

PRESS RELEASE

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Inclusive Playgrounds for an Inclusive Society

The Ministry of Equality is pleased to announce the success of its programme to ensure that playgrounds fulfil the Government's policy for an inclusive society. An inclusive society is a society for all in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role.

Outdoor play is beneficial to all children. It allows them to learn and interact with their environment, and contributes to children's physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. For children with disabilities the fulfilment of the right to play is often thwarted as a result of both physical barriers and social exclusion.

Inclusive playgrounds promote the social inclusion of children with disabilities by encouraging activities that bring together children with and without disabilities and that also involve their families.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is committed to providing playground equipment that welcomes children and families of different abilities to enjoy the fun and to making playgrounds truly inclusive for all.

The Ministry of Equality has been liaising closely with the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority. The latter are responsible for the installation and maintenance of play parks and now have a dedicated team looking after all playground equipment to ensure that inclusive playground equipment is procured both in new parks and in existing parks that are being refurbished. Examples include:

- The new purpose-built inclusive playground at the Tercentenary Sports Complex Boathouse Activity Centre.
- The ability swing for children who are wheelchair users that was recently installed at Westview Park.

The policy of the Government is that all new projects are accessible; the Department of Equality is also advising the contractors at the new housing developments at Mons Calpe Mews and Beach View Terraces to ensure that the new play parks under construction there are inclusive.

Minister for Equality, the Hon Samantha Sacramento, said: "This is just one example of all the projects that we have embarked on to make Gibraltar more accessible. Inclusive play benefits all children, regardless of ability. It helps children recognise and appreciate both the differences and the similarities between people. It gives children with and without disabilities a chance to play together. Inclusive play gives children with disabilities the opportunity to participate equally and enjoy equal opportunities to flourish."