



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Welcome Improvements and Refurbishments at Mount Alvernia**

The Ministry for Health, Care and Justice and the Elderly Residential Services (ERS) are delighted to announce the completion of the ground floor refurbishment and the dining room in the 2nd floor at Mount Alvernia.

The main kitchen, dining room, salon, lobby, reception and chapel have all been refurbished. The kitchen has been completely revamped and the latest catering equipment installed. 'Dementia Friendly' colour schemes, designs and furniture have been installed across communal areas. The dining room on the 2nd Floor, has also been entirely renovated. As with the ground floor, 'Dementia Friendly' colour schemes, fixtures and fittings have been incorporated into the renovation. The project to further renovate Mount Alvernia, will continue in phases, in order to minimise disruption to residents.

In November of 2017, the Ministry for Health, Care and Justice and the ERS announced plans to introduce standardised dementia friendly environments across all its residential homes and facilities. Mount Alvernia, the John Mackintosh Home, Hillsides and the Bella Vista Day Centre are all fitted with 'Dementia Friendly' furniture and colour coded areas across the buildings, to assist elderly persons living with dementia. Careful consideration was taken with respect to the designs throughout the buildings, which are tailored to minimise the risk of injuries and falls. In February 2018, the Ministry of Health, Care and Justice also announced the inauguration of an additional floor at the John Mackintosh Home, which now provides 70 beds for elderly residents and fitted with all the relevant dementia friendly features.

The recent improvements and refurbishments at Mount Alvernia, and across elderly residential homes and facilities is yet another example of HM Government of Gibraltar's continuous commitment towards improving the quality of life of our elderly. In January 2019, the Care Agency also announced the extended opening times of the very popular Waterport Terraces Day Centre for the Elderly, from 4 to 5 days a week. A free bus service is provided for service users attending the centre, where they enjoy a wide range of therapeutic and social activities.

The Government's investment in elderly residential homes, as well as the Bella Vista Day Centre, have provided excellent and future-proof facilities for the elderly in the community living with Alzheimer's and dementia. The staff working within these ERS facilities have received specific

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training in caring for persons living with Alzheimer's and dementia, and deliver numerous therapeutic activities designed to calm and stimulate those persons with the condition.

ERS Manager, Ms Susan Vallejo said: "I would like to sincerely thank my nurses, carers, the facilities team, and all staff who have been involved in ensuring the works have been conducted in a manner that has caused minimum disruptions for our residents. I am delighted to see the completion of the works at Mount Alvernia's ground floor, which will no doubt be welcomed by our residents and staff alike. Most importantly, these works, which continue, will prove hugely beneficial towards to the comfort of our dear residents."

Commenting on the refurbishments, the Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP said: "It gives me great pride and satisfaction to see the fantastic work being carried out at Mount Alvernia, Gibraltar's first elderly residential home. We have achieved important enhancements across our ERS homes and facilities, to ensure we maintain the highest standards of care we offer our cherished elderly, including those persons living with Alzheimer's and dementia, services which take into account their specific needs, comfort and wellbeing. I would like to take this opportunity thank the indefatigable, formidable and always dedicated Susan Vallejo, and her excellent staff at ERS for their continued work and dedication towards our dear elderly community."