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Use: Immediate

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Pair win support for life-changing product

A pair of long-time friends aiming to change the lives of people with profound disabilities through their revolutionary new product have won the backing of Wychavon and the local MP.

The Migloo is a unique set of portable changing suites for people with profound and multiple disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, that makes it difficult for them to use traditional disabled toilets. The product was showcased during an event at the Civic Centre in Pershore on Friday (26 January) in front of invited guests and dignitaries.

Pinvin inventor John Robinson came up with the idea after growing increasingly frustrated at the lack of facilities available to those with specialist needs. There are 250,000 people with complex disabilities across the UK but only about 1,000 toilets fitted with equipment like a hoist and adjustable changing bench.

Together with his friend Pershore based John Morgan, he created a company to help achieve their vision of increasing the number of venues, events and festivals which catered for people with complex disabilities.

There are several versions of the Migloo including a lightweight changing unit for individuals that can be easily transported by car and set-up in minutes by a single person. There is also a larger tented version that comes complete with a toilet and a wash basin suitable for use at festivals or events.

The pair's latest innovation, the Naked Migloo, is capable of being installed in any disused space such as offices or empty shops making it ideal for businesses wanting to cater for more of their customers' needs. With a price tag of just £6,000 it is a fraction of the £50,000 to £130,000 cost of installing a permanent facility. Cost is the main reason businesses refuse to install specialist facilities by claiming it is not a 'reasonable adjustment' under the Equality Act.

John Morgan, co-director of Migloo, said: "This isn't about making money. It's about changing lives, giving people back their dignity and allowing people with profound disabilities to enjoy the things we take for granted every day."

Wychavon has been supporting the company over the last six months with specialist advice through the Worcestershire Business Accelerator programme.

The council has also confirmed it will be installing permanent changing facilities for people with profound disabilities in toilets in Evesham, Pershore, Droitwich and Broadway over the next 12 months.

Cllr Emma Stokes, Executive Board Member for Environment on Wychavon District Council, said: "We're proud to support such an innovative company like Migloo and also to lead the way by installing specialist changing facilities in our award-winning public loos. I hope this will inspire more companies and organisations to follow suit."

Nigel Huddleston, MP for Mid-Worcestershire who attended the event, added: “This product has the power to change lives and I will support it any way I can. We do need to look at tightening up the legislation but at a cost of just £6,000 it’s becoming harder for major companies making huge profits to argue against.”

-Ends-

Pictured: Nigel Huddleston MP tests out the Migloo with Cllr Emma Stokes, Wychavon Executive Board Member for Environment, John Morgan, Migloo co-director and John Robinson, Migloo inventor and co-director.

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