



## **PRESS RELEASE**

No: 410/2018

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018

### **GHA CATARACT SURGERY INITIATIVE**

The Gibraltar Health Authority's Ophthalmic Unit has embarked on a cataract surgery initiative to reduce the waiting lists for surgery. The initiative is run by the Ophthalmic Unit's dedicated staff, which includes nursing staff, hospital optometrists, ophthalmologists, administrative staff, and is supported by some external local optometrists. The surgeon contracted by the GHA for this initiative, is Mr Tariq Saboor, a surgeon conversant in similar initiatives, and with extensive experience in high volume, high efficiency cataract surgery. He is familiar with local health services, having carried out Locum work at the Ophthalmic Unit for over 20 years.

The initiative consists of pre-operative clinics, surgery and post-operative clinics, which take place at the GHA's Ophthalmic Unit. These sessions are carried out after hours, so as not to interfere with the day-to-day running of the Unit. Only four surgical sessions will take place during normal working hours, dedicated for patients who may require support from other GHA staff, or who are having their surgery in the hospital's main theatre, under general anaesthesia.

A total of 173 patients already underwent pre-assessment by the Ophthalmic Unit's nursing staff to plan the surgical schedules and identify each patient's individual requirements. The first surgical session commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Mrs Isabella Crisp, Clinical Lead for the Ophthalmic Unit said: "Demand for cataract surgery is a challenge facing many health organisations worldwide. We are very grateful to have the opportunity to embark on this exercise to improve access to cataract surgery for our patients, and are proud to do so with the expertise of our highly skilled local staff. I would like to thank all staff involved for their work and commitment in planning this initiative to ensure its success".

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, spoke of the initiative: "It is important that we identify any areas across our health services which, at any given time, may require extra support. This is vital in order to take any necessary action to provide our community with health services in a timely and efficient manner. I am very grateful to the staff at the Ophthalmic Unit for their proposed excellent initiative, to which I immediately agreed, to reduce waiting lists with regards to cataract surgery."