.

Richard Moore, box-office manager of The Filmhouse said: “It is very important to us that we make our venue as accessible as possible to as wide a range of audience as we can. It’s great to get an award like this as it shows we must be making some progress in that direction.”

The person nominating them said:- “The Filmhouse puts on lots of audio-described films and assist me when I want to buy a dvd. A member of staff takes me over and points out the relevant dvds that I have asked for and reads out the information on the cover. In the café, the members of staff will come over and ask me what I want, they will not let me carry plates etc and will bring the food directly to my table.”

Kevin Woodburn, director of Edinburgh City Private Hire Taxi, also acknowledged the importance of catering for customers with sight loss. “There’s no reason not to leave the house,” he said. “We’ll take you where you want to go, we’ll help you get there, and we’ll take you home.”

The person who nominated them emphasised the reliability and helpfulness of the drivers. "They go out of their way to be helpful," she said.

Other winners throughout Scotland include local branches of such household names as Marks & Spencer, Asda and Iceland Foods.

John Legg, director of RNIB Scotland, said: "For people with sight loss, the Go Shop Awards have provided hope that service-providers will listen and are prepared to make changes to the way they work, to make their goods and services more accessible.

"For businesses, it has been an opportunity to learn about the challenges people face in their everyday activities. And this doesn't necessarily have to mean elaborate or expensive changes. Several have commented on how the awards have transformed the way they think about the needs of blind and partially sighted consumers, which was precisely the kind of response we were hoping for.

"We need to work together towards more practical solutions for people living with disabilities."