

## PRESS RELEASE

No: 204/2018

Date: 9th April 2018

---

### **Transition of Care at the John Mackintosh Home to New Service Provider**

After the conclusion of a competitive selection process, the contract for the provision of care of the elderly residents at the John Mackintosh Home (JMh) was awarded to MedDoc Healthcare Limited (MedDoc). All bidders were advised of the outcome on 5th March. On the same day, Grand Home Care (GHC) were advised that the former arrangements would terminate with effect from 8:00am on Friday 6th April. MedDoc were similarly advised that their contract for the provision of this service would commence at 8:00am on 6th April. Both companies, therefore, were provided with one month's notice to make all necessary preparations.

It is important to highlight that GHC had over four weeks to assess whether it would need to make any of its employees redundant, inform those affected employees and provide any redundancy payments under the Employment Act. Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar considers that it is a shocking indictment of the company's shareholders and directors that they had, as at this morning, still failed to notify their employees whether they would be retained or whether they would be made redundant. GHC has failed to exercise their legal obligations and comply with any payments due to their employees in the case of redundancy.

Following a meeting between Unite the Union and its members on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018, the Government received a request from Unite for a seven-day extension of the termination date to ensure that the rights of GHC's employees were protected. Given that Unite wished to assist affected employees, if any, the Government readily agreed to grant the proposed extension, provided that all other stakeholders agreed. The Government considers that it is regrettable that it was not until the afternoon of Thursday 5th April that GHC responded to Unite's request to extend the termination date. However, by then, the Elderly Residential Services (ERS) had to confirm that all appropriate measures were in place to ensure the continuity of its residents' care. That GHC should have replied only on the day before the changeover, notwithstanding that the offer to extend the termination date was made 7 days before, is yet another example of the company's appalling conduct, which shows contempt and utter disregard for both the residents of John Mackintosh Home and GHC employees.

If this deplorable behaviour were not serious enough, GHC even failed to inform its employees that they should not report to JMh for work on Friday morning. At a meeting today between the Minister for Health, GHC employees and Unite, three employees confirmed that at no time did GHC inform them that it would cease to provide services at JMh as from 6th April, or that the



company was identifying whether any employees were to be made redundant. In fact, the employees noted that GHC management denied that they would cease to provide services at JMH. Government has repeatedly expressed concern to GHC, that MedDoc be advised soonest as to which employees GHC would release in order that they could approach MedDoc for employment.

The Gibraltar community can decide whether GHC's words can ever again be believed against the background of such shameful behaviour towards their employees, and whether their protestations are not as hollow as their supposed concerns for the residents.

Government considers that it is important to address the issue of continuity of care at JMH during this transitional period. ERS has worked together with Meddoc to plan and carry out the transition of service provider in meticulous detail, operationally and clinically. On Friday morning, ERS staff, together with MedDoc staff, commenced the day's routine at JMH as usual, and everything ran smoothly: all residents' care needs were met and no complaints were received. The continuity of care was seamless. All the usual services of that day, such as Recreational Activities, Physiotherapy Exercise Group and the Doctor's rounds, took place as per the normal routine. All mealtimes and all clinical and nursing procedures were carried out without incident and with continuity. The families who visited during mealtimes did not raise any complaints or concerns.

ERS Management were present all day in order to oversee the transition and to be on hand to respond to any concerns raised. The changeover of staff had no effect on the residents, who simply carried on with their normal activities and remained content throughout. It is also important to note that over 50% of the incoming staff taking over the services on Friday morning had already previously worked at JMH. Not only were they familiar with the routine, but more importantly, were already familiar to the residents and their families. During the night of the 6th April, additional staff were deployed to help deal with any unexpected events. However, again, the night was uneventful and no concerns were raised. ERS Senior Management continued to closely monitor the situation and visited the premises overnight throughout the weekend. The fact that the transition from one service provider to another last Friday morning occurred without incident is to the credit of all those dedicated professionals who care so much for the well-being of their residents.

The Government wishes, in particular, to praise those employees of GHC who, in carrying out their duties at JMH, have acted professionally at all times. The GHC nursing staff on duty on the night of 5th/6th April provided incoming MedDoc and ERS staff a complete and diligent handover, not only of the night shift report, but a full handover in respect of every single resident's care needs.