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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Opposition is inconsistent in its arguments**

The hypocrisy of the Opposition is second only to the arrogance demonstrated by its spokesperson on Health, Isobel Ellul-Hammond, during her GBC interview when questioning the integrity of citizens who have agreed to give of their time in assisting with Health Service complaints.

Mrs Isobel Ellul-Hammond seems to think that appointees of the present Government are not capable of independent and conscientious thought but persons that the GSD appointed, when in power, are.

The allegations made by Mrs Hammond about one of the appointees is possibly slanderous and the suggestion that these persons, or the individual boards selected by the Ombudsman, will in any way discriminate on political grounds is scandalous. All the appointees are respectable members of the public who will be just and fair in their deliberations.

Mrs Hammond seems to conveniently forget how she was first involved with the GHA. The crass hypocrisy in the GSD view on appointments to boards is clearly demonstrated by the fact that, in 2007, the GSD Health Minister Yvette Delagua dismissed Dr John Cortes from the board of the Health Authority, after 16 years' dedicated service as an independent member, at a time when he was in no way active in politics, and replaced him with Mrs Hammond herself, soon to become a GSD candidate. At the same time, a former GSD appointee to the Board, Edwin Reyes, left the Board and became a GSD Minister and that was a policy making board, not a clinical review panel where politics are irrelevant.

The GSD's attempt at justifying their stance by criticising the parties in Government for inconsistency is also totally flawed. If they held, when in Government, that the system was fair no matter who they appointed, how can they now say it is NOT fair because of who is appointed?

In any case, the Government stated in its first response on the matter that the appointments on this occasion will be for a short period only. They have come about due to the fact that the old panel expired at the end of last year. The Government, as stated in its Manifesto, is not satisfied with the current complaints system and is working on a

review that will involve the office of the Ombudsman more directly. The GSD knows this, not just from the Manifesto, but because Government has reiterated it several times, in Parliament, in response to Opposition questions. It seems once again that the Opposition does not listen to the answers given in Parliament.

Crucially, when in Opposition, the GSLP/Liberals never personally criticized any of the individuals appointed, in sharp contrast to the personal attacks the GSD has made now.

In the meantime, the Government has selected a group of honest citizens of integrity and of a balanced variety of backgrounds and persuasions to keep the current process running. The Government solidly maintains its position when in Opposition and is on track to changing the system to make the process itself totally independent.