



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Housing, Tourism, Equality & Social Services
14 Governor's Parade
Gibraltar

PRESS RELEASE

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Care Agency Safeguards Continuity of Care

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar takes this opportunity to reassure the community that the Care Agency considers continuity of care to service users as an absolute priority, and is taking every possible measure to ensure the same during the handover to new staff.

With this in mind, Minister Sacramento met with the families of service users as stakeholders to explain the current situation regarding the fixed term contracts. At this meeting, families were assured that consistency in care provision would be maintained throughout any staffing changes. Indeed, in December 2014 the service began the process of training new staff, including shadowing opportunities and supervision, to ensure a smooth handover.

The safety and security of service users and staff are paramount. Existing safeguards include training, supervision, mentorship, appraisal, policy and procurement, and environmental adaptations.

The services have commissioned experts to examine how we can continue to improve standards of care. This ongoing process is set to UK specifications and we have established a multi-disciplinary team in order to meet the guideline requirements.

In May 2015, some contracts in the residential service will expire and will not be renewed. No staff members will have their contracts 'terminated'.

With the best interests of service users in mind, the flats at Dr Giraldi home were divided into smaller units. Not only are the flats now more homely and provide residents with increased privacy, the service has also been able to provide one more bedroom as a result.

The capacity and usage of the respite service has been greatly increased over the last few years. Indeed, in December 2011 respite was not available overnight on Mondays, Tuesdays or Wednesdays, and was limited to two service users on Thursdays and

three service users on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. In January 2015, however, the afternoon respite service was available to 38 service users per week and the overnight service was available to 23 service users per week, more than double the December 2011 capacity. The respite service also now offers support to families in their own homes, some of whom are choosing to make use of it on a part time basis.

A transition pathway is also being established to guarantee a smooth transfer from children's services into adult learning disability services.

Minister Samantha Sacramento said, 'Because of the attempts at scare mongering in the recent weeks, I went to speak with the parents of users of the service to explain what was happening and allay any fears they had. They expressed satisfaction with the explanation as well as the current service and the developments and improvement they had seen in the past three years.

It is precisely because it is such an important service that we have had people in place since December to take over those whose contracts will run out in May to ensure that there is continuity for the users of the service.'