



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Revamped Child Protection Committee initiates training week with Barnardo's specialist**

Gibraltar's restructured multi-agency Child Protection Committee (CPC) will be conducting an intensive programme of training and professional development at Bleak House this week. The training will be delivered by Julie Dugdale, a leading UK Government policy adviser and a senior consultant at the Barnardo's Child Care Agency in the UK. Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon Neil F. Costa M.P. delivered the opening address on Monday 6 February 2017.

The CPC is responsible for promoting the welfare of children and young people in the community and will remain accountable for all initiatives designed to guarantee their safety. Representatives of the Care Agency, the Royal Gibraltar Police, the Probation Service, the Youth Service, the Gibraltar Health Authority, the Department of Education and Training, the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority and the Department of Culture, all form part of the Committee.

The programme will be divided into three segments. The first is aimed at the CPC executive, which includes heads of key Government departments and agencies across the public sector. Their task is to consult and coordinate working systems with other relevant organisations to provide an effective child protection service. The second part of the training encompasses the CPC operational arm, comprising of officials with delegated responsibilities to ensure that the systems that are introduced to secure these aims are functioning properly. Designated officers for child protection, selected from all public sector entities, comprise the third tier of the training programme. As experts in the field within their own ambit, they are entrusted with child protection and safeguarding issues in the workplace, for instance, in schools or in a government department.

The Committee has a number of sub-committees that deal with several aspects of child protection issues, including overseeing online safety for children, the dangers of grooming and the protection of children against online sexual predators.

Care Agency CEO Natalie Tavares said: "The training has been organised to ensure that each member in the Committee fully understands their role and responsibilities and so that they have a clearer understanding of our strategic approach and our respective roles."

Minister Costa welcomed the training programme and said the Government would provide resources so that adequate and effective child protection systems were in place in Gibraltar. Mr Costa said: "The Care Agency is doing extraordinary work in the field of child protection and this week's training programme is

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further testament to the commitment and hard work of all the professionals involved in this vital area of social services and the continuing aim to make Gibraltar as safe as possible for our children. It is clear that in cases of children and young persons at risk, early intervention is crucial. Further, by providing the adequate support to families at the right time, it is possible to avert issues before they arise. This is one of the many reasons why the work of the Child Protection Committee is so important and why the Gibraltar Government is fully behind every initiative to make its work more efficient, more professional and more accountable.”