

**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**

Ministry for Health, the Environment, Energy and Climate Change
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Gibraltar

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Historic leap for Gibraltar's Mental Health

Ocean Views Mental Health in-patient facility received its first patients over the weekend, when they were transferred, in a carefully planned operation, from the old King George V psychiatric hospital, known for decades as 'KGV'.

After a full renovation of one of the wings of the former Royal Naval Hospital, including the latest furnishings and equipment suitable for the residents, this is the first of three blocks that are due to open on the site during the course of the year, transforming the way health care is provided for many of our citizens. In addition to its careful design from a user perspective, the building incorporates the latest energy efficiency technology and is among the first in Gibraltar to receive an 'A' designation for energy efficiency.

The old KGV made the news in January 2012 following a visit by the newly elected Chief Minister and the Minister for Health when the dilapidated state of the building and the inhumane conditions in which the residents lived were revealed. Immediate improvements were made at the time, and the plans for the new facility were extensively reviewed, improved and signed off.

The new facilities will transform mental health care in Gibraltar.

Approximately one in four of us will experience a mental illness at some point in our lives. When this happens having access to the right treatment and support in a therapeutic, safe and healing environment is vital to help people recover as soon as possible. The stigma attached to the current sub-standard facility at KGV has for years worked against such recovery, despite the best efforts of the professionals.

As a direct result, many people who would benefit greatly from short admissions for assessments or commencement of therapeutic treatment plans opt to avoid contact with Gibraltar's mental health services. This causes unnecessary distress and suffering to them and their families, and unfortunately in some cases leads to crisis presentations and prolonged admissions under a section of the Mental Health Act.

The main aim therefore has been to design a facility that is welcoming, homely, safe and fit for purpose whilst ensuring that it addresses all the needs of our community.

Ocean Views, as the new facility has been named, is a 52-bedded state-of-the-art modern facility designed by the Mental Health multidisciplinary team in partnership with service users, carers and support groups; it has been built specifically with our patients' needs at the centre of all decisions taken.

The treatment philosophy adopted by Ocean Views will reflect a holistic approach, in the diversity of its therapeutic programmes. The new treatment programmes to be introduced are comprehensive and based on a recovery model approach; as many of the patients treated demonstrate difficulties in a variety of life's circumstances. Therefore, the programmes have been designed to comprehensively address factors of emotional well-being, social functioning, educational level, environmental influences, and familial issues in a therapeutic milieu where safety and security are paramount.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo, who has taken a great personal interest in the well-being of mental health residents, stated, "On taking office we were immediately struck by the lack of investment there had been in mental health. The old KGV was the Cinderella of the Health Service – it was worse than anyone might have imagined – so it is an absolute pleasure to see the patients moving into this superb facility.'

Commenting on the move, Minister for Health, Dr John Cortes said, "This is a dream come true for so many of us. We have worked very hard indeed to get this absolutely right, because we owe it to our mental health residents who have had to put up with such poor conditions for so long. The benefits will be not only to them but also to mental health in the wider community as we do away with the stigma of the KGV and improve the way we deliver our programmes." There will be a formal opening ceremony in a few weeks' time once the residents have settled in.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

The site:

Ocean Views Mental health Facility is composed of:

Sky Ward (Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit – PICU)

The PICU is a five bedded Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit located on the 2nd floor. Within this area there are 3 close observation rooms with en suite facilities, 2 seclusion rooms and a Multi-Functional self-contained suite.

The PICU is an area specifically for patients whose mental health condition requires them to be treated in an environment of therapeutic security for a brief

period of time. The unit will provide supportive, individualised care for those whose acute episode of mental illness is resulting in disturbed behaviour that requires a safe specialist environment.

Multi-Functional suite, (MFS)

The MFS is composed of two single rooms sharing communal areas. The purpose of this completely independent suite is to provide a safe and secure environment to care for patients, who for specific reasons are unable to be nursed in the main acute admissions ward. These patients may include children or adolescents, vulnerable adults, mothers and baby or forensic cases.

Horizon Ward (Acute admissions ward)

13 bedded unit (5 single and X4 double rooms).

Dawn Ward (Rehabilitation ward)

Some patients suffering from enduring mental illness can often find returning to the community a very difficult and distressing process. A medium and longer term rehabilitation plan has been developed in order to provide a treatment intervention and care package to assist the patient's re-integration into society. Patients can become de-skilled in carrying out aspects of daily living activities and may require a period of training or retraining to feel more competent in such activities. The new rehabilitation unit will enable and facilitate the process through more comprehensive assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of individualised care packages and care co-ordination to meet patients' needs.

13 bedded unit (4 single, X4 double and x1 high dependency bedroom with full en suite facilities)

Rockside Flats (X2 Male & Female Rehabilitation Flats)

The rehabilitation flats linked to Dawn ward have been designed to assist patients achieve independent living. They are two purpose built residential flats for up to 7 adults suffering from mental illness. They will operate on the basis of single gender occupancy. The flats will offer communal sitting area, kitchen and bathroom. The rehabilitation programme provides individuals with assistance in improving interpersonal and daily living skills, which will lead to living in a less-structured environment.

Flat 1 offers x3 single rooms, Flat 2 offers X2 single and 1 double room (with X2 single beds).

Sunshine Ward (Elderly Mentally Ill (EMI) ward)

The EMI has been designed to cater for 3 specific areas for old age patients. It will offer; 4 assessment beds where patients' mental states can be assessed and diagnosed, 9 beds for longer term patients who fall into the Elderly Mentally

III category, (these are patients who have symptoms of a Dementia type illness and also have residual psychotic symptoms), plus the provision for 1 respite bed. This bed will be only for short term use in order to give respite to carers and families.

14 bedded unit (X7 double rooms)

Reception area

Training/meeting room

4 Clinics (1 Psychology, 2 Psychiatry and 1 Medical)

The facility will be serviced by a Cafeteria positioned in this area offering sheltered employment in the near future. This floor also houses the Staff canteen and changing room area.

The ARC (Activity and Rehabilitation Centre)

This Centre is run by a team of occupational therapy and nursing staff, whose main aims will be the assessment and development of personalised programmes in partnership with the Mental Health Multi-disciplinary team. This service will offer both in- and out-patients support in learning new skills, depending on the patients' specific needs. The ARC will also offer facilities for patients to engage in a variety of events, outings, activities, personalised work or groups covering a wide range of interests e.g. arts & crafts, photography, IT skills, gardening, cooking, pamper groups etc.