



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **GHA and ERS to Become ‘Smoke-Free’**

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, has today published regulations prohibiting smoking, subject to certain exemptions, across all Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA) and Elderly Residential Services (ERS) premises. These regulations published today, supported by a new GHA Policy, will come into effect in October this year. This coincides with ‘Stoptober’, the annual no-smoking campaign by Public Health England.

Smoking is already prohibited in most enclosed public areas in accordance with the Smoke Free Environment Act. The regulations introduced today add most outdoor and unenclosed areas on GHA and ERS premises to the list of places where smoking is prohibited by law.

Smoking is a leading factor in many causes of death and chronic illnesses, including cancer and respiratory and heart diseases. Despite this well-known fact, smoking prevalence has increased in Gibraltar, according to the latest Health and Lifestyle Survey (2015). Importantly, exposure to second hand smoke is also a known health hazard, proven to increase the risk of several serious illnesses and death.

The new regulations aim to promote a healthier and cleaner environment for all patients, visitors, residents and staff of the GHA and ERS and to encourage members of the community to stop smoking.

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, said: “The ban on smoking within GHA and ERS premises is very much a reflection of the GHA’s ethos of promoting healthy lifestyle choices and environmentally-friendly practices. This ban does not intend to impede those who wish to smoke; a decision we entirely respect. The regulations and new policy mean that patients, residents, employees and visitors to ERS and GHA premises will not be subject to second hand smoke when on the premises, even in unenclosed areas.”

Anyone wishing to attend the GHA’s ‘Stop Smoking Clinic’ may book an appointment with the Nurse Practitioner via telephone, on 20007865, or alternatively visit the Green Area at the Primary Care Centre. The clinic provides advice and support to persons trying to quit, with the aim of increasing their chances of quitting for good and enjoying healthier lives.

Further information on the risks of smoking can be found on the Public Health website:  
<http://www.healthygibraltar.org/quit-smoking/>