

PRESS RELEASE

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Where on Earth do the Opposition get their 'facts' from?

HMGOG is astonished that the GSD should have issued a statement on Thursday evening in respect of a matter on which it has filed a question for parliamentary answer. Could they not have waited to get the full, detailed explanation in Parliament?

Quite simply, it is absolute nonsense to suggest that nursing standards have fallen. It seems that the Opposition are being inaccurately or maliciously briefed by individuals who, for whatever reason, are determined to misrepresent the true picture. Where is there a scrap of evidence that the GHA is planning to replace experienced ICU nurses with newly-qualified staff? There is none.

The hard facts are strikingly clear: in May 2011, in the CCU, there were 28 Registered Nurses, (comprising 2 charge nurses and 24 staff nurses + 2 Enrolled Nurse = 28 full time).

Today, in March 2017, there are 30 Registered Nurses, (comprising 3 charge Nurses and 27 staff nurses) and 1 Nursing Assistant. Every one of them is fully trained and qualified to work in Intensive Care. Clearly the number of fully-trained staff has risen under this Government.

The Opposition should also be aware, as they were told only last month in Parliament, that the total number of nurses directly employed by the GHA has increased under the GSLP/LIB from 387 in 2010 to 473 in 2016, reflecting an unprecedented investment in our clinical staff. To put it in a different way, there has been a 22% increase in the number of nurses.

Had the Opposition waited to hear the Health Minister's answer in Parliament, they would have learnt that the Intensive Care Unit boasts of 20 nurses on permanent contracts and only 10 on fixed term contract. Of those 10 nurses, 8 have been contracted by the GHA for less than 2 years, in line with the GSD's own policy of recruiting cross-border workers on fixed term contracts, whilst local nurses are being educated in the UK or educated in the GHA's School of Health Studies. The remaining 2 nurses' positions are currently in the process of being made permanent and they have been informed of this within the last fortnight.

In response to the latest GSD press release, the Hon Neil F. Costa MP, Minister for Health, Care and Justice, said: "The GSD continue to listen to unsubstantiated or malicious rumours and continue to make statements which are way off the mark. The GSD file motions on subjects on which, had they

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bothered to attend Parliament, they would have known there was no point to. They have now taken to firing ill-informed, incorrect and possibly malicious press statements and on subjects on which they have already filed a question in Parliament. This is just more proof, if any was needed, of the GSD's neurotic nit-picking and pathetic headline grabbing. My Ministry and the GHA continue to work hand in glove to deliver the highest quality medical care and to implement wholesale reform led by clinicians. It is no surprise that people are saying that this Opposition has gone to the dogs."