



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Legal Assistance

The Minister for Justice, the Hon Neil F. Costa MP, at the next sitting of Parliament will lay before it the 40th Annual Report of the Parole Board.

Notable in this report is the mention of the amendment to Schedule 1 of the Legal Aid and Assistance Act by the Legal Assistance (Amendment) Rules 2017. This provided for legal assistance under that Act to be available for proceedings before the Parole Board.

This amendment has meant that, for the first time in Gibraltar, prisoners applying for parole can, should they meet the relevant criteria for assistance, receive free legal representation when the Parole Board considers their case. This ensures that important decisions about prisoners are made fairly and that prisoners who wish to have a legal representative at the hearing have the opportunity to do so.

Minister for Justice, Neil F. Costa MP, said: "It was a great pleasure to introduce the amendments, contained in the Legal Assistance (Amendment) Rules 2017. I am happy to note that, since the date of introduction until today, a total of 16 prisoners have been granted legal assistance for such representation. These are prisoners who felt they would benefit from legal representation before the Board, but may otherwise have been unable to obtain it. This means that now over 50% of parole applications have the benefit of legal representation. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman and all members of the Parole Board for their continued hard work in undertaking this difficult and demanding task for our community's benefit."