



PRESS RELEASE

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International Men's Day; Looking at Male Suicide

Chief Minister establishes an Inter-Ministerial Committee

The Minister for Equality, Samantha Sacramento MP, in the context of marking International Men's Day, has asked questions about the high number of male suicides in Gibraltar.

The Minister for Equality, instead of holding an awareness event on this occasion, as was the case on this date last year, has with the objective of prevention, shifted the focus of the subject into looking at the causes of suicide, particularly in men, as well as improving early intervention and support.

Following meetings set up by the Ministry for Equality between stakeholder agencies, a working group has been established in order to co-ordinate knowledge and understanding of suicide and attempted suicide. The group will also look beyond mental health and will consider significant elements which may impact on a person's life to the extent that makes them feel suicidal.

The working group will collaborate to strengthen services and in the process will consult with support groups, individuals and their relatives all of whom will play a vital role in informing this process.

There will also be early intervention with children so as to develop their coping mechanisms as they grow older. The Ministry for Equality has delivered talks on this subject on International Men's Day for a couple of years now.

The Minister for Equality has referred her concern to the Chief Minister who has also established an Inter-Ministerial Committee made up of the Minister for Equality, Minister for Health, the Minister for Public Health, the Minister for Education and the Minister for Youth.

Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "Each person who passes away due to suicide is someone's mother, father, brother, sister or daughter and their death will be devastating. Quite often, it will come as a shock, leaving a deeper sense of loss and making it all the more difficult for family members to recover.



“The reality is that the reasons for suicide are complex and are difficult to establish and the working together of the key stakeholder professionals will enable us to give the solution from a different perspective.

“The truth is that we do not talk about this subject enough, stigma makes it embarrassing or frightening to open up to others. We need to build people’s confidence so that opening up does not feel so overwhelming.

“I am grateful for all the charity groups that provide support, particularly GibSams, who in the relatively short period of time since the charity was established, have engaged very effectively and run significant awareness campaigns.

“While this working group has been triggered by the Minister for Equality as part of her gender equality strategy into issues that affect men, the working group will look at all incidents of suicide and attempted suicides. I thank Minister Sacramento for raising this issue from a different perspective; the aim now is to review all processes and achieve a more joined up and holistic strategy, which we hope will be more effective and will result in the reduction of suicides locally. It is for this reason that I have also set up an Inter-Ministerial committee that I will chair to ensure that all aspects are considered at the highest level.”

Minister for Equality, the Hon Samantha Sacramento, said: “Suicidal thoughts are more frequent than people realise, but the vast majority will not go to take their own life. All suicides are of course concerning and I am particularly concerned that this seems to predominantly affect men. I am grateful to the Ministry for Equality for focusing the minds of all professionals and setting up the working group to look into this matter.”