



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

Ministry for Health & Environment

**Floor 7, Block 1, St. Bernard's Hospital, Harbour Views Road,
Gibraltar**

Telephone: (350) 20072266 Ext. 2011/2012 Fax: (350) 20059942

PRESS RELEASE

No: 146/2013

Date: 6th March 2013

Opposition deprived people of certain therapies when in Government

The Opposition has a cheek to question the evidence supporting positive actions on behalf of the Government when the GSD themselves, when in office, failed to heed or even request, and blatantly ignored, scientific and other technical advice in so many different areas, including the environment and planning.

In health, it was the Opposition when in Government that did away with the Gibraltar Health Authority's Management Board, which included two doctors' representatives and the Specialist in Community Medicine (now Director of Public Health) and replaced it with a body without medical representation. It was the GSD who reduced the frequency of meetings of the Authority and disallowed members, including doctors, from bringing matters onto the agenda.

Under this Government, the Health Authority, chaired by the Minister, has once again made the Director of Public Health a member of its Executive, has increased the intensity of consultation, and is preparing a restructure to increase clinicians' involvement in management. The Minister, as Chairman of the GHA now meets regularly with clinicians, including doctors, nurses and allied professionals, as well as multi-disciplinary teams, and gives the utmost importance to their views and opinions. There are many initiatives on improvements which are now totally clinician-led. Such had not happened in the GHA for years.

The Opposition seems to be accusing the Government of not having had a balanced approach to what they call alternative therapies. They seem to have forgotten that when in Government, they supported a main cancer charity by funding sizeable premises, an initiative that the present Government continues to wholeheartedly support. The reasons why this charity was chosen over so many others in Gibraltar that work so hard and are so deserving have never been sought. It is a worthy venture. The reasons are not relevant. Neither is the blinkered way in which the GSD is choosing to turn on certain therapies. With what end? A vain attempt to discredit the Government for offering opportunities to more people?

The Opposition states in its latest release that it does not wish to deprive people of the therapies in question. The fact is that they DID deprive people of these therapies when they were in Government. They did not support the Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre and not only did they not offer NaPro technology, but they took no steps to introduce IVF, even though this had been offered in the UK NHS, with the NICE Guidelines they now seem to want to live by, for many years. They therefore did nothing at all to help childless couples. And now they pick a fight over a non-issue just because this Government wants to improve what is offered. This is shameful.

Isobel Ellul-Hammond's comments have not upset the Minister for Health, as she suggests. They have disappointed him.