



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

Ministry for Equality & Social Services
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THE ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA RESIDENTIAL FACILITY WAS DELAYED BY THE MISTAKES OF THE LAST GOVERNMENT

The Government is pleased to provide an update on the proposed Alzheimer's and Dementia Residential Facility at the old Royal Naval Hospital Site and to contrast its own plans with the shocking way in which the previous administration intended to cram far too many elderly dementia patients into an area much too small to accommodate them. In short, the facility which would have been provided by the previous administration, had the works not been stopped by this Government, would have been substandard.

Shortly after taking office, this Government engaged Mr Bob Wilson from Chaplow Wilson Associates, an independent consultant who specialises in designing Dementia and Alzheimer facilities. Mr Wilson studied the plans that were in already place and prepared a comprehensive report on their deficiencies. His critical conclusion was that the old scheme clearly displayed a shocking philosophy of 'quantity' rather than 'quality'. Given the space available in the RNH site, Mr Wilson believed that the unit could only house a maximum of 52 bed spaces.

In contrast, the last government seemed to have no direction in relation to this project, constantly changing its plans, and regrettably without any clinical input or that of people with appropriate experience in dementia design. It had originally planned for a sixty six bed facility, of which fifty eight beds would be allocated to people with Dementia. The plans were then revised and a mezzanine floor was included to accommodate a total of 88 beds. After first reducing this figure to 80 beds, in April 2011 they then increased the figure to 90 although they again later reduced it to 80 following pressure from the Care Agency. Doubts were expressed by the Care Agency in April 2011 about the size of the residents' rooms, and in particular that it would not be possible to use a standard hoist. The Care Agency was also concerned about the workability of the layout which it felt was compromising the safety of residents and staff. At this stage, the Care Agency was firmly of the opinion that the client did not have the interest of the residents at heart. And, when the question 'who was the client?' was asked, the response was always that 'the instructions came from No.6 Convent Place'.

'In April 2011, the then Government was trying to squeeze 90 beds into a space that specialist designers believe could barely accommodate 50,' said Minister the Hon Samantha Sacramento. 'It is abundantly obvious that no thought whatsoever was being given to the patients' needs, their dignity or to their quality of life.'

As an aside, despite having no agreed design brief, the previous administration estimated a budget of about £6m for the project. Upon taking office it was later discovered that the estimated cost for design would be more than double the original amount. This is hardly the only example of a project of the previous administration which vastly exceeded its estimated cost.

The current government believes that people with Dementia and Alzheimer's, like everyone else, need safety, security and comfort in a pleasant and stimulating environment. However, as a consequence of patients' dependency needs, they have additional requirements, resulting from impaired memory, learning and reasoning processes. They need more space than normal residents of a care home, to allow for easy access for carers and appropriate equipment. They also have particular therapeutic needs. They represent a very vulnerable group and the rest of the society has a genuine responsibility to ensure that the best quality of care is provided in an appropriate environment.

The estimated cost to completion is in the region of £1,200,000 of which over £800,000 goes towards changing the 80 bed internal structure to a 52 bed structure. The rest of the cost goes towards items that were not considered in the previous design such as, a main Kitchen, activity room and specialised activity equipment such as speakers systems and audiovisual equipment in each floor, induction loops for residents with hearing impairments, snoezelen room, hairdressing saloon, a garden and sensory garden which is easily accessible to the residents and many other elements that would make the life of the resident more pleasant experience.

'The final designs will be finalised by mid to late April and the works will start immediately' added Minister Sacramento. 'It is a disgrace that the mistakes of the last government have so significantly delayed the provision of this much-needed facility.'