



HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of Health, the Environment,
Energy and Climate Change



HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of Tourism, Equality,
Social Services and Housing

PRESS RELEASE

No: 148/2016

Date: 1st April 2016

World Autism Day

Saturday 2nd April is World Autism Day. It is supported by the United Nations and highlights that children and adults who are affected by autism can lead full and meaningful lives.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is proud to support World Autism Day and, from 2nd to 8th April, will celebrate the participation and inclusion of autism by lighting up the Moorish Castle with the Autism Awareness Puzzle logo. This is the most recognized symbol of the autism community worldwide and the puzzle pattern reflects the complexity of the autism spectrum.

Autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong development disability that usually manifests itself during the first three years of life. It affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. While all autistic people share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways and they will have different abilities.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is committed to promoting social inclusion. The Government continues to invest in autism support and improving existing services.

As part of its ongoing work in developing life planning for people with disabilities, the Department of Equality together with the GHA, Department of Education and the Care Agency work closely and have developed a coordinated approach to autism support policies, practices and services, and programmes.

Minister for Equality, the Hon Samantha Sacramento, said: "This Government has made considerable progress in understanding the needs of autistic individuals and there is a continued desire and commitment to continue to develop this understanding and improve the services that we deliver to the autistic community. Consultation with stakeholders is key, and I am grateful to the Autism Support Group, other support groups and all individuals who form part of the regular consultation process, which helps inform the development of our policies and programmes."

Minister for Health, the Hon Dr John Cortes, said: "The GHA multidisciplinary team has worked hard over the past few years, together with other departments, in raising awareness, training and



supporting families, and working with the Autism Support Group, and will continue to do so and explore further ways of providing this."