

PRESS RELEASE

No: 44/2017

Date: 26th January 2017

Gibraltar's Bathing Water Quality Continues to Improve

The grading of Gibraltar's bathing waters has improved in recent years, according to the latest data. All bathing waters in Gibraltar are sampled by the Environmental Agency on weekly basis, the samples are analysed by the Public Analyst at the Gibraltar Health Authority. During the period 1976 to 2014 all samples had to comply with the two standards, *Mandatory* and *Guide*. The annual assessment of all the samples taken during the bathing season then confirmed whether the beach met Mandatory or Guide values.

There was very mixed implementation of these standards across Europe, so in 2006 the revised Bathing Water Directive 2006/7/EC (rBWD) came into effect. This Directive brought into effect a simplified procedure with four categories of classification: *Excellent*, *Good*, *Sufficient* and *Poor* for beaches.

The assessment carried out at the end of the 2016 of all our bathing waters demonstrates that the quality of our bathing waters is improving with the well-known exception of Western Beach. Western Beach continues to have an average Poor water quality which can be attributed to the historical problems with sewage from a rainwater outfall in neighbouring Spain.

The following is the 2016 classification of our beaches:-

Beach Name	2013-2016 data	2015-2016 data
Eastern Beach	Excellent	Excellent
Catalan Bay	Good	Excellent
Sandy Bay	Sufficient	Good
Little Bay	Excellent	Excellent
Camp Bay	Excellent	Excellent
Western Beach	Poor	Poor



Except for Western Beach, all of Gibraltar' beaches are now fully compliant with the requirements of the revised Bathing Water Directive, with Catalan Bay and Sandy bay both improving on their status.

Minister for the Environment Dr John Cortes commented, "A great deal has been done behind the scenes over the past few years to improve water quality in beaches. This work has proved successful, and I am absolutely delighted that, with the unfortunate exception of Western Beach, the quality of our bathing water is now better than ever since the monitoring programme began."

The frequency of sampling in Gibraltar is far in excess of the requirements of the Directive and all results are displayed in the Environmental Agency's website or the smartphone free app *Gibenviro*.