



PRESS RELEASE

No: 194/2019

Date: 19th March 2019

The Care Agency Celebrate World Social Work Day

The Care Agency celebrated 'World Social Work Day' at an event held at the Family & Community Centre, on the 19 March 2019. Ms Natalie Tavares, CEO (Ag) of the Care Agency, said that this marked a very significant day in the year, where Social Workers in Gibraltar and across the world stand together to celebrate, and reflect, on the numerous and important achievements of their profession.

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP highlighted that this year's local celebration was particularly special, as, for the very first time, Gibraltar has seen the introduction of a locally delivered BA Social Work (Hons) degree course, in partnership with Kingston University and the GHA's School of Health Studies. This course provides persons interested in embarking in a career in Social Work with an invaluable opportunity to obtain their requisite qualification, without the need to travel abroad.

The event saw a number of speakers, including Professor Ian Peate, Principal of the School of Health, who spoke about his involvement and support in the implementation of the BA Hons Degree in Social Work, and Ms Natalie Tavares, who addressed the audience expressing her vision for the future of social work on the rock.

Ms Tavares spoke of the constant progress local Social Services had made from its early beginnings, as a team of unqualified welfare officers and visitors, working within the small Family Care Unit at the former Department of Labour and Social Security, to the current, stand-alone organisation, of professionally regulated and qualified practitioners. She said: "Having had the privilege of working for social services for the last 31 years, I have seen the great progress this organisation has made. In this respect, I must sincerely thank all those practitioners, staff members, administrators, and policy-makers, for their vision, commitment and drive in making this happen. Changes in social policy, practices and legislation have made it a reality and have provided a better future for the children, individuals and families, which Social Services work with."

Minister Costa said that World Social Work Day provides an important opportunity to raise awareness and support for the invaluable role that social workers play in the lives of vulnerable families and individuals in our community, adding: "Social work is, without doubt, a vocation. In a

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tight-knit community such as Gibraltar's, our Social Workers have to overcome unique challenges, which they would not face within larger communities. Since my appointment as Minister with responsibility for Health, Elderly and Social Care, in 2016, it has been a real pleasure to work with Natalie, and her excellent team of passionate and caring Social Workers - I would like to thank, and express my well wishes to, each and every one of them on this special day."