



## HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

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### PRESS RELEASE

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#### **Hospital operation waiting lists in steep decline**

The size of waiting lists in St Bernard's Hospital continues to drop steadily to what is now the lowest in years.

The total numbers in the main specialties have dropped from around 1000 patients awaiting surgery in 2012 and early 2013 to under 400. If plastic surgery, which had a waiting list of over a decade in 2011 is excluded, there are just over 200 patients listed for surgery in the GHA in these specialties.

In addition there are about 150 patients for maxilo-facial surgery, who are to be dealt with in a six-month initiative.

The main areas of improvement are General Surgery, where the drop has been from 301 patients in April 2012 to 48 in November 2014, Gynaecology, from 88 in March 2013 to 40 in November 2014, and Ear Nose & Throat (ENT), dropping from 125 in April 2012 to 23 in November 2014.

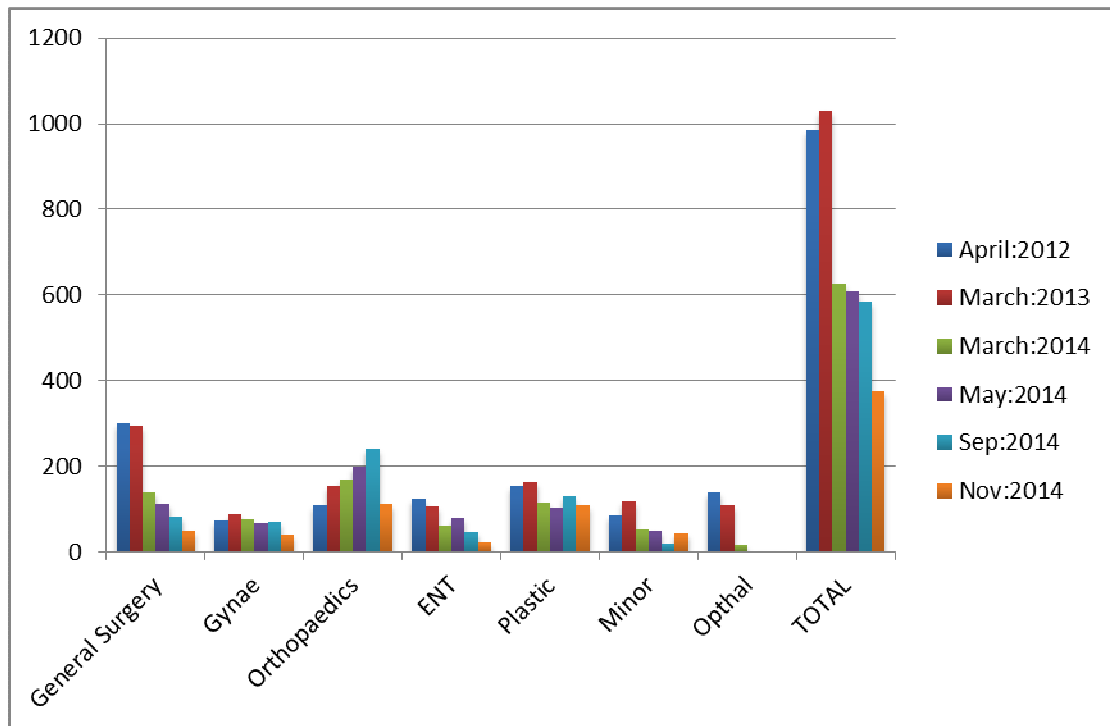
When figures were last announced earlier in the year, Orthopaedics was the greatest challenge, as numbers were still rising, from 108 in April 2012 to 240 in September 2014. The recruitment of the third Orthopaedic Surgeon and increase in activity by the Orthopaedic team has seen this reduced drastically to 112.

The Ophthalmology surgical list remains at zero.

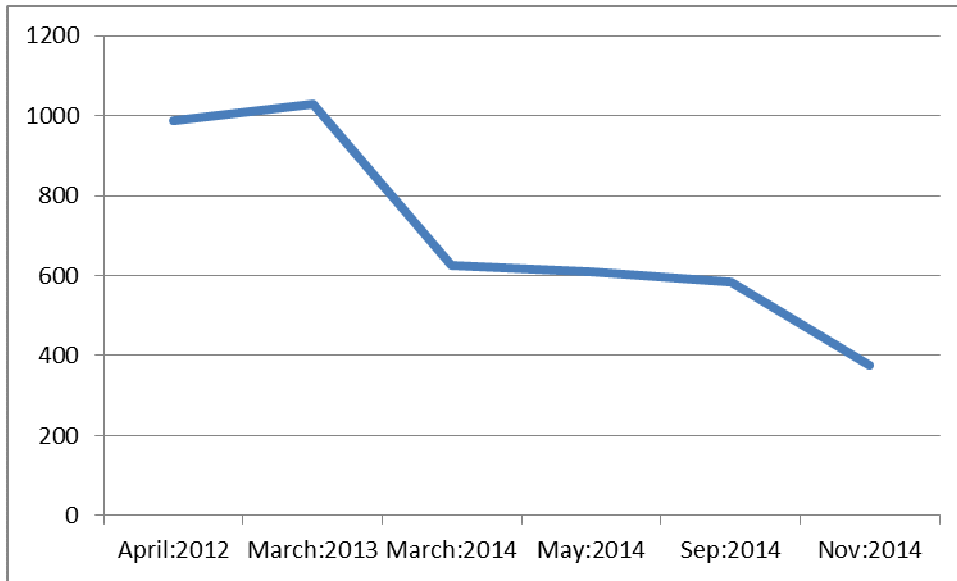
The continued success of the Day Surgery Unit, which in August carried 91.5% of all surgery (well over the UK target) has meant that surgical cancellations have continued to be negligible. In addition, the opening of a third theatre has increased flexibility and capacity, more effective managing of theatre time has ensured that empty slots arising from leave, etc., are utilised by other surgeons, and new state-of-the art equipment has also played an important part. This has also allowed operations being performing in St Bernard's that used to be carried out in the UK.

The remaining challenge is plastic surgery, which is in the process of being tackled.

Commenting on the situation, Minister for Health Dr John Cortes said, “This is an unbelievable achievement in such a short time, after so many years of the same old story. It goes to show that our policy of empowering and encouraging clinicians and other stakeholders, and supporting them, bears fruit. I am incredibly proud of nurses, surgeons and anaesthetists, and the administrative, secretarial and other support staff for working so hard to achieve this. We will continue to work on improving the situation further. It is an honour to be part of an amazing team.”



Total number of patients awaiting surgery by specialty



Total numbers of patients awaiting surgery in listed specialties