



PRESS RELEASE

No: 450/2020

Date: 8th July 2020

Gibraltar Beach Accessibility Continues During Social Distancing

HM Government of Gibraltar would like to remind the general public that accessible beach facilities are available in Gibraltar as with previous years.

Introduced in 2015, these accessible beach facilities provide a free service for people with permanent and temporary physical disabilities and allow them to make use of the beach during the summer period with the aid of specialised equipment, such as amphibious chairs and mobile hoists, which provide easy transfer facilities from a standard wheelchair to the beach equipment.

This summer season extra precautions are being taken in order to safeguard users against COVID-19. Beach attendants will wear masks and sanitise their hands and beach equipment before interacting with users.

The accessibility features at the beaches include ramp access from the road to the pergola units which provide direct access to the shore at the beaches via “mobi-mats” (synthetic walkways specially designed for the transit of amphibious chairs on the beach). These can be found at Eastern Beach, Catalan Bay and Western Beach. Furthermore, at Camp Bay, an accessible ramp leads to the shore and the main swimming pool is also accessible via a ramp and wide steps.

Each unit has a pergola that provides a certain element of privacy to carry out transfers, as well as providing a shaded area for users to enjoy. Further to this, the Accessible Service Unit at Eastern Beach provides users with two beach tents that can be loaned out for weekly periods.

Accessible toilets are available at Catalan Bay, Eastern Beach and Western Beach. Changing Place toilets are also available at Eastern Beach and will soon be available at Camp Bay when works to the public toilets there are finished. Planned improvement works started earlier this year for the Camp Bay public toilets and showers inevitably had to be postponed during lockdown. Provisional toilet facilities at Camp Bay are currently available at road level and these also include an accessible toilet.



Changing Place toilets offer the same facilities as accessible toilets, but also provide extra equipment in the form of overhead hoist systems and height adjustable sized benches and extra space in the room to accommodate extra carers or assistants.

The public are reminded to follow the Public Health advice on social gatherings. Try to keep your social distance from other groups and remain in groups of twenty or fewer. If social distancing is not possible because beaches are overcrowded, access may be controlled and time at the beach may be restricted.

Minister for Equality, the Hon. Samantha Sacramento, MP, said: “Going to the beach with friends and family during summer is ingrained in our social calendar. I am proud that Gibraltar has some of the most accessible beaches in Europe. Social distancing due to COVID-19 has made this annual ritual slightly more challenging, but we want to ensure that people with disabilities are included in our beaches this year as much as they are every year. It is important that, despite the social restrictions that affect us all, people with disabilities are also catered for. Fortunately, the varied choice of locations available to people with disabilities that wish to go to the beach will help them and their families to maintain social distancing whilst enjoying this summer at the same time.”

The Minister for the Environment, the Hon. John Cortes, MP, said: “We have worked very hard to ensure that this year in particular, our beach and pool facilities are in a good state and accessible to all. I am delighted at how all our teams have worked hard to deliver this, even through the weeks of lockdown. I am sure that in this way everyone will be able to enjoy our summer months.”

For further information regarding the accessibility features at our beaches, please call 200 71648.