



PRESS RELEASE

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Statement on Unite the Union

Any suggestion that the GSLP Liberal Government would be involved in privatising the GHA or any aspect of the health services is untrue, unfair and unjustified. Unite members are being entirely misled, if that is what they have been informed.

The Government has asked Unite to clarify what vacancies, it says, have not been filled, or have been filled by agency staff. As at the time of drafting this statement, Government has not received a reply.

Further to the GHA and Unite the Union Joint Press Release issued on the 25 September 2017, Government notes, that in addition to the 81 posts which had been successfully regularised, a total of 57 adverts have been issued in respect of medical, nursing, ambulance service, allied health professional, consultant and non-consultant hospital doctor posts.

Her Majesty’s Government of Gibraltar confirms that the staffing levels at the GHA have never been higher, with an increase in overall staffing levels rising by over 25 % during the last 6 years. The staffing levels have increased as follows:

	March 2011	March 2018	Variance
Admin & Support	175	203	+28
Medical & AHPs	155	220.5	+65.5
Ambulance	34	43	+9
Nursing	389.5	482	+92.5
Industrial	115.5	144	+28.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>1092.5</b>	<b>+223.5</b>



The Government and the GHA are therefore extremely surprised by the contents of a Bulletin issued by Unite the Union to its membership, where it refers to vacancies not having been properly advertised.

The GHA can categorically confirm that during the process of recruitment, Agency Workers may have been used to bridge the gap until the post has been substantively filled, following the established recruitment process. Agency Workers form an important and essential part on the continual delivery of services, providing cover in order to maintain the necessary and safe clinical levels of care. Additionally, the Government has further confirmed again that in the GHA, agency workers are only used for long term absences and maternity cover.

The Ministry for Health, Care and Justice and Unite officials and staff representatives have met on no less than 86 occasions since January 2017 in what it has thought, until today, to have been a good and positive working relationship. These meetings have lent themselves, in no small way, to resolving all issues brought to the table, to date. The number of meetings does not include the numerous phone calls and impromptu meetings at Unite' request. The Ministry has always adopted an engaged and transparent relationship with Union officials and staff representatives.

A walk out in the health services is a potentially hugely disruptive action with potentially dangerous consequences for patients.

This action has nonetheless not been raised with Government before and has not been balloted by the GHA members. It is therefore highly regrettable and wholly unnecessary.