



PRESS RELEASE

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New Mental Health Acts Brings Positive Changes to Service

This week GHA psychiatrists, psychologists, General Practitioners, Accident and Emergency doctors and mental health workers are taking part in a four-day training course in line with the new Mental Health Act. This specialised training is delivered by the UK Education and Training Network, which provides high quality medical and multidisciplinary training in the field of mental health care.

The object of the new Mental Health Act is to make mental health care in Gibraltar more efficient and transparent, with a more pronounced emphasis on the rights of the individual patient. The Act affords patients a greater say in their care and in what would happen to them in a crisis. Under the Act, the Government will appoint a Mental Health Board to act as a statutory watchdog tasked with challenging the service through an open doors policy to ensure continuous improvement.

This week's training aims to cascade information down from frontline professionals to other key staff in agencies and departments across the public service including the Care Agency, the Royal Gibraltar Police and the Department of Education.

"We want to reduce the stigma attached to mental health issues by raising awareness and working so that the public at large obtain a better understanding of our work and the service we provide," said the General Manager of Ocean Views Mental Health Facility, Chris Chipolina.

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon. Neil F. Costa MP, welcomed the training programme noting that the Government of Gibraltar is keen to advance the quality of mental health care in the community. Minister Costa said: "The training for those at the sharp end of the delivery of mental health care in Gibraltar is part of a well thought-out process for the introduction of the new Mental Health Act. It will assist professionals in familiarising themselves with the provisions of the Act and ensure an upgrade in the skills of those who manage a vital area of the health service. The training is comprehensive and will allow participants to gain a detailed insight into the legal aspects of the Mental Health Act, its range of implications from detention to assessments and the role and responsibilities of clinicians and, naturally, the statutory rights of patients.

"We want to ensure that all the relevant staff, and the support agencies and departments, fully understand the changes in the new legislation and the impact it will have on patients and their carers".

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