



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**  
**MINISTRY OF EQUALITY, SOCIAL SERVICES & THE ELDERLY**  
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GIBRALTAR

## **PRESS RELEASE**

No: 318/2014

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014

### **UN International Day Against Drug Abuse**

Today we join the world over and observe a day designated by the UN to mark drug abuse.

A day such as this provides an opportunity to highlight the problem and raise awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and an update on progress and services.

Drug abuse affects the person, their family and society. It predisposes people to various risks, their health, educational outcomes or employment and in many cases it leads to criminal offending. That is why it is important that measures and policies are in place to help eradicate this problem.

The theme set by the United Nations this year is "A message of hope; drug use disorders are preventable and treatable". This is in keeping with the Government priorities this year. While Government continues to work on an overall strategy, we are focusing on ensuring that the essential components and services are in place to make drug rehabilitation treatment available to all who may require it.

A lot of work has been undertaken in improving current resources and the services provided in relation to drug rehabilitation. There has been considerable investment in the fabric of Bruce's Farm, and more importantly the operation of the facility has improved, particularly since substantial training has now been provided to current care staff. Furthermore, we are working with other organisations in the UK with proven records of good practice to enhance the services that we deliver. The aim of the Government is to provide a welcoming and comfortable therapeutic environment at Bruce's Farm so as to make it more conducive to successful recovery.

Education and prevention programmes are just as essential as the treatment of drug addiction. The Government, through the Care Agency, in conjunction with the Royal Gibraltar Police have developed a robust programme for the youth working with local schools and holding regular lectures on the risks of drugs, as well as arranging various sporting events to raise awareness. We are particularly grateful for the involvement by recovering addicts in this programme so that children can hear first-

hand of the dangers of drugs. This successful programme has already reached out to thousands of children.

Government is already proving its commitment to strengthen resources to deal with this problem. As an example, the Care Agency now has a counsellor dedicated solely to community outreach work. This is an entirely new initiative which will enable the Care Agency to include a formal programme of drugs counselling in prison which is a historic gap which needed to be filled. This is important given that drug abuse is related to criminality, not only do we wish to help the person and break the abuse cycle but also help the cycle of reoffending.

"This Government is determined to make a difference to those who suffer from drug addiction, we want to ensure that we can offer hope and real help to people who are affected by this disease. A lot of work still needs to be done but the changes are already apparent and are proving to be very effective. We have prioritised providing help to addicts and support for their families. We are also working hard on preventative measures and awareness campaigns, particularly with young people. Together with a committed and dedicated team from the RGP, the Care Agency are working closely to engage the youth through various initiatives advising them on the real dangers of drugs and to empower them to reject drugs. It is delivered to children who are at a crucial point in their lives so it is important that we try as hard as we can to guide them down the right path. Working with the community is important and the support network provided by organisations such as Narcotics Anonymous and Families Anonymous is invaluable, I am very grateful for all who give of their time to help. We now look forward to also working together with 'Stay Clean' a band new charity that has just been established. We must all aim to live in a society that is free from drugs and the problems associated with it." Said Samantha Sacramento, Minister for Equality Social Services and the Elderly, with responsibility for drug rehabilitation.