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## **PRESS RELEASE**

No: 410/2018

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018

### **GHA CATARACT SURGERY INITIATIVE**

The Gibraltar Health Authority's Ophthalmic Unit has embarked on a cataract surgery initiative to reduce the waiting lists for surgery. The initiative is run by the Ophthalmic Unit's dedicated staff, which includes nursing staff, hospital optometrists, ophthalmologists, administrative staff, and is supported by some external local optometrists. The surgeon contracted by the GHA for this initiative, is Mr Tariq Saboor, a surgeon conversant in similar initiatives, and with extensive experience in high volume, high efficiency cataract surgery. He is familiar with local health services, having carried out Locum work at the Ophthalmic Unit for over 20 years.

The initiative consists of pre-operative clinics, surgery and post-operative clinics, which take place at the GHA's Ophthalmic Unit. These sessions are carried out after hours, so as not to interfere with the day-to-day running of the Unit. Only four surgical sessions will take place during normal working hours, dedicated for patients who may require support from other GHA staff, or who are having their surgery in the hospital's main theatre, under general anaesthesia.

A total of 173 patients already underwent pre-assessment by the Ophthalmic Unit's nursing staff to plan the surgical schedules and identify each patient's individual requirements. The first surgical session commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Mrs Isabella Crisp, Clinical Lead for the Ophthalmic Unit said: "Demand for cataract surgery is a challenge facing many health organisations worldwide. We are very grateful to have the opportunity to embark on this exercise to improve access to cataract surgery for our patients, and are proud to do so with the expertise of our highly skilled local staff. I would like to thank all staff involved for their work and commitment in planning this initiative to ensure its success".

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, spoke of the initiative: "It is important that we identify any areas across our health services which, at any given time, may require extra support. This is vital in order to take any necessary action to provide our community with health services in a timely and efficient manner. I am very grateful to the staff at the Ophthalmic Unit for their proposed excellent initiative, to which I immediately agreed, to reduce waiting lists with regards to cataract surgery."



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 433/2018

Date: 23rd July 2018

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### Video Conferencing

The Gibraltar Health Authority, (GHA), is pleased to announce the recent implementation of a secure videoconferencing solution. The software will enable patients and GHA clinicians to engage in consultations with clinicians elsewhere, reducing the need for patients to travel abroad. The new system also assists clinicians when discussing patient cases, by providing a platform for dialogue in a more effective, timely and efficient manner and this software will be available to registered GHA employees.

As well as being able to view each other over a video link, the technology enables clinicians at both ends to view and share images, such as X-rays, together with any other information that can be displayed on their own computer screen. This has the benefit of being able to share information rapidly, when necessary, in a safe and secure environment, as and when it is available. The particular system in which the GHA has invested is a 'cloud based' videoconferencing, online collaboration and meetings platform. The system is readily accessible from any location, at any time and has a very secure platform with an inbuilt privacy key element.

In addition, the software will also enable the GHA's Human Resources Department to interview prospective candidates who are not based in Gibraltar. This is already being used by the HR department for this purpose and has helped streamline recruitment processes.

Mr Heath Watson, the GHA's Director of Information Management and Technology, said: "We are always looking at ways that technology can improve the services the GHA provides to patients and clinicians. With the advances in videoconferencing technologies, together with much higher internet speeds than were available in the past, this videoconferencing solution was identified by the team as a very effective way to improve our service to our patients. The majority of work undertaken by IT teams is generally in the background and unseen, but this is a very visible example of how the work of a very dedicated and skilled IT team can bring tangible benefits to the delivery of patient care."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, added: "We are constantly reviewing how existing and emerging technologies can assist with the delivery of patient care. The ability to have consultations via video link has been implemented, principally, for the convenience of our patients and to entirely remove, whenever possible, the inconveniences and stresses of

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travel to the UK or Spain. I am very pleased that other Departments are also making use of this new technological solution across the GHA, providing savings in travel and accommodation, which we can reinvest into other areas. I must thank our great IT team for their excellent work in implementing this extremely beneficial technology.”



## **PRESS RELEASE**

No: 440/2018

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018

### **GHA and GHITA work together to raise awareness of hearing impairments**

The Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA) and the Gibraltar Hearing Impaired and Tinnitus Association (GHITA), are working in close collaboration to enhance and further develop audiology services.

GHITA, a non-profit association, advocating for the needs of the hearing impaired, state that hearing loss may affect as many as 5,000 Gibraltarians. As a result, the GHA is currently undertaking an initiative to register persons affected with hearing loss or impairment who wish to do so. In September this year, the Primary Care nursing staff and GHITA volunteers will set up an information desk at the Primary Care Centre reception area and St Bernard's Hospital's main entrance. Questionnaires will be distributed to members of the public in order to gather valuable data to assist medical professionals in identifying areas within the service, which may be improved and further developed.

Based on statistics in the United Kingdom, 41% of over 50 year olds and 71% of those over 70, find it difficult to hear people speak, yet, 40% of people are not aware of the fact, or feel embarrassed in seeking advice. It is also estimated that 1 in 10 people suffer from Tinnitus, a ringing, buzzing or other intrusive sound, which can make it hard to hear or concentrate. The term 'hearing loss', is used to describe those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or suffer from conditions such as Tinnitus, Meniere's disease or Hyperacusis.

- Meniere's disease causes dizzy spells, sickness and a sudden drop in hearing and in many occasions it can be misdiagnosed.
- Hyperacusis makes some sounds, frequencies or volumes painful to hear and can cause temporary hearing loss.



To help raise GHITA's profile, and reduce the stigma surrounding hearing impairment, a deaf awareness seminar was organised and delivered by Mr Edgar Triay, GHITA's Chairperson at the Primary Care Centre. A total of 29 health care professionals attended the sessions, receiving their certificates of completion this week. Clinical Nurse Manager for the Primary Care Centre, Ms Suzanne Romero said: "We are delighted to work together with GHITA to help raise awareness and understanding amongst frontline health care professionals and the general public on hearing impairments."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa added: "I would like to personally thank Mr Triay, the GHITA volunteers, Suzanne and her excellent staff at the Primary Care for their hard work and diligence in leading this important initiative. On having met with GHITA on several occasions, I really do admire their drive and determination in advocating for persons affected by hearing impairments and their eagerness to work together with us at the GHA to help develop these important services."



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 446/2018

Date: 30th July 2018

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### **CHAMP: Healthy Eating for Children Summer Programme**

Phase two of the successful CHAMP (Children, Healthy and Active! Multi-agency Programme) public health initiative began in Casemates on Friday July 6th. A stall, staffed by GHA nutritionists and dieticians in conjunction with the Health Promotion team (Department of Public Health), provided information on various events and activities, including beach fun days, healthy eating games and cooking workshops, which will be held throughout the school holidays under the banner of 'Summer of Nutritious Goodness'.

CHAMP was officially launched in April 2017, to promote healthy living for Gibraltar's childhood population. The initiative is led by professionals from the GHA, Care Agency, Department of Education, Department of Public Health, Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority and Cultural Services.

The second phase of the programme has proven to be a success, with events being well attended throughout the last month. The team have held events at Casemates Square, Eastern Beach, the Victoria Stadium and the Laguna Youth Club. The 'Taste Buddies' cooking sessions, scheduled to take place at the Dolphins Youth Club on 6th August at 9am, will draw 'The Summer of nutritious Goodness' to a close.

As scheduled, CHAMP is taking Gibraltar into its summer phase and encourage members of the public to join at various venues around Gibraltar. The aim is to engage with the public and discover realistic, nutritious and creative ways of meeting the snack and mealtime needs of children. The 'Autumn of Getting Fit and Physical' will follow later in the year, with the CHAMP initiative concluding 2018 with the 'Festive Season of Good News and Cheers'. In the ensuing years, CHAMP will continue to evolve and develop strategies to lead Gibraltar's children to a healthy and successful future.

Paediatrician, Dr Annie Dai, who has been the driving force behind the project, said: "CHAMP is here to be reliable partners of local families in their challenging task of managing a wide range, and often confusing information, on child health matters in the modern world, and to effectively help children grow up to be healthy, happy and productive individuals. CHAMP strives to be relevant to who we are, where we are and what we want to be."

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Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP added: “We must continue to work together to promote this important programme and encourage children, and their parents or guardians, to make the right choices when it comes to their eating habits. I am delighted to hear that the second phase of the programme has been a success, and wish to thank Dr Dai and all those involved in CHAMP, for the fantastic work they have done so far, and continue to pledge my full support towards this extremely worthy project.”

### **The Summer of Nutritious Goodness**

6th - 10th August, 9am - 1pm

Taste Buddies' cooking sessions with the Youth Team at Dolphin's Youth Club

Venue: Rosia Road.





## PRESS RELEASE

No: 460/2018

Date: 7th August 2018

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### **GHA INTRODUCES VACCINE AGAINST HEPATITIS B**

Her Majesty's Government is pleased to announce that protection against Hepatitis B will now be part of the routine childhood vaccination programme. Children born on or after the 1st June 2018 will receive a childhood vaccine that has the extra component already included, so that the child will require no additional visits or injections.

The new vaccine is called 'Hexavalent', because it protects against six diseases in one shot, (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Polio, Hemophilus B – and now, Hepatitis B). Although new to Gibraltar, the vaccine has been used extensively in other countries for many years and part of the UK schedule from last year.

The Director of Public Health, Dr Vijay Kumar, pointed out that Hepatitis B is a serious disease that produces jaundice and often becomes chronic, with a long-term death rate of 20% due to liver damage. The introduction of a vaccine that protects against hepatitis B is an important milestone in the fight against viral hepatitis and fulfils the World Health Organisation (WHO), recommendation that every country should routinely immunise children against hepatitis B as part of the global strategy to eliminate this virus.

Dr Kumar added: "The introduction of hepatitis B vaccine into Gibraltar's routine childhood immunisation programme at this time is also significant, as it comes soon after World Hepatitis Day, which takes place on 28 July each year and aims to highlight the global health burden from all forms of viral hepatitis as well as to galvanise efforts to tackle the problem. The WHO's goal of elimination of viral hepatitis as a major public health concern, it is hoped, will gradually be within reach."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP said: "I would like to thank Dr Kumar for providing his expert advice and recommendations to further enhance our existing childhood vaccination programme, which will now include protection against Hepatitis B. I am sure our entire community will welcome this positive development."



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 467/2018

Date: 15th August 2018

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### **Eight Additional Registered General Nurses for the GHA**

Eight nursing students from the School of Health Studies have completed their three-year programme of study, concluding with the award of Registered Nurse as well a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Adult Nursing. The eight students have undertaken their degree in Gibraltar. The degree is awarded by St George's University of London and Kingston University London and they will be eligible to register locally with the Nurses, Midwives, Health Visitor Registration Board Gibraltar.

The three-year full time honours degree programme has required these students to work fifty percent of their time, 'hands on' in clinical practice across the GHA, as well as Elderly Residential Service and the Care Agency. The remaining fifty percent of the degree is theory-based. The degree is a challenging programme that demands extremely high practice and academic standards, as these students are continually assessed in clinical practice by clinicians, with service users also making a contribution on how the student had performed in practice.

Professor Ian Peate, Head of the School of Health Studies, praised the standard of work the students have produced. He commented that the students should also be proud of their outstanding achievements, as they have demonstrated the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes, which will enable them to provide care that is safe, effective and patient centred.

Mrs Sandie Gracia, Acting Director of Nursing, said she was delighted with the students' achievements, adding: "All eight students have been successful in being offered employment with the Gibraltar Health Authority. I wish to welcome the newly qualified nurses to the GHA, and to thank the GHA nurses, who, along with a range of clinicians, have been closely involved in preparing the eight nurses to take up their posts. As Registered Nurses, we are honoured to provide care to patients and families; it is indeed a privilege. We know that these eight nurses will be walking in the footsteps of other Registered Nurses before them, as they work day in and day out, to provide care that is safe and compassionate."

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP stated: "I would like to convey my warm congratulations to the eight newly qualified Registered Nurses on their excellent achievements and their commitment to the degree programme. I am delighted that they will soon

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take up their new posts, and take this opportunity to welcome them to the GHA family. I would also like to take this opportunity to personally thank Ron Coram, Ian Peate and his great team at the School of Health Studies, for their work and dedication in helping the students fulfil this great achievement.”



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 540/2018

Date: 14th September 2018

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### **Autism Workshop for GHA Staff**

Autism Support Gibraltar, in conjunction with the Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA), held an 'Autism workshop' on Friday the 14th September, where they delivered a series of talks to frontline staff at the Primary Care Centre. The workshop was also held for staff at St Bernard's Hospital on the 12th September. The workshop was part of an ongoing initiative, started by the GHA and the 'Advocacy Council for Service Users with Additional Needs'.

The Advocacy Council is formed of representatives of various associations and support groups, who advocate for members of our community who live with different conditions and who have additional needs in their day-to-day life. The GHA regularly meets with the Council to identify areas within our Health and Care services which may be improved to better cater for persons with additional needs.

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder, refers to a range of conditions which affects the person's social skills, speech non-verbal communication and how they experience the world around them. There is not one form of autism, but many types, caused by different combinations of genetic and environmental influences. The term "spectrum" reflects the wide variation in challenges and strengths possessed by each person with autism. Autism's most-obvious signs tend to appear in young children aged between 2 and 3; however, it can be diagnosed as early as 18 months. Autism is a common condition. Statistics indicate that there are 700,000 people on the autism spectrum in the United Kingdom alone. While there is no cure for the condition, the right support at the right time can make have great benefits.

Mr Kevin Mañasco, Chairperson for Autism Support Gibraltar said: "Autism Support Gibraltar are extremely pleased to have been able to organise and offer these workshops to both the staff at the Hospital and PCC, as it widens their understanding and offers advice on how to deal with individuals on the spectrum. These sessions are invaluable and we will endeavour to try and make life easier for those on the spectrum and their families by coming up with similar initiatives in the future. ASG would like to thank the GHA and Minister Costa for their support towards our workshops."

Clinical Nurse Manager for Primary Care, Mrs Suzanne Romero said: "We are delighted to have a very experienced health care professional in Autism, deliver these talks to our members of staff. It is important we all develop a better understanding on Autism."

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The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon Neil F. Costa MP, addressed the attendees prior to the workshop's commencement. He added: "I would like to thank the members of the Autism Support Gibraltar for working with our teams at the GHA to organise the workshop. The talks will be invaluable to our staff at the Primary Care Centre, to help them better understand the challenges faced by persons with Autism and their loved ones, and learn what they can do to help overcome, or better deal with, some of these challenges. I would also like to extend my thanks to all the Advocacy Council members for their important contributions since its formation – I very much look forward to our next meeting."



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 550/2018

Date: 19th September 2018

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### **Pet Therapy for Mental Health Patients**

The Gibraltar Health Authority has introduced 'Pet Therapy' for patients at Ocean Views Mental Health Facility.

The service, named 'Pawsitive Pet Activities', is currently offered to certain in-patients at the Sunshine Ward on a weekly basis, with a view of expanding it throughout other areas in Ocean Views in the future. 'Pawsitive Pet Activities' offers patients the chance to get involved in activities with Ant and Dec, two Chihuahuas. The Chihuahua is a tiny but confident dog, that loves giving and receiving attention, they have a unique personality and tend to be affectionate, loyal and good companions. Mrs Annette and Mr Roy Button, Ant and Dec's owners, approached the GHA to offer their services free of any charge.

Pet therapy builds on the pre-existing human-animal bond. Interacting with a friendly pet can help persons with many physical and mental issues. Studies have found it can release endorphins that produce a calming effect, helping alleviate pain, reduce stress, and improve your overall psychological state. The aim of pet therapy programs, include increasing individual's self-esteem, verbal communication and willingness to join in activities, as well as developing their social skills. The therapy may also be beneficial to residents in long-term care facilities. They visit Ocean Views once a week.

Mrs Kay Rajkumar, Clinical Nurse Manager for Ocean View said: "Since the initial introduction of Pawsitive Pet Activities, nursing staff have seen the benefits in both social interaction and the emotional wellbeing of our elderly patient group. Seeing this patient group interacting and communicating with each other on memories, that come flooding back for times they had previously owned or cared for a pet is heart-warming and rewarding to see. The reduction of anxieties, the care that patients take in order to hold, pet and interact with Ant and Dec is wonderful."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice had the chance to see patients enjoy spending some time with Ant and Dec during a recent visit to Ocean Views, he added: "It was great to see the patients interacting with Ant and Dec and really enjoying their company. I am very glad to note that staff have already witnessed the positive impact that the visits and activities have had on our patients. I would like to sincerely thank Mr and Mrs Button for their kindness and generosity in providing this popular and welcome service."

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## PRESS RELEASE

No: 552/2018

Date: 19th September 2018

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### **The GHA Appoints New Director of Nursing Services**

The Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA) is delighted to announce the appointment of Ms Sandie Gracia to the post of Director of Nursing Services. Ms Gracia had been covering the post in an acting capacity and has now been formally appointed following the usual recruitment process.

The Director of Nursing Services is an integral part of the GHA's clinical senior management structure, overseeing all nursing services across the GHA and the overall management of patient care services. The post also entails advising the GHA Board on all aspects of nursing and contributing to the strategic leadership of the GHA, such as implementing strategies and reforms to enhance the quality of patient care.

Ms Gracia began her career at the GHA in 1987, when she commenced employment as a student nurse. She qualified as a Registered Nurse four years later, before being promoted to Sister Charge nurse and then Clinical Nurse manager in 2005.

Ms Gracia commented on her promotion: "I truly feel honoured, privileged and excited to have been appointed as the Director of Nursing Services. This has given me the platform to lead the Nursing Workforce in advocating for the further development of Nursing as a profession in Gibraltar and incentivise high standards of care throughout our Health Care facilities. As nurses, we are the first and last line of defence for patients, who often are not strong enough to advocate for themselves. It is up to us as health care advocates to strive to ensure that they receive the best possible level of care at all times."

The GHA's Medical Director, Dr Daniel Cassaglia congratulated Ms Gracia, commenting that; "Ms Gracia has worked tirelessly for the benefit of all patients in an acting capacity. She has a thoughtful, caring and collaborative approach and always places patients at the centre of the service, across all areas of the GHA. I very much look forward to continuing our excellent working relationship for the betterment of both the organisation and the standard of healthcare delivered to the people of Gibraltar"

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon Neil F. Costa MP also congratulated Ms Gracia, adding: "I would like to congratulate Ms Gracia on her appointment to the post of Director of Nursing Services; she has proven to be an extremely valuable asset to the GHA throughout her extensive career in nursing and has proven herself as an excellent leader in the period in which she has been acting in the post. Sandie has made vital contributions towards many of our important

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reforms, especially in leading a robust bed management approach, which has resulted in major improvements in bed availability at St Bernard's Hospital. She truly is a credit to her profession, and I wish her the very best in her new role."





## PRESS RELEASE

No: 563/2018

Date: 24th September 2018

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### School of Health Studies

A new intake of twenty-two students, a record high, commenced educational programmes delivered by the Gibraltar Health Authority's (GHA) School of Health Studies (SHS). There are three programmes being delivered, a Diploma in Higher Education Nursing and two degree programmes: BCs(Hons) Nursing (Adult) and BSc (Hons) Nursing (Mental Health).

Seven students, who are currently employed at the GHA and Elderly Residential Services (ERS), will undertake the Diploma in Higher Education Nursing programme. This two-year long, full-time course prepares students to receive an academic qualification and eligibility to register with the Nursing Registration Board (NRB) as Enrolled Nurses. Those successfully completing this programme may be considered to undertake further educational opportunities to become a Registered Nurse.

There will be a further nine and six students undertaking the BSc (Hons) Nursing (Adult) and BSc (Hons) Nursing (Mental Health) degree programmes respectively. This is the first time that the BSc (Hons) Nursing (Mental Health) programme is taught locally, meaning students will not have to go abroad to achieve this qualification. The three-year long, full-time programmes require students to complete 2,300 hours of theoretical instruction and 2,300 hours of practice across various fields of nursing. The practice component of the course takes place in a variety of care settings across the GHA, ERS and the Care Agency, where students will be supervised and receive mentorship by specially appointed clinicians. The theoretical aspect is provided by SHS staff and expert clinicians and will take place at the University of Gibraltar. Students successfully completing these programmes will receive an academic qualification and eligibility to register with the NRB as Registered Nurses.

Principal of the GHA's School of Health Studies, Dr Ron Coram Said: "I am delighted to see the commencement of these excellent education programmes for our staff, which will reinforce the skills of our employees. This training and education agenda is pivotal in maintaining the high standards necessary in the delivery of a modern public health service. In addition, I am very excited to see that, for the first time, we will be introducing a Degree in Mental Health, which will be delivered locally."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon Neil F. Costa MP visited the new intake of students at the University of Gibraltar, commenting: "I would like to wish our students the very best of luck

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in their studies. It was clear to see their enthusiasm and promise when I met the group. This should be an exciting time for each one of them. The courses will no doubt be challenging, though prove to be a vital and meaningful stepping-stone in their careers in nursing. I can assure them that they are in the most excellent hands under the guidance of Professor Peate, his excellent staff at the SHS and our clinicians across the GHA, ERS and Care Agency, who will offer mentorship and convey their valuable knowledge and experience. I would like to sincerely thank Dr Ron Coram, Principal of the SHS, Head of the School, Professor Peate, his team and every member of staff who has, and will, contribute towards the professional development of our new cohort of students. Their work is invaluable to the future of nursing and health services as a whole in Gibraltar, and I warmly welcome them to the GHA family.”



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 569/2018

Date: 24th September 2018

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### **GHA and GHITA Carry Out Survey on Hearing Loss**

The Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA) and the Gibraltar Hearing Impaired and Tinnitus Association (GHITA), are currently undertaking an initiative to register persons affected by hearing loss or impairment who wish to do so. Primary Care staff and GHITA volunteers will set up an information desk at the Primary Care Centre reception area and at St Bernard's Hospital's main entrance and will be distributing questionnaires to members of the public to collate data and information. The survey, which commenced on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September, will run until the end of October.

This will also help identify areas within the current services, which may be enhanced to better provide for persons living with hearing loss or hearing impairment in the community.

Statistics in the United Kingdom indicate that 41% of over 50 year olds and 71% of those over 70, find it difficult to hear people speak, however, over a third of those are unaware of the fact, or feel uncomfortable in seeking professional advice.

The term 'hearing loss', includes conditions such as deafness, Tinnitus, Meniere's disease, Hyperacusis and persons that are hard of hearing. Symptoms of Hyperacusis include sounds, frequencies or volumes which are painful to hear and can cause temporary hearing loss. Meniere's disease causes dizzy spells, sickness and a sudden reduction in hearing. Research also shows that 1 in 10 people are living with Tinnitus, a condition that causes a ringing, buzzing or other intrusive sound.

Clinical Nurse Specialist for Primary Care, Mrs Suzanne Romero commented: "I would like to thank Mr Triay, the GHITA volunteers and my colleagues here at the Primary Care Centre for their efforts in helping organise and carry out this important survey, which will benefit those in our community affected by hearing loss."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa said: "The purpose of the survey is to gather information which will help identify areas within our current services which may be improved to better cater for persons with hearing loss. Just as significantly, it will help raise awareness on hearing loss and encourage persons in our community, who may be affected by hearing loss, to seek professional advice. I would like to thank Mr Triay, GHITA, and my team at the



Primary Care Centre led by Ms Suzanne Romero for their enthusiasm and hard work in leading this initiative.”



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 580/2018

Date: 26th September 2018

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### Well Person Unit to Open on 8<sup>th</sup> October

The Ministry of Health, Care and Justice and the Gibraltar Health Authority are delighted to confirm that, following the press announcement in May 2018, the Well Person Unit will officially open on 8 October 2018. Today's inauguration will highlight and consolidate the messages of Sexual Health Week; an annual awareness campaign led by the Family Planning Association, which seeks to inform the public and support health professionals to provide the highest level of sexual health and family planning care.

The Well Person Unit, located in the Primary Care Centre, will provide:

- 1) Well Person checks for men and women to help support a long and healthy life;
- 2) Full advice and provision of the broadest range of contraception; and
- 3) Sexual Health screening, testing and treatment, including Chlamydia screening and sexual health promotion.

Well Person checks will be available to men and women aged 16 years and over. Any patient may self-refer and, in addition, services will be routinely offered to patients newly registering with the GHA in order to pick up any medical condition that can be managed easily and as early as possible. The check will comprise of a full medical history review, appropriate screening advice and support, (e.g. cervical, breast and bowel cancer screening advice), healthy lifestyle assessment, (including blood pressure, weight, smoking and alcohol) and routine blood tests (e.g. cholesterol and diabetes screens). The value of being supported to change lifestyle habits for long-term health and wellbeing cannot be overestimated. The service will also provide PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) for HIV after sexual exposure, and PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) if clinically appropriate and after full assessment.

Persons attending for contraception and sexual health advice, including young persons, can be assured of confidentiality. In a crucial innovation for the GHA in the field of sexual health, patient records will be stored under a unique Well Person Unit number and test requests and results will be anonymised. Anonymization is essential to ensure that our patients feel confident and secure in accessing our services.

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Long-Acting Reversible Contraception, such as the implant, injection and coil will be provided, along with oral, barrier and emergency contraception methods. Key to excellent family planning is the time given to going through every method to ensure that the right contraception is given, that a patient and partner will feel comfortable with and confident in using.

The Unit will be open for Well Person Screening, Contraception and Sexual Health Advice from Monday to Friday, from 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm. The telephone number for making appointments or enquiries is 200 07842, or appointments can be booked through the MyGHA automated telephone service on 2000 7007. The Unit will be staffed by a Sexual and Reproductive Health doctor, a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Sexual Health, two Well Person Unit nurses and a receptionist. Appointments will be available to book as from 8 October 2018.

Leading the Service will be Sexual and Reproductive Health GP, Dr Lynsey Dunckley, who said: “I am absolutely delighted to be launching the Well Person Unit, which is the culmination of many months of hard work. I sincerely thank all those who have contributed to the set-up of the unit, which has been a complex project. This would not have been possible without the support and expertise of various GHA departments and stakeholders. I would especially like to thank the Minister for Health the Honourable Neil Costa, Deputy Medical Director Dr Krish Rawal and Clinical Nurse Manager Suzanne Romero for their unwavering support and guidance throughout. I truly believe that the services offered at the Well Person Unit will hugely benefit the health and well-being of the people of Gibraltar.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP said: “Since the first press announcement in May, considerable work and incredible cooperation have contributed to this moment. It is entirely my pleasure to now publicise as promised the opening of the Well Person Unit in collaboration with our Sexual Health Week campaign. This entirely new and much anticipated service is an excellent example of listening to feedback from the community, seeking professional advice and then creating an even better and more innovative service. Modern and dynamic, this unit will benefit all age groups, and in particular, better access for some members of our community that, perhaps do not usually make full use of our medical services. I would like to sincerely thank all those involved in making possible the formation of this excellent and vitally important service, especially Ms Suzanne Romero, Dr Rawal and Dr Dunckley”.



## **PRESS RELEASE**

No: 601/2018

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018

### **GHA Strengthen Stroke and Rehabilitation Services**

The GHA are delighted to announce improvements in the stroke and rehabilitation services at St Bernard's Hospital.

The GHA is now able to offer emergency treatment in the form of clot busting medication for certain types of stroke. This treatment has been shown to increase the number of patients discharged from hospital and improve their independence and quality of life.

Early detection of a developing stroke is the key to the success of this treatment. To that end a 24/7 diagnostic stroke service has been set up at the A&E and Radiology Departments to ensure that a formal diagnostic report is available within an hour of a CT being performed and treatment started once the diagnosis is made.

Sister Lisa Bennett-Long alongside Doctor Keith Gracia, Senior Physiotherapist, Mrs Amanda Danino and Senior Occupational Therapist, Ms Jenna Cantelo have been working closely with our in-house Electro Medical and Building Works' teams towards implementing a dedicated stroke rehabilitation ward within Captain Murchison Ward. The Ward has undergone extensive re-development to provide an acute monitoring unit with telemetry monitors that allow patients' heart rates, blood pressure, breathing and other vital signs to be monitored, in addition to a purpose built rehabilitation therapy gymnasium to provide patients with a programme of exercise and education sessions.

This enhanced rehabilitation service is part of the GHA's wider continuing efforts to improve clinical care outcomes not only for those patients who have suffered a stroke, but also for the frail and older members of the community who have been admitted into hospital. This ensures that a safe and timely discharge takes place, thus maximising independence.



The new service will be delivered by a multi-disciplinary team which includes Nurses, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Dieticians, Speech and Language Therapists and Doctors who have undergone stroke and rehabilitation training, locally and in the UK.

The GHA are sincerely grateful to the Lions International Club Gibraltar for their kind financial donation for the purchase of rehabilitation equipment for patients being treated in the new Acute Rehabilitation Unit within Captain Murchison Ward.

Doctor Keith Gracia, an Associate Specialist with extensive stroke experience and skills in stroke medicine, will be overseeing the stroke care pathway, as well as, taking an active lead in the rehabilitation pathway of patients.

Sister Bennett-Long spoke of the pleasure of working alongside her health care colleagues to provide a fully integrated care pathway, which provides our patients with the best possible evidence based care and promote clinical excellence.

Medical Director Dr Daniel Cassaglia said, "Upgrading our stroke care pathway is a huge step forward in the clinical care we are now able to deliver at the GHA. This project has involved engagement from many different professionals in the GHA who have, once again, worked together to achieve improvements in the care pathway of our stroke patients."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F Costa MP spoke of the developments: "Strokes are unfortunately common and can severely threaten a person's life and general wellbeing. It is therefore extremely important that we do all we can with the view to providing patients with the best possible outcome when treating the initial episode and the following rehabilitation. I am confident that the recent works at Captain Murchison Ward, as well as the on-going training received by our medical professionals, will greatly enhance our existing services in the treatment and rehabilitation of stroke patients. I must sincerely thank all those who have been involved to help achieve yet another important milestone."





## PRESS RELEASE

No: 618/2018

Date: 9th October 2018

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### **New GHA Child and Adolescent Psychology Service for Gibraltar to commence in January 2019**

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon Neil F. Costa MP is pleased to announce that the Gibraltar Health Authority's first-ever dedicated Child and Adolescent Psychology Service will commence in January 2019. This psychology service represents a Gibraltar-specific format based on the NHS's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, known as CAMHS. This important announcement is timed to coincide with World Mental Health Day.

The much needed service, which has been the focus of representations by various charities and associations concerned with mental health, will be able to meet the mental health needs of children and their families in the community. The two clinical psychologists will be tasked with the development of a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency child & adolescent mental health service for Gibraltar, in the form of a new Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology Service.

Mr Costa said that the introduction of the new service, which has been the product of advice and work by the GHA Mental Health Team and his Ministry over the last 18 months, reflects the GSLP-Liberal Government's enduring commitment to the continued expansion and modernisation of professional mental health services in the community. The new service, specifically, draws attention to the essential need to provide clinical services for children as part of a comprehensive community mental health programme.

The Child Psychology Team will be an integral part of the GHA Paediatric Neurodisability service to ensure that all children, especially those with additional needs, are afforded timely and effective professional mental health care by the relevant professionals. The Team will also assist in the development of locally relevant, individualised care plans for children and their families.

In the context of World Mental Health Day, it is important to note that:

1. in percentage terms, the level of investment in Gibraltar's Mental Health has increased materially from almost 2% of the overall GHA budget in 2011/12 to over 6% in 2018;
2. since April of this year, the complement of Consultant Psychiatrists was increased from 3.5

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to 4.5 full time posts. Of these posts, 2.5 are currently filled by substantive employees. Of the two remaining full time posts, one is being filled on a locum basis, until the commencement of the substantive post-holder on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019; and one has been re-advertised as the successful candidate subsequently turned down the offer of employment. This latter post is also being covered on a locum basis;

3. since 2011, the number of Registered Mental Health Nurses has increased by three and Mental Welfare Officers have increased from two to three. The recruitment process for a fourth is currently underway;
4. since 2011, the total staff numbers in all areas of Mental Health has increased by 30%, since the GSLP/LIB came into office in December 2011. In nursing only, numbers have increased in all grades from December 2011 to date: Sister/Charge Nurses from 5 to 7, Registered Mental Nurses from 28 to 31, Enrolled Nurses from 12 to 22 and Nursing Assistants from 15 to 16;
5. clinical psychologist posts have doubled from two to four;
6. since 2014, the GHA has employed a dedicated General Manager to oversee the Mental Health Service;
7. in 2015, the Government opened Ocean Views Mental Hospital, providing 52 beds over five wards as a replacement to the appalling KGV;
8. in 2017, Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar inaugurated the Bella Vista Day Centre and Hillside Residential Home to assist those in the community living with Alzheimer's and Dementia;
9. also in 2017, the GHA provided a two bedroomed flat, where former Ocean Views in-patients are supported in re-integrating into society and being able to live independently;
10. the GHA has also engaged the services of a second opinion additional Consultant Psychiatrist;
11. in June 2017, the GHA expanded community mental health services, with after hours and weekend nursing support and a crisis telephone line for known patients. Our partnership with Clubhouse Gibraltar, GibSams and the Mental Welfare Society, provide greater assistance to the more vulnerable persons; and
12. when the new Primary Care Centre opens, mental welfare and counselling services will be doubled.

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa said: "The provision of mental health care in Gibraltar has, rightly, increased since we came into office. There have been well-documented radical improvements in the past seven years. The commencement of this valuable new child psychology and adolescent clinic is further testament of the importance my colleagues and I attach to mental health issues, to the care of the most vulnerable persons and to our community-centred approach to mental health. I would also like to sincerely thank the



Gibraltar Mental Welfare Society, Gibraltar Clubhouse and GibSams for their partnership, hard work and valuable advice. My Ministry, the GHA and I will continue to strive to ensure that all children can grow up healthily and in a happy environment. I can think of few projects more important and worthwhile than to secure all our community's children's wellbeing."



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 629/2018

Date: 12th October 2018

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### **Biennial Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting Conference**

The Seventh Nurses Midwives and Health Visitors Conference was held today at the University of Gibraltar. The all-day biennial conference, organised by the Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA), focussed on Service Development and Improved Care Outcomes.

The aim of the conference was to provide GHA staff with an opportunity to show case and share examples of best practice to help further improve the patient experience. The conference programme provided a number of keynote presentations, focusing on Service Development and Improved Care Outcomes, which was the core theme of the event. There were various breakaway sessions that allowed nursing and midwifery professionals to discuss innovations from a local and international perspective.

GHA Matrons, Ms Natasha Cerisola and Ms Jolyn Orfila attended. Ms Cerisola commented: “The conference provides an opportunity for staff to network and discuss with like-minded people how we can continue to enhance care provision ensuring that the patient is at the centre of all that is done.” Ms Orfila added: “Innovation and creativity in practice can have a positive impact on how care is delivered and a conference such as this can lead to further developments and improved patient outcomes”.

Ms Sandie Gracia, the GHA’s Director of Nursing opened the event, stating: “Building on the success of previous successful conferences, this conference will feature a highly interactive and multidisciplinary approach addressing issues that matter. By bringing our nurses, midwives and health visitors together in a forum such as this, the conference will provide a stage to share novel ideas that are related to crucial issues and trends within the sphere of health and social care”.

Professor Ian Peate, Head of the School of Health Studies added: “This conference provides the ideal platform to explore diverse nursing and midwifery topics that will impact on future practice. Those attending will be able disseminate advanced knowledge in the area of Nursing and Midwifery, highlighting the collaborative role that Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors play in a contemporary health care system”.

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Mr Ian Felice, the Chairman of the Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Registration Board of Gibraltar since 2012 provided the opening presentation. Mr Felice addressed those in attendance regarding the new legislative developments, which the GHA are considering, concerning the important issue of registration and regulation of certain health and social care professionals in Gibraltar.

Minister for Health, Care and Justice the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP said: “We are extremely proud to be hosting this conference. Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors represent an integral part in any health care system, and this event provides our staff with a platform to show case their practice and aspirations in providing safe, compassionate and effective patient centred care. Her Majesty’s Government of Gibraltar remains fully committed to its on-going investment in its health care staff, to ensure we continue to develop and improve our health care services and provide our community with a service of which we can be proud”.



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 636/2018

Date: 16th October 2018

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### **New Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the GHA**

A new Consultant Clinical Psychologist has commenced employment with the Gibraltar Health Authority. Dr Louise Barber will be based at Ocean Views Mental Health Facility, where she will provide psychological interventions for in-patients. The services will be audited in order to allow for further development, in line with the most effective treatment approaches.

Dr Barber held the post of Consultant Clinical Health Psychologist at Salford Royal Foundation Trust in Manchester and, therefore, comes to Gibraltar with a wealth of experience. Dr Barber led the chronic fatigue syndrome service at the Trust, assisting in the safe discharge of in-patients. During her career, she has formed an important part of Multi-Disciplinary Teams, playing an active role in development of Mental Health Services. Dr Barber also has experience in drug and alcohol services.

The appointment, for which the recruitment process was initiated in May of this year, follows the recent announcement of the new Child and Adolescent Psychology Service (CAMHS), which will commence in January 2019. The new CAMHS service is set to significantly bolster mental health services in Gibraltar. Its introduction follows advice received from the GHA's Mental Health Team, charities and associations. This is the first time the GHA will offer such a service, which has been designed specifically for the mental health needs of children and adolescents.

General Manager for Mental Health Services, Mr Chris Chipolina said: "The Mental Health Service, as a whole, are extremely excited with the introduction of a Consultant Psychologist for in-patient services. This new, invaluable addition to our team will see the introduction of a number of new psychological interventions in a consistent and structured manner. These will include essential one-to-one and group psychological therapies being offered to our in-patients from the start of their admission."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa welcomed Dr Barber's arrival: "I would like to warmly welcome Dr Barber to the GHA family. I am certain she will be a great addition to the team. She brings a wealth of experience in psychology, having played key roles in the development of services with her previous employers. This appointment is further indication of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar's commitment to continue to expand and improve our mental

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health services. I would like to sincerely thank the Mental Health Services teams for their hard work, diligence and expert advice, which has resulted in adding much-needed resiliency. Further to the CAMHS services commencing in January and first announced in July of this year, and the announcement today in relation to Dr Barber, I very much look forward to making additional statements in respect of planned measures to our Mental Health Services.”



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 644/2018

Date: 19th October 2018

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### **Gibraltar Health Authority's School of Health Studies: Health and Social Care Awards**

Twenty four members of staff received awards at the Health and Social Care Awards ceremony which took place at the Rock Hotel on Thursday. The awards related to training and education undertaken in Gibraltar and were the awards are the culmination of hard work, dedication and commitment.

The demands of study have been challenging, with students having had to produce a portfolio of evidence showing that they have achieved the requisite standards laid before them, as well as having to demonstrate that they have mastered a range of clinical skills within contemporary and demanding health and social care settings. These achievements are quality assured externally by Pearson/Edexcel, an external international education and training body, as well as being subject to external scrutiny of the Enrolled Nurse Programme by Mrs Karen Wild, UK external advisor to the programme. Mrs Wild commented how impressed she was with the strength of support provided by the clinical nursing team who had direct involvement with the practice assessments. She said there was a real sense of high profile nursing staff truly engaging with the pupils in a positive and supportive way. The programme, she added, is challenging, robust and innovative and, above all, it remains fit for purpose.

Seventeen staff members received a conjoined award, comprising Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) Level 3 in Health and Social Care, as well their Enrolled Nurse Hospital Badges. Following the GSLP/Liberal's re-introduction of training for Enrolled Nurses after an absence of many years, the GHA have been unwavering in its pledge to this training, offering Nursing Assistants an opportunity to further progress in their careers. Other awards are also providing career progression opportunities; including continuing personal and professional development from a variety of professional perspectives.

Dr Ron Coram, Principal of the GHA's School of Health Studies said how delighted he was to see this number of staff receiving these awards, testament he said, to their hard work and dedication as each member of staff strives to make a difference to the life of each patient they care for.

Professor Ian Peate, Head of the School of Health Studies, noted: "The awards presented today not

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only recognise the efforts staff have put into their studies, it also demonstrates a commitment to provide care of a high quality, that is not only patient centred, but is also safe and effective, offered to service users who come from different backgrounds”.

A variety of vocational awards were presented at the ceremony, including Certificates of Achievement. Mrs Janet Lane, Senior Nurse Tutor commented: “These awards mark both the academic and practice progression of staff employed within various areas. This event highlights, as have others in the past, the accomplishments of our Nursing Assistants, Enrolled Nurses and Practice Assessors”.

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP added: “The achievements being celebrated are significant and are testament to the GHA’s commitment to providing vocational studies. Today, we have focused on the students who are receiving their awards, reflecting on the determination and dedication that they have put into their studies. Family, friends and staff present today, will feel truly proud to see our students receive these deserved awards. They have been required to study at the same time as they have been working, in order to achieve such magnificent outcomes. This has required admirable sacrifices and stamina. I am very proud of all of our students, and I am indeed delighted with those who are now fully prepared and ready to excel in the work that they do. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the award recipients my sincere congratulations and best wishes.”



## **PRESS RELEASE**

No: 673/2018

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018

### **GHA Re-structure Services for Approved Mental Health Professionals**

The Gibraltar Health Authority and the Ministry for Health, Care and Justice wish to announce the addition of an Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) as a result of the enactment of the new Mental Health Act 2016 and Lasting Powers of Attorney and Capacity Act 2018. This key piece of legislation has enabled the GHA to fulfil plans for enhancing current Mental Health Services by recruiting an additional Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP).

The role of the AMHP, formerly known as a Mental Welfare Officer, has been developed to address a rise in demand for Mental Health Act assessments to protect and safeguard vulnerable persons. These include sensitive and challenging assessments such as Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) assessments, which protect vulnerable persons who are accommodated in hospitals or care homes, in circumstances that amount to a deprivation of their liberty and who lack capacity to consent to the care or treatment they require.

The team, previously three Mental Welfare Officers, will now consist of four AMHPs. They will deliver comprehensive and holistic care to the community, and they will be able to identify health and social factors that precipitate acute mental health crises. Further, they will be tasked to ensure that the GHA is operating a full DoLS service with assessments completed in a timely manner to the highest standards.

The AMHP team will provide a walk-in service, with clinics held at the Primary Care Centre from 9:00 to 13:00 hours, and 14:00 to 17:00 hours, Monday to Friday.

Since July 2017, the enhanced team will also continue to provide a 24 hour 'on-call' service, along with a Consultant Psychiatrist and Registered Nurse, to address any crisis or need in the community out of normal working hours. The team may be reached on 2000 7831.

Ms Suzanne Romero, Clinical Nurse Manager for Primary Care and Operational Lead for AMHPs said: "I work alongside the AMHPs to achieve the very best possible clinical outcomes



for our patients at all times, and make certain that the relevant legislation is always adhered to, ensuring the safeguarding of our most vulnerable patients.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP added: “I am pleased to announce the expansion of this team to four Approved Mental Health Professionals. This welcome expansion follows the recent announcement of the new Child and Adolescent Psychology Service, set to commence in January 2019, and the appointment of an additional Consultant Psychologist, which commenced on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October. It is imperative that we, as a public health service, provide persons within our community with swift and easy-to-access avenues when it comes to receiving assistance and treatment for mental health issues. My mental health teams and I continue our work to endeavour to improve and to create a better and more responsive mental health service to meet the needs our community. I very much look forward to making additional statements in respect of planned measures to our Mental Health Services”



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 703/2018

Date: 19th November 2018

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### **GHA Improves the Provision of Counselling Services**

The GHA is delighted to announce that it has contracted an extra Counsellor to complement the Chartered Counselling Psychologist and Counsellor currently providing services at the Primary Care Centre. The Chartered Counselling Psychologist and Counsellor have increased their sessions by an extra day each.

The welcome addition of the new Counsellor and the additional sessions, follow recent important enhancements to the Mental Health Services, with the newly created Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) due to commence in January 2018. The GHA has also engaged an additional Consultant Clinical Psychologist to provide in-patient care at the Ocean Views Mental Health Facility, who commenced on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

As our community may be aware, counselling is a talking therapy. Counsellors listen to patients and help to find ways for them to deal with any emotional or other issues. This type of therapy can prove beneficial to persons experiencing the following:

- a mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety or an eating disorder;
- an upsetting physical health condition;
- a difficult life event, such as a bereavement, a relationship breakdown or work-related stress; and
- difficult emotions – such as, low self-esteem or anger.

Persons in the community who feel they may benefit from seeing a counsellor, should visit a GP at the Primary Care Centre, where they may obtain a referral. Counsellors are often the first port of call for patients who may be experiencing mental health issues or concerns. In some cases, when deemed appropriate, a counsellor may refer a patient on to a Psychologist, Psychiatrist or other mental health professionals.

General Manager for Mental Health Services, Mr. Chris Chipolina commented: “Everyone, throughout the course of their lives, will develop their own unique set of life experiences, so the exact path to overcoming any existing problems will inevitably vary between individuals. While there are many shared problems, and common issues, the exact elements at play will always differ from case to case. By working in partnership with clients, a professional counsellor can help improve the skill of decision making, reduce tension, develop better self-esteem, confidence and

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feel generally more positive and optimistic towards life. Counselling is a step-by-step process that requires time and consistency in order for the therapy to work; increasing the availability of therapists will help tremendously towards achieving this goal.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honorable Neil F. Costa MP said: “Counsellors offer a very important service. In many cases, persons experiencing emotional issues can benefit from this type of therapy, by talking to a trained professional. The counsellors form an integral part of our Mental Health Services, in many cases, averting the need for more intensive therapy or treatment. My colleague, Minister Cortes, announced, only last week, the welcome engagement of counsellors to work full-time at our schools. This is, undoubtedly, a major development in the provision of mental health services for children and young persons in Gibraltar. These counsellors will work in close collaboration with the GHA’s Mental Health Services, in order to identify pupils that may benefit from therapeutic, psychological or psychiatric services. I am delighted to say that we have also significantly increased the availability of counselling sessions at the Primary Care Centre; a development which will be beneficial for our community. “



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 744/2018

Date: 29th November 2018

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### **WORLD AIDS DAY 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2018**

World AIDS Day takes place on 1st December every year to raise awareness of the fight against HIV/AIDS and show support to the HIV community. It is estimated that over 36.5 million people across the world are living with HIV.

In England, around 90,000 people are living with HIV, with 12% unaware they are HIV positive. This means that one in eight people living with HIV don't know they have the virus. Although the HIV epidemic is slowing in the UK, nearly half of people who test positive are finding out they have HIV very late, meaning the virus may have damaged their health permanently. The risk of death and disease is greatly increased in people diagnosed late.

In contrast, people who are diagnosed early with HIV and receive effective antiretroviral therapy (ART) medication will have a normal life expectancy. They are also protected from passing HIV on to others because effective treatment reduces the virus in the body to an undetectable, untransmissible level.

There are various circumstances whereby HIV may be transmitted from one person to another, such as:

- Sexual contact that involves semen, pre-ejaculatory fluid, vaginal fluids, rectal mucus or blood;
- direct blood contact, particularly through sharing injection drug needles; and
- mother to baby (before or during birth, or while breastfeeding through breast milk).

The GHA's Well Person Unit, located at the Primary Care Centre, offers confidential and anonymised testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Persons wishing to book an appointment may do so by telephoning 20007842, or via the MyGHA Automated Phone System, on 20007007.

Dr Lynsey Dunckley, Sexual and Reproductive Health Doctor, has reinforced the importance of regular sexual health screening, including HIV: "The HIV test is a simple blood test and is offered to everyone. It is much better to know that you have HIV, so that the appropriate treatment can be

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started early, therefore avoiding later complications. The Well Person Unit, importantly, provides persons in our community who may feel concerned about sexually transmitted infections and wish to get tested, or simply wish to have a routine check-up, the opportunity to do so in a confidential and anonymised setting. It also serves to offer non-judgmental advice on preventative measures that persons should take to avoid contracting and transmitting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. We must not forget the very important message to use condoms to protect against HIV and other infections. I would therefore encourage members of the public, who wish to undergo screening for sexually transmitted infections to make an appointment with the Well Person Unit.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP added: “To coincide with World AIDS day, I am pleased to announce the introduction of ‘Point of Care Testing’ at the GHA. These tests will be available, for the first time, to individuals who may feel anxious about a possible positive diagnosis, or who are apprehensive about blood tests. This test is performed in the clinic and gives a result within minutes. It is carried out using a ‘finger prick’ sample of blood and will detect most infections within 6 weeks of exposure to HIV. An additional test is then offered to all patients at 3 months to definitively exclude HIV infection. I wish to sincerely thank Dr Dunkley, Ms Suzanne Romero, Clinical Nurse Manager at the Primary Care Centre, and Dr Krish Rawal, Director at the Primary Care Centre, for their excellent work in establishing and developing this crucial service.”



## **PRESS RELEASE**

No: 767/2018

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018

### **Matron Service at GHA Enhanced to Support Mental Health Services**

The Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA) is delighted to announce the commencement of recruitment of a third matron, who will be deployed to support Mental Health Services across the GHA. In October of 2017, the GHA announced the reintroduction of a modernised matron role, with the appointment of highly competent and committed charge nurses: Natasha Cerisola and Jolyn Gonzalez.

The matron's role involves developing and maintaining policies and protocols to ensure the delivery of care and patient safety is preserved and enhanced, across the GHA. They provide an accessible and authoritative presence in wards, to whom staff, patients and their loved ones can turn for assistance, advice, and support. Matrons also play an important role in the observance of high standards of hygiene and infection control procedures within wards and clinical settings. Other functions include coordinating the right plan of clinical care to meet the needs of recovering patients.

Following months of evaluation and discussion between the Ministry for Health, Care and Justice, and the Mental Services Teams at the GHA, various planned improvements and reforms have been introduced at the Mental Health Services. It was announced in October 2018 that the newly created Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is set to commence in January of 2019. This was followed by the appointment of an additional Consultant Clinical Psychologist to provide in-patient care at the Ocean Views Mental Health Facility, and the addition of a new Counsellor and extra counselling sessions at the Primary Care Centre. Further announcements, in respect of enhancements to mental health provision at the GHA, will be made in the coming months.

Ms Kay Rajkumar, Clinical Nurse manager for Mental Health Services said: "I welcome this extension to the mental health services and see this as an important step in the continued hard work and enhancement of current service provision. This development will prove beneficial towards ensuring that our service users', and their relatives', experiences of the service are positive and responsive to their current and future needs. It will also greatly assist in further





maintaining, developing and improving standards of nursing care and patient and carer access to information.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP said: “The reintroduction of the matron service has proven to be hugely successful. The feedback received from our service users and staff has been extremely positive. An additional matron, designated solely to support our mental health services, will no doubt be of the greatest benefit to our mental health patients and staff. This important and welcome post comes at a very important time for our mental health services, with further important, and welcomed developments, yet to be announced.”



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 778/2018

Date: 8th December 2018

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### **CHAMP: A Winter of Festive Cheer & Good News – Command Paper to ban the sale of energy drinks to under 16 year olds**

CHAMP (Children, Healthy and Active! Multi-agency Programme) as a local public health initiative, launched its third phase of planned events on Saturday 8th December. The winter phase of the programme, entitled 'A Winter of Festive Cheer & Good News', kicked off at Casemates Square. CHAMP is a well-supported, multi-agency programme set up to promote healthy living for Gibraltar's childhood population. The programme is led by local professionals from across Health, Social Care, Education, Public Health, Sports and Leisure, Youth and Culture, along with local businesses and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) considers poor weight management in childhood as one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century. The WHO report that the number of overweight or obese infants and young children, (aged 0 to 5 years), increased from 32 million globally in 1990 to 41 million in 2016, and state that, without intervention, obese infants and young children will likely continue to be obese during childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

CHAMP seeks to engage children and their carers through various planned events around the year in order to raise awareness on and promote healthier lifestyle choices in Gibraltar. The event launch of the winter programme, which will run into 2019, was titled 'CHAMP about Town'. Children and families enjoyed a treasure hunt, starting at Casemates, along Main Street and back via Irish Town, with multiple educational 'quiz stops' stationed along the route. 'Lucky draw' prizes were handed out to participants on successful completion of the treasure hunt. Another main feature on the day was the 'Guess how many steps?' game. Participating children and families were asked to state how many steps it would take to complete the roundtrip during the treasure hunt, with prizes awarded to those with the nearest or correct answers.

Further, the consumption of energy drinks has been reported to be particularly detrimental to a child's health, frequently containing high and unregulated amounts of caffeine. These drinks have been associated with serious adverse health effects, such as, diabetes, mood and behavioral issues. It is also proven to contribute towards tooth decay. To demonstrate its unwavering support towards this extremely worthy initiative, HM Government of Gibraltar will, on Monday, publish a command paper on the banning of the sale of energy drinks to under 16 year olds. The Minister for Health, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, has worked in collaboration with the Honourable John Cortes MP, Public Health Minister, on the preparation of the Command Paper.



Dr Annie Dai, Consultant Paediatrician and Clinical Lead of the GHA's Paediatric Service, shared her views: "Gibraltar is a wonderful home to us all, and as a caring and responsible community, it is down to all of us to make sure that our children grow up to be healthy, happy and productive individuals. We must lead by example and provide opportunities to the next generation to live healthily. It is only through investing our time and effort wisely and wholeheartedly this way that we can secure our children's future, and hence Gibraltar's future, in this beautiful land. CHAMP is here to help in the challenging work of making healthy choices the easy choices for children and their families in Gibraltar. After all, healthy children - happy future!"

Minister Costa added: "I have been a very keen supporter of this programme since the very first time Dr Dai, brimming with her usual enthusiasm and joy, briefed me on this excellent initiative. The work CHAMP is doing cannot be underestimated. CHAMP is already proving to be beneficial, and I am confident that the long-term effects will be even more valuable. It is important that we teach our children about the importance of keeping active, eating healthily and leading healthy lifestyles and how making the right choices will be beneficial to their health throughout their lives. I would like to congratulate, and sincerely thank the whole of the CHAMPs team for their fantastic work. I would also wish to thank my dear friend, and Cabinet colleague, Professor Cortes, for working with me on this project."

Minister Cortes said: "It's a real pleasure to once again work with my friend and colleague Neil Costa on this initiative. CHAMP is clearly showing the value of good old-fashioned teamwork. A great deal of progress is being made in this vitally important area of child health thanks to the joint efforts of many professionals. The Government wants to make a real positive difference to the health of young people. We led the way in creating smoke-free environments, which have benefited the whole community, and our legislating to control access to high energy drinks once again shows our commitment to real progress. And there will be more to come"

<b>Care Agency</b>
<b>413/2018 - Safeguarding and collaboration with British Overseas Territories</b>
<b>442/2018 - GSLA and Care Agency work together on Stay and Play</b>
<b>620/2018 - Care Agency Provides Safeguarding Training for faith groups</b>
<b>633/2018 - Fostering Campaign October 2018: Let's Face it – Time to Foster a Child</b>
<b>649/2018 - Let's Face it, Time to Foster a child</b>



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 413/2018

Date: 11th July 2018

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### **Safeguarding and collaboration with British Overseas Territories**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016, Gibraltar, along with other British Overseas Territories, signed a Memorandum of Understanding entering into a partnership among Overseas Territories to share relevant experiences and best practice to solve child-safeguarding issues. Since then, the members of the Gibraltar Child Protection Committee (CPC) have met on several occasions with the Head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Safeguarding Unit to share examples of best practice.

In October 2017, an Overseas Territories' Safeguarding Conference was held in London with representatives from the Care Agency and the Government Law Offices. They delivered presentations on the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers and the Enforcement of Cross Jurisdiction Orders.

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) in the UK has recently contacted Gibraltar's Head of Children's Services and the Chair of the Child Protection Committee. CAFCASS has asked the CPC, which is a statutory body, to share some of its successes and practices with the rest of the Overseas Territories. As part of this project, CAFCASS is planning a series of webinars for the CPC and the Safeguarding Children's Board members as from July 2018, with the aim to share learning and best practices. Given the level of success at implementing safeguarding strategies under the auspices of the CPC, CAFCASS has asked Gibraltar to lead at the first Webinar. The themes of the webinars will focus on leading transformational change and developing the safeguarding sector.

Chairperson to the Child Protection Committee, Mrs Natalie Tavares, said: "This was a wonderful opportunity for the Child Protection Committee. This statutory body has developed through time

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and is now functioning as an executive body and a separate operational one. This has allowed the CPC to mature and develop effective safeguarding strategies, which has culminated in the request to share our learning and experiences with other Overseas Territories”.

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon Mr Neil F. Costa MP, commented: “One of my very first acts, on having the privilege to be appointed Minister for Care, was to reorganise and restructure the Child Protection Committee. It is only right that Gibraltar shares its learning and best practices with other territories and supports the development of safeguarding processes beyond our shores. Safeguarding children has always been high on the Government’s agenda and is a subject that is very close to my own heart. The fact that Gibraltar has been recognised as a leading territory in this area gives me great personal pride and satisfaction and I am certain that our whole community will join me in thanking all the excellent professionals that comprise the CPC.”



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 442/2018

Date: 26th July 2018

### **GSLA and Care Agency work together on Stay and Play**

The Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority's (GSLA) Summer Sport and Leisure Programme has become a fixture in Gibraltar's summer calendar, and one that is enjoyed by a great number of children in Gibraltar. Within this, the Stay and Play Summer Sports has always been very popular and has been well attended by children with additional needs during their summer holidays for a number of years. It provides a wonderful opportunity for children to enjoy activities and form friendships.

The Stay and Play programme offers fun and exciting activities, and has seen a steady increase in the number of participants, who require a more specialist type of support over the last few years. This year, the Care Agency is proud to assist this excellent service by providing qualified care workers to compliment the GSLA leaders, in order to meet the complex needs of some of the children attending.

The Stay and Play Summer Sports programme is an inclusive one that ensures children, regardless of their needs, are able to access sports and leisure activities. No child should miss out on opportunities, which are available to the wider community, and the GSLA, together with the Care Agency, have worked together to ensure that all children who wish to attend, can indeed participate. Both organisations have an excellent working relationship, having previously worked together in the safeguarding of children. The natural follow-up has been to continue this partnership in the inclusion of children in the GSLA's summer programme. The programme includes a diverse range of sport, recreational, leisure, arts and learning opportunities, led by a committed team of leaders, trained workers and volunteers. It is a fantastic programme that offers learning, enjoyment, social interaction and fun.

Reagan Lima, CEO of the GSLA, said: "this working partnership provides greater support and learning opportunities to both the participants and leaders, providing an essential service to those who need it the most. The GSLA welcome the invaluable support from the Care Agency and looks forward to working together into the future."

Minister for Culture, Media, Youth and Sport, the Honourable Steven Linares MP spoke of the progression of the programme: "It is great to see how the Stay and Play Programme has progressed. The investment we made at the purpose built centre at the Boat House has certainly paid off. I

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would like to thank those who helped in making the programme work, but especially the staff of the GSLA who started this in the first place years ago.”

Natalie Tavares, CEO (ag) of the Care Agency, commented: “ensuring children are able to access services and activities is paramount to the Care Agency and, as such, we work at a multi-agency level with all relevant disciplines to achieve this. The Care Agency acknowledges the great work GSLA does in this field and are proud to be co-operating with them on this.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, added: “I am delighted that the Care Agency is working together with the GSLA in this hugely beneficial programme, and happy to see that more children have been able to access these wonderful activities as a result. I would like to thank Natalie Tavares and our friends at the GSLA, especially Reagan Lima, for their work in this fantastic programme.”

For further information on the Summer Sport and Leisure programme, please contact Gibraltar Sports Development & Training Office on 20076522.





## PRESS RELEASE

No: 620/2018

Date: 10th October 2018

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### Care Agency Provides Safeguarding Training for faith groups

Faith groups and places of worship play a major role in the lives of many children and young people within our community. Safeguarding must therefore be a key consideration in these settings.

In order to develop further in this regard, members from the Child Protection Committee have been meeting with different faith groups in Gibraltar, to agree a way forward in which robust safeguarding procedures may be implemented for the benefit of children and young persons in our community. Some faith groups already have these procedures in place, which include reporting concerns to the relevant authorities.

The Care Agency has today held a seminar to provide Safeguarding Training (Tier 1) to leaders and designate officers from faith groups at Bleak House. The training highlighted different issues faced by faith groups, providing information on how to identify concerns and how best to respond to concerns. It also provided information on the current systems in place regarding the reporting of concerns to relevant authorities, and how these referrals are handled. The development and implementation of safeguarding practices and policies also formed part of the training.

The Chair of the Child Protection Committee and Chief Executive Officer of the Care Agency, Mrs Natalie Tavares opened the training seminar, addressing those in attendance. She said: "Faith groups in Gibraltar are very active within our community and liaise frequently with the Care Agency. As part of our on-going work, we have met with leaders from the different faith groups and discussed the developments in the area of safeguarding. Gibraltar's different faith groups have always worked well together, and this is another great example of these partnerships."

The Honourable Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP commented: "To have systems in place to safeguard children and young people is crucial in any setting in which they regularly attend; be it schools, sports clubs, or, as in this case, places of worship. It is important for all sectors of our community to work together to protect children and keep them safe. I am, therefore, very pleased to report that the Child Protection Committee have been working together with various faith groups. I would like to thank Mrs Natalie Tavares, the members of the Care Agency and the Child Protection Committee for their hard work, commitment and diligence, in respect of the safeguarding of children and young persons within our community. This is a vital area within our services; one which HM Government and I will always fully support."

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Persons interested in attending safeguarding training sessions in future, may contact Karen Dawson, stating the organisation you belong to, on 20078528 or [karen.dawson@careagency.gov.gi](mailto:karen.dawson@careagency.gov.gi)



## PRESS RELEASE

No. 634/2018

Date: 15th October 2018

### **Fostering Campaign October 2018: Let's Face it – Time to Foster a Child!**

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, launched the fourth Fostering Campaign on the 15 October 2018, coinciding with the National Adoption Week in the UK. As with each campaign, the Care Agency aims to find suitable alternative homes for children in care. Minister Costa took the opportunity, once again, to make positive comments about the development of the fostering and adoption services in Gibraltar. The Minister was extremely grateful to Ms Dianne Vallejo, CEO of Bassadone Motors, for having shown specific interest in supporting the Care Agency with this year's campaign.

Ms Nicole Viagas, Head of Children Services, said that she was delighted to be part of such a great service, stating: "Children need the best possible start in life, and if this cannot be offered by the parents or family members, then alternative placements are crucial. I want to thank our wonderful foster carers and social work team for making this a reality for our children. Our carers understand that children need a safe base from where they can feel special; belonging to a family and positive childhood experiences translates into well-adjusted and successful adults." Ms Viagas went on to say that children's timescales are important and need to be acted upon promptly, "children grow up quickly and, therefore decisions about their future need to be made in a timely manner in line with their development."

The Children's Services are seeing the fruits of a truly committed team. The relationships between foster carers and social workers, and the service they provide, continues to grow. One of the developments in this team has been the creation of specific support programmes to help foster carers understand the impact of abuse. This programme deals with the effects of daily exposure to chronic stressful environments on children and teaches foster carers strategies to manage consequences of these.

It is with this in mind that the Care Agency will continue to be committed in developing this service through the provision of ongoing training by CoramBaaf to foster carers, social workers, and all those involved in this service. The Care Agency aims for a brighter future for children and therefore needs more foster carers and adoptive parents to be able to offer children an alternative to residential care.

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At the launch, Minister Costa spoke of the importance of children being brought up in a loving, stable and secure home. He said: “Children and young persons need parents and carers who will provide them with unconditional love and care. They need the consistency of a stable, warm and caring environment to help them overcome the consequences of adverse childhood experiences. These are some of the many reasons why I wholeheartedly support the Care Agency in finding suitable and alternative placements for children who desperately need them. I want to pay tribute to our current foster carers who enable children overcome their difficulties, through their patience, kindness and commitment. I would also like to urge persons considering becoming foster parents to contact our wonderful staff at the Care Agency to find out more about fostering, and the huge positive impact they could have on the lives of children and young persons.”



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 649/2018

Date: 23rd October 2018

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### Let's Face it, Time to Foster a child

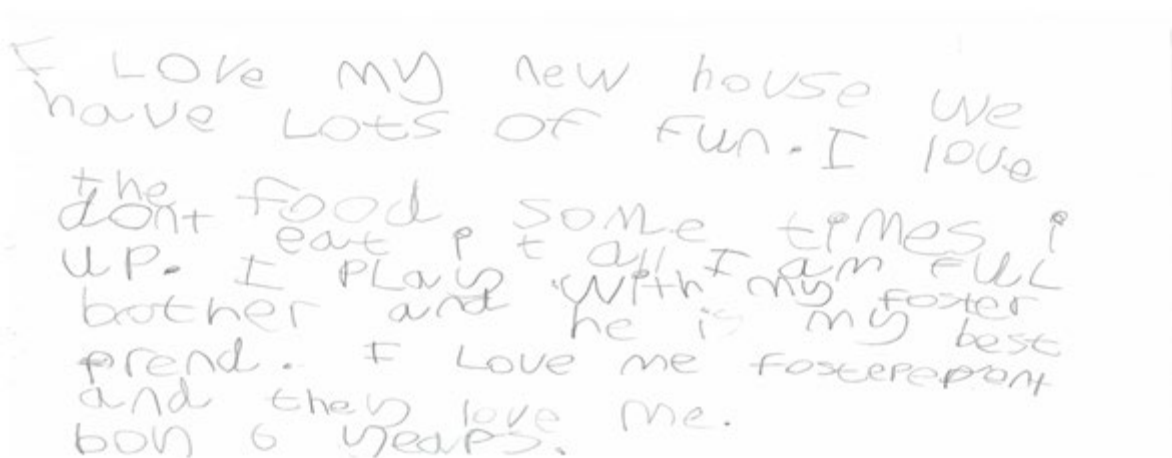
For children in the care system, life can be filled with uncertainty, especially for those children in residential care.

One's childhood is very precious and time limited. As adults, many of us may remember or track our early years, which might include a timeline of significant events such as birthday celebrations, the first day at school or family holidays. Most people will have been able to share these experiences with their parents and their extended families, and will have some good and perhaps some bad memories. Nonetheless, the people they share them with are consistent.

Take a moment to imagine a child who at age 3, was no longer be able to live with their family; or a baby born into the world never knowing their birth family.

What if that child could form part of a family, who can care for them and be part of the significant events in their lives, helping make positive memories for children?

Below is a note written by a boy aged 6 about his foster family:





As part of this year's campaign, we at the Care Agency want to make people aware of the importance of a person's childhood. It is vital that we have foster carers in our community who can offer their home to children of different ages, stages in their lives and abilities.

For many of our children, their early experiences mean that they are likely to have additional needs, whether this is physical, emotional or cognitive. Many children in care can experience extra struggles, which can concern persons who are considering becoming foster carers.

A foster carer said:

"We were aware that there were some medical difficulties with the baby, but had no real idea of how complex his needs would be - we can honestly say that the baby, who we fostered for over a year, has enriched our lives.

"We are so glad to have had the opportunity to have him as part of our life. Even with all the sleepless nights, hospital visits and worrying times in the beginning when he wasn't feeding well, we wouldn't change our time with him. We feel lucky that he has now gone to live with an amazing forever family who could see past the additional needs that he has and see him for the wonderful little boy that he is"

Foster carers play a major role in the life of children in care by providing safety, security, love and warmth. Caring for children with additional needs requires patience, understanding, a good sense of humour and open-mindedness.

For these reasons, we at the Care Agency will assign a social worker to foster carers, to provide support and guidance.

Let's Face it - Time to Foster. Can you help turn a child's life around?

Can you Face it and become part of the fostering service! For more information please contact Elizabeth Chikasha on 200 61728 or email [fostering@careagency.gov.gh](mailto:fostering@careagency.gov.gh)

<b>Ministry of Justice</b>
<b>669/2018 - Commencement of Duty Legal Representative Scheme</b>
<b>670/2018 - Fee Waiver for Old Age Pensioners in connection with Lasting Powers of Attorney</b>
<b>717/2018 - "Upskirting" Bill Unanimously Passed in Parliament</b>
<b>723/2018 - Legislation published to implement the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support</b>



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 669/2018

Date: 5th November 2018

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### **Commencement of Duty Legal Representative Scheme**

The Ministry of Health, Care and Justice is delighted to announce the commencement of the much-anticipated legal reforms establishing Gibraltar's first Duty Legal Representative Scheme. The Duty Legal Representative Scheme, which commenced on the 1st of October 2018 is a result of close consultation between the Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP and the Bar Council.

The start of the Scheme follows the commencement in June of important reforms to the provision of legal assistance. Entitlement to legal assistance was greatly enhanced by increases in financial eligibility from £5,000, a sum set in 1990, to over £14,000. This means that a person in full time employment, on the minimum wage, may now be eligible.

Also, since 27th of June of 2017, and for the first time in Gibraltar, prisoners applying for parole who meet the relevant criteria became eligible to receive free legal representation when the Parole Board is considering their cases. Further, persons appearing before the Mental Health Review Tribunal also became eligible to receive free legal representation, provided they meet the relevant criteria.

The main objective of this important package of civil justice reforms is to establish a fairer, and much improved, system for persons accessing legal assistance, whose financial limitations impeded their ability to obtain legal advice and representation. These wide-ranging access to justice reforms ensure taxpayer's monies are used in meritorious cases and not to fund cases, which were considered unreasonable.

The introduction of the Duty Legal Representative Scheme aims to provide persons arrested in Gibraltar with access to legal representation while in police custody. The service is available 24 hours and seven days a week. All law firms of 5 or more practitioners are required to become members of the Scheme, with smaller law firms given the option to be included. The Scheme guarantees a person's human right to professional legal advice and representation when held in custody.

The Bar Council said: "The Bar Council, which has been closely monitoring the implementation of the Scheme together with all stakeholders, including the Magistrates' Court, Royal Gibraltar Police and HM Customs, is pleased to report that the Scheme is working well overall from the perspective of all said stakeholders and that the availability of free legal representation has been well received





by detainees generally and is also assisting the law enforcement bodies in the discharge of their procedural duties.”

Minister Costa added: “I am extremely pleased at the successful collaboration with the Gibraltar Bar Council to implement the Duty Legal Representative Scheme. The Scheme provides legal advice and representation to persons in custody, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Persons may find themselves in situations where they are held in custody and are unable to access legal representation. It is important, and just, that everyone has the opportunity to receive legal advice and representation in keeping with their human rights. I wish to sincerely thank the Bar Council for their invaluable input and our excellent lawyers at the Government Law Offices for their outstanding work in achieving this important milestone.”



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 670/2018

Date: 5th November 2018

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### **Fee Waiver for Old Age Pensioners in connection with Lasting Powers of Attorney**

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice is pleased to announce an amendment to the Lasting Powers of Attorney (Registration) Regulations 2018, which waives certain fees if the individual requiring the Lasting Power of Attorney is in receipt only of an old age pension under the Social Security (Open Long Term Benefits Scheme) Act 1996 or the Social Security (Closed Long Term Benefits and Scheme) Act 1997, rent relief under the Housing Act 2007 or minimum income guarantee payments under the Social Assistance Fund.

The waived fees are those payable upon registration, repeat application and revocation of a Lasting Power of Attorney, in addition to the search fees of the register.

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP said: “This waiver of fees seeks to make the Lasting Power of Attorney more accessible to all who might want to avail themselves of a very useful life planning tool. I would like to sincerely thank Mr Manolo Ruiz of the Senior Citizens Association, who raised this important issue with me. It is thanks to his valuable work in advocating for his members that this important amendment to the regulations has been introduced.”



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 717/2018

Date: 22nd November 2018

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### **“Upskirting” Bill Unanimously Passed in Parliament**

A Bill has been unanimously passed in Parliament today to make “upskirting” a specific criminal offence in Gibraltar. The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, announced the publication of the Bill in June of 2018, following significant media attention in the United Kingdom, where a campaign was led by victim Gina Martin. Ms Martin was at a music festival in London, when two men took indecent photographs of her by angling their phone cameras under her skirt when she was distracted. These images were then shared by the men on WhatsApp.

Ms Martin campaigned for upskirting to be specifically made an offence and a Private Members Bill was submitted to Parliament. It did not pass its second reading, due to an objection by Sir Christopher Chope MP, who, as a matter of principle, objects to all private bills. However, after much outrage, the UK Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Theresa May MP, rightly, intervened and adopted the measure as a Government Bill. The UK Bill is still working its way through the Houses of Parliament.

This new legislation will ensure that convicted offenders are placed in the sex offenders register, as “upskirting” will be listed as a sexual offence.

Minister Costa said: “It is important for Gibraltar to criminalise this vile behavior. These odious acts cause victims great distress and humiliation, a fact that this Government takes very seriously and is reflected in the penalty that will be imposed on the perpetrators of such behaviour”.

Minister Sacramento said, ‘Upskirting is an invasion of privacy which leaves victims feeling degraded and distressed. We must do everything possible to protect women and girls from sexual offences and ensure that those committing such offences are punished and that perpetrators of this type of offence are added to the sex offenders register.’



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 723/2018

Date: 26th November 2018

### **Legislation published to implement the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support**

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP has published legislation implementing the 2007 Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance. The legislation published implements the Convention, which allow for an efficient and accessible system for the cross-border recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance.

This transposition of the Convention into local legislation is of particular importance, given that the continued application of the Convention to Gibraltar will be affected by the United Kingdom's exit of the EU.

The Regulations, together with Rules published by the Chief Justice, are a precursor to giving full effect of the Convention to Gibraltar once Gibraltar leaves the EU, as the UK Government will seek an extension of the Treaty to Gibraltar. The new measures will facilitate this process, which will, crucially, allow for the continued relationship with the other parties to the Convention after Gibraltar leaves the EU in respect of recognition and enforcement of maintenance orders.

Commenting on the publication of the new legislation, the Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP stated: "These important pieces of legislation will serve to provide a robust channel for families and children in our community in circumstances where individuals are not meeting their obligations with respect to financial support as ordered by the courts of EU and non-EU states party to the Convention. I am confident that our community will welcome this development, and I would like to sincerely thank our Government Lawyers for their work in drafting the necessary legislation."