



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Bathing at Western Beach**

As is well known, Western Beach consistently had excellent bacterial water quality prior to 2010. Since then, and especially during periods of rainfall in the winter months, there have been erratic episodes associated with sewage discharges from a storm water drain from La Linea which significantly affected the bacterial water quality at this beach. Nevertheless, it was possible to open Western Beach last summer since bathing water quality was acceptable from an EU perspective during this period.

The present EU Bathing Water Directive stipulates the manner in which Bathing Water is categorised as either 'Acceptable Water Quality' or 'Low Water Quality'. After a period of rainfall bathing will only be permitted once sampling results are consistently found to be acceptable under the present Bathing Water Quality Directive.

A protocol to protect public health will once again be implemented during the bathing season as and when required.

The protocol is as follows:

- The sampling regime will be maintained at three times a week, i.e. far in excess of the recommended minimum sampling period stipulated in the Bathing Water Quality Directive.
- Visual and olfactory inspections will be carried out on a daily basis. Any pollution detected will be assessed and, if deemed necessary, the beach will be closed until such time sample results confirm the EU values are met.
- Similarly, when there is deterioration in the bacterial water quality the beach will be closed. This will continue until the authorities are satisfied that bathing water quality meets the "Acceptable water quality" EU value at which time the beach will be reopened.
- As bathing water quality may be influenced strongly by rainfall, the beach will be closed during periods of heavy rain.
- In the above situation, the sampling frequency will be increased to daily until it is ascertained that the EU values are being met at which time the beach will be reopened.



The Bathing water quality sampling results continue to be published on the Environmental Agency Website <http://environmental-agency.gi/index.php/bathing-water/> and in the Gibenviro Smart Phone App.

In addition to the publishing of the results on the web and Gibenviro App, the Government would like to remind the public to observe the notice board at Western Beach where the latest advice on bathing water quality will be displayed. This notice board will be prominently displayed at the official point of entry to the beach. The Bathing Water Quality will be displayed by a three coloured indicators .



Acceptable Water Quality-Bathing permitted at your own risk.



Low Water Quality-Bathing permitted at your own risk.



Bathing prohibited.

Routine bathing water samples are taken on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, since bacteriological analysis of bathing water requires at least 48 hours before the complete results are available. The results published on the Environmental Agency website will, under normal circumstances, illustrate the quality of the bathing water on either the preceding Monday, Wednesday or Friday of any week.