



PRESS RELEASE

No. 416/2017

Date: 28th June 2017

Hugely successful seminar organised by the Ministry for Drugs & Alcohol awareness and rehabilitation services

“Working together for the elimination of drugs”, that was the title of the seminar that was organised today by the Government’s Drugs & Alcohol Awareness and Rehabilitation Services today for the public services in Gibraltar.

The seminar was well attended with over 60 attendees which included the Commissioner of Police, Collector of Customs, Chief Executive of the Care Agency, GHA deputy Clinical Director, Director of Public Health, Chief Executive of the Court Service and the Supreme Court Registrar.

The seminar was opened by the Minister with Responsibility for Drug Rehabilitation, awareness, policy and strategy development Samantha Sacramento MP, just before she delivered her own budget address in Parliament.

The Minister explained that the motivation for the seminar was to explain the role and function of her service to all relevant stakeholders with a view to ensuring that people with addiction problems and their families were supported and referred to the excellent rehabilitation services at Bruce’s Farm or in the community. The Minister explained that everyone in the room had an essential part to play either providing support to people with addiction problems or referring them to the services as well as contributing to the formulation of the Government’s policies and strategies. Finally, she invited attendees to think of people as individuals and human being as opposed to discarding them as addicts when they came into contact with their services.

The keynote speaker Scott Kane is a renowned expert in the field of drugs and mental health, who presented the latest trends and findings on good practice amongst problematic drug users.

The day also served to showcase local drug services and including two very powerful presentations from recovering addicts who talked about their journey from addiction through to long term recovery and how the local drug and alcohol services played a key part in turning their lives around.

Commenting on the seminar Minister Sacramento said “Our Government has a strong political commitment in addressing the issue of drug control within our community.



I am delighted with the excellent success of this morning's seminar and the high level of attendees who were present. The attendees represented a wide cross section of the numerous statutory and public bodies including health, law enforcement, social services, youth services and education, amongst others. The seminar also provided a forum to promote ever stronger partnerships amongst all these stakeholder organisations, an issue which was a recurring theme throughout the event and to which all attendees subscribed to. Government is confident that there exists a wealth of expertise and experience from among those who attended which will be crucial at the time of formulating a strategic response that works for our community. This is particularly relevant given some recent comments from specific, small, self-appointed group within our community casting doubt on the professional ability of those attending to make a positive contribution in effectively addressing the effects of drugs.

The objective of these joint efforts is to safeguard public and individual health and welfare. In this context, education, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, care and the provision of a continuum of measures to reduce the negative consequences of drug abuse should be paramount. In this respect, the Drugs & Alcohol Awareness and Rehabilitation Services have focused much of their efforts over the past year in developing policies and procedures to establish how they interact with all the agencies represented today.

The importance of drug abuse prevention, especially among young people, must remain the primary objective of drug control policy and practice and in that context I announced that the current strategic priority in our business plan is prevention through education of our youth. My officials will be finalising the policy during the summer with a view to implementing a revised strategy at the start of the new school term. I will be working closely with my colleague Dr John Cortes, Minister for Education to see this strand of our strategy through.'