



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

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PRESS RELEASE

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GSD Government did not listen to clinicians

Isobel Ellul-Hammond seems to think that the present Government has assumed the GSD Government's attitude of not listening to clinicians.

Plans for the RNH site were extensively reviewed at a meeting on 4th January this year, less than a month after the election, chaired jointly by the Ministers for Health and for Social Services, bringing together over 20 professionals from different professions and agencies for the first time since the project started.

Among the many decisions taken were a complete redesign of the dementia block and a consolidation of the way the whole site would be operated. The plans for the Mental Health wing had not been approved by the GSD Government and were signed off by the present Minister for Health on 17th February this year, with no political interference whatsoever.

In its Press Release, the GSD sets out a long list of supposed 'achievements', many of which refer to plans that were not effected and strategies that were not implemented. The mental health draft legislation for example had got nowhere and work on this has had to be re-initiated and completely revised as it did not have the approval of the clinicians.

Plans, committees and strategies can just be empty words. The bottom line is that in his first visit to KGV, the new Health Minister Dr John Cortes was shocked by the physical conditions in which some of the most vulnerable people in Gibraltar were living, alleviated only by the magnificent care and dedication provided by the staff. Government therefore had no option but to take immediate remedial action. The Government cannot understand all those grandiose claims from the GSD when they could not even sort out basic living conditions for the patients who were then in KGV.

Planning for the future is very important but the real commitment to carrying out such plans is put in doubt by their failure to deal with the real problems of the present.