



PRESS RELEASE

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Gibraltar's Accessible Beaches

The summer season is now in full swing and our community is enjoying spending time at our various beaches. Since 2012, our beaches have been improved tremendously to also make them accessible to people with disabilities and many facilities have been introduced so that everyone can enjoy the beach just as much. In addition this year, Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, has provided disability awareness training to all beach personnel.

The beach improvements ensure that many people, who physically were unable to enjoy our beaches before are now able to do so with their families. The quality of life of many Gibraltarians has been improved. Needless to say, these improvements also make Gibraltar more accessible as a whole and tourists also make use of the facilities. This has been mentioned in the past, has not gone unnoticed and the UK travel company, Enable Holidays, an award-winning disabled holiday specialist features Gibraltar as one of its accessible destinations. Indeed, when compared to many other beaches throughout Europe, Gibraltar beaches by far offer more facilities than most.

The accessibility features at our beaches include ramp accesses from the road to pergola units which provide direct access to the shore at the beaches via "mobi-mats" (synthetic walkways specially designed for the transit of amphibious chairs on the beach). These can be found at Eastern Beach, Catalan Bay and Western Beach. Furthermore, at Camp Bay, an accessible ramp leads to the shore and another ramp and wider steps are also available at the main swimming pool.

Accessible toilets are available at Catalan Bay, Eastern Beach, Camp Bay, the Bathing Pavilion and Western Beach, with Changing Places also available at Eastern Beach, Camp Bay and the Bathing Pavilion. Changing Places offer the same facilities as Accessible Toilets but also provide extra equipment in the form of overhead hoist systems and height adjustable sized benches and extra space in the room.

The Department of Equality has very recently carried out Disability Language and Etiquette training to members of staff who work for the Department of the Environment at our beaches. Lifeguards, Beach Attendants, Toilet Attendants at all beaches, as well as officers from the Department of Environment were trained. The training was delivered by Jason Belilo, an Equality Officer from the Department of Equality. Jason was certified by Attitude is Everything (a UK



Charity) after successfully completing his training last year. This training will no doubt improve the customer service offered by staff at beaches, especially for those people with disabilities and make it altogether a more enjoyable experience.

Minister for Equality, the Hon. Samantha Sacramento, MP, said: “I am very pleased with the accessible facilities available at Gibraltar’s beaches, the facilities are second to none and we can also offer the beach goer the choice of a number of different accessible beaches. Beach culture is very important to us Gibraltarians and with the improvements we have made, I can say that the beach experience can now be offered to more Gibraltarians and tourists alike and this makes Gibraltar more accessible all round. I would like to thank each and every one who has been involved in making this project a reality and making our beaches some of the most accessible in Europe, we should be very proud of this.”

The Minister for the Environment, the Hon. John Cortes, MP, said: “We are working hard to ensure that our beaches are available for all the community to enjoy and are very proud of what we are achieving. We will continue to look at what further improvements we can introduce.”