



PRESS RELEASE

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Pilot 'Alcohol and Substance Misuse' Programme for Royal Gibraltar Police Officers and Staff

Her Majesty's Gibraltar of Government and the Royal Gibraltar Police (RGP) is pleased to note that the RGP will introduce an alcohol and substance misuse policy, which will commence on the first week of December. The policy is a result of close collaboration between the RGP and the Ministry of Health, Care and Justice since 2016. The policy will be introduced, initially, for RGP officers and civilian staff, with the view of this policy being extended to all public services. The programme aims to maintain the integrity of all government departments, agencies, authorities and companies by preventing any alcohol and substance misuse among its employees. The policy also aims to enhance the public service's ability to provide customer focused attention to the public.

The central purpose of the policy is to offer support for individuals who may self-declare their alcohol and/or substance misuse, and encourage individuals who have a substance misuse problem to seek help at an early stage and prior to the request for a sample. Staff members will be afforded the opportunity to disclose any issues or concerns to the Welfare Officer or occupational health advisors in a confidential and supportive environment.

Officers and civilian staff may be required to provide samples for testing in the following circumstances:

- testing with cause (i.e. where there is a reasonable suspicion of alcohol and/or substance misuse);
- pre-employment screening and testing during the probationary period; and
- random screening of members and civilian staff identified by the Commissioner, or his delegate, as being in a vulnerable or safety critical posts.

In cases where a positive result identifies the potential for alcohol or drug misuse, the case will be referred to the Head of the Professional Standards Department. The next steps in each case will be decided on its specific circumstances. The new policy will be underpinned by regulations, which are currently being revised in anticipation of the policy's commencement.

In order to demonstrate the ease and non-intrusiveness of the new testing system, the Minister for Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, Commissioner, Ian McGrail, Assistant Commissioner,

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Richard Mifsud and his Senior Command Team volunteered to be the first group to undergo the test. Commissioner of Police, Ian McGrail stated: “The RGP fully embraces this type of programme; it is very important that public confidence is upheld in all quarters and this demonstrates our willingness to precisely do that in this subject area.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP said that the new policy was a positive development, which should be welcomed, highlighting the importance of offering professional help to individuals who self-declare concerns regarding alcohol and substance misuse. He stated: “One of my very first projects on being appointed Minister for Justice was to start working with the RGP to devise a robust and fair programme, and to establish and provide the necessary professional help to any individuals who may so require. As employers, we have a duty of care towards our community and our staff. Following almost two years of discussions, legal advice and several drafts of the alcohol and substance misuse policy, I am happy that we are ready to proceed. I would like to personally thank Commissioner McGrail and Assistant Commissioner Mifsud for their close collaboration and diligence in delivering this important programme. I also wish to personally thank the Gibraltar Police Authority’s prompt consideration of the policy.”