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Government and Unite the Union Agree Outcomes of Care Workers Industrial Review

HM Government of Gibraltar has, for the past seven months, been engaged in negotiations with Unite the Union and its members employed by the Care Agency to conduct a Care Workers Industrial Review. These meetings have been positive and constructive, with the mutual aim of fully supporting Care Workers in their important work, whilst ensuring the best value for money for the taxpayer.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar deeply appreciates the vocational work that Care Workers undertake for those in our community who require care. The Government recognises that this work is often as challenging as it is rewarding and it is right that Care Workers are provided with the support necessary to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

As a result of the negotiations, the Government submitted a package of proposals to Unite the Union in line with their original concerns for their consideration. The package of measures proposed by the Government included the following:

- 1) A new pay scale to recognise the work undertaken by both the Care Support Workers and their Unit Managers, with a sliding scale depending on qualifications.
- 2) An increase in administrative support for Unit Managers.
- 3) A Challenging Behaviour Allowance for all Care Support Workers and Unit Managers who have undergone training and deal with users who display a challenging behaviour.
- 4) Reduction on the limits on the provision of overtime for Care Support Workers.
- 5) Introduction of an Injury at Work Policy
- 6) Additional incentives to improve attendance and current remuneration.

Unite the Union have since balloted their Care Worker members on these proposals and 72% of those participating in the ballot voted in favour of accepting them.

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon Neil F Costa MP, said: 'The constructive nature of our meetings with Unite the Union has been enormously helpful in assisting the Government to understand the issues of concern to Unite's members in the sector. The vocational work that Care Workers undertake is vital to our community and it is important that this is recognised by the Government as their employer. I am delighted that we have been able to agree on a whole package of measures that benefit and support Care Workers, whilst also enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in the service.'



Unite the Union's Convenor for the Health & Social Services and Executive Secretary, Frederick Martin, added: 'It is fair that the unsung heroes of our community, those working with the most vulnerable in our society, enjoy provisions in line with the concerns originally put to Government that recognise the hard work they regularly undertake. Their commitment in meeting the needs of their Service Users, as well as the efforts they make in increasing their Service Users' participation in society and the workplace is certainly a testament to their passion and vocational nature of their work. Unite would like to highlight the enormous patience and professionalism that the workforce has exhibited prior to and during the negotiating period, as well as the assistance that has been provided by the lay member working group that was formed as a consequence of these negotiations. We hope that both parties; HM Government of Gibraltar and Unite the Union with assistance of its Working Group in representation of this sector, will be able to continue working together in order to address any outstanding or future issues that may materialise.'