



PRESS RELEASE

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Safeguarding and collaboration with British Overseas Territories

On 2nd November 2016, Gibraltar, along with other British Overseas Territories, signed a Memorandum of Understanding entering into a partnership among Overseas Territories to share relevant experiences and best practice to solve child-safeguarding issues. Since then, the members of the Gibraltar Child Protection Committee (CPC) have met on several occasions with the Head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Safeguarding Unit to share examples of best practice.

In October 2017, an Overseas Territories' Safeguarding Conference was held in London with representatives from the Care Agency and the Government Law Offices. They delivered presentations on the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers and the Enforcement of Cross Jurisdiction Orders.

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) in the UK has recently contacted Gibraltar's Head of Children's Services and the Chair of the Child Protection Committee. CAFCASS has asked the CPC, which is a statutory body, to share some of its successes and practices with the rest of the Overseas Territories. As part of this project, CAFCASS is planning a series of webinars for the CPC and the Safeguarding Children's Board members as from July 2018, with the aim to share learning and best practices. Given the level of success at implementing safeguarding strategies under the auspices of the CPC, CAFCASS has asked Gibraltar to lead at the first Webinar. The themes of the webinars will focus on leading transformational change and developing the safeguarding sector.

Chairperson to the Child Protection Committee, Mrs Natalie Tavares, said: "This was a wonderful opportunity for the Child Protection Committee. This statutory body has developed through time

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and is now functioning as an executive body and a separate operational one. This has allowed the CPC to mature and develop effective safeguarding strategies, which has culminated in the request to share our learning and experiences with other Overseas Territories”.

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon Mr Neil F. Costa MP, commented: “One of my very first acts, on having the privilege to be appointed Minister for Care, was to reorganise and restructure the Child Protection Committee. It is only right that Gibraltar shares its learning and best practices with other territories and supports the development of safeguarding processes beyond our shores. Safeguarding children has always been high on the Government’s agenda and is a subject that is very close to my own heart. The fact that Gibraltar has been recognised as a leading territory in this area gives me great personal pride and satisfaction and I am certain that our whole community will join me in thanking all the excellent professionals that comprise the CPC.”