



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Costa announces second tranche of reforms at the Primary Care Centre

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is delighted to announce the launch of further initiatives in a continued drive to improve primary care services for our community.

The Primary Care Centre will see the introduction of a dedicated telephone line for patients who simply need a sick certificate. This initiative will release many more appointment slots for patients who need to see a doctor and is another illustration that the Ministry for Health and the Health Authority continue to work to put in place modern and imaginative reforms to improve all aspects of healthcare.

This new service will start on 6 March 2017. Patients will be able to telephone 2000 7888 during the hours of 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday to request a sick certificate for up to 2 days at a time. Trained nurses will staff the telephone line who will issue and complete the certificate. This service is limited to only one certificate every three months and the certificate can be collected and signed for by a friend or relative on the same day.

This forward-thinking initiative is designed for those patients who have minor self-limiting illnesses that do not need to be seen by a doctor but who need rest and self-care at home. This innovation in primary care supports HMGoG's public health message for keeping minor and infectious illnesses away from public places, such as the Primary Care Centre and the Accident and Emergency Department. The initiative, in addition to the recently introduced Repeat Prescription service, will further release pressure on Accident and Emergency. In this respect, the new Repeat Prescriptions system has ensured that 300 patients have obtained their prescriptions without the need for an appointment.

Patients are urged to only use this number for a sick certificate. All other PCC telephone numbers for queries, appointments, cancellations, house calls and medical services remain the same. Improvements to primary care services are also occurring behind the scenes with a project to scan and digitise all paper patient notes and upload the information to individual electronic records. This enormous undertaking, which will take between 3 to 6 months, will eventually release 4 PCC staff to attend to patients face to face and on the telephone. This will result in much improved customer service, making things easier for patients to navigate through a very busy Department.

Ministry of Health, Care and Justice

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Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon. Neil F. Costa MP, welcomed this new initiative to improve the service to patients at the Primary Care Centre. Mr Costa said: “My Ministry and the Health Authority are working hand in glove to improve and modernise health services. We are immensely proud of all the recent reforms that have clinicians at the heart of the ideas and delivery of local medical care. The steady improvements we are introducing throughout the health service proves that we listen to our clinical staff, we act upon their recommendations and also take into account the comments and suggestions from patients and members of the public who are the beneficiaries of our reforms. I very much look forward to making even further announcements over the next few weeks.”