



HM Government of Gibraltar

Ministry of Health, the Environment,
Energy and Climate Change

PRESS RELEASE

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Statement on Residential Home and Day Centre

"The opening of two new buildings designed specifically for dementia care, which are new concepts in Gibraltar go much, much further than the completion of a building project," commented Minister John Cortes.

What the two new blocks at the former RNH site – a residential home and a day centre for dementia sufferers, accommodating over 50 and 90 persons respectively – will achieve, will be revolutionary for the care of our elderly, and have needed careful and sometimes painstaking planning.

These buildings are in no way what the GSD had planned. The residential block was redesigned and will now care for persons with higher dependency. And the day facility was a brand new initiative of the GSLP/Liberal Government that had not featured before 2011. It has made a day centre for 90 elderly out of what the GSD wanted to make accommodation for staff.

A great deal of work is ongoing on the part of health and care professionals in order to ensure that the best possible facilities and standards of care are achieved. This will include a new dedicated doctor specifically to look after users of the elderly residential services. This will additionally relieve pressure on both the Primary Care Centre and A&E.

Both centres will definitely open within months. In addition, ways at which the elderly can be better supported in the community are currently being studied.

It is naïve for the GSD to state that the pressure on acute beds is exclusively due to the homes not having opened. It is a fact of health services everywhere that there will be times when more patients need to access hospital services, and more beds have to be introduced. The GSD is making those comments after being responsible in their time for years of cancelled operations, while the present situation is only a few months old. For two whole years there have been virtually no cancelations. Had this Government not taken all the



steps it has over the past four years, particularly with opening of Day Surgery, the impact would have been much, much worse.

Minister for Health and for Elderly Residential Services Dr John Cortes stated, "We are working hard on getting this absolutely right. And getting things right can take more time than one would like. I would of course have liked these centres to have been open already, but I am at the same time hugely excited at the difference they will make to the users, their families and carers, and to the health and care professionals who always bear the brunt of additional beds and full wards. I cannot stress enough my thanks and appreciation to all the staff, and the Unions, both in the GHA and the Elderly Residential Services, who are working so hard at present dealing with the added work. It is a pleasure to be able to work hand in hand with the representatives of the staff, who are absolutely vital in the work of sustaining morale. I look forward to the Opposition congratulating the Government once all these exciting new services are up and running.

The work that the staff of the Social Services Ministry is doing under my hard working colleague, Samantha Sacramento, must also be recognised as they are providing domiciliary services to ensure people can be cared for at home. We are investing millions on that service which the GSD spent only a few hundred thousand on. When we spend, however, we are criticised by them for spending. When we don't spend because we are fine tuning and getting things right, they criticise us for not spending. What a shambles of an Opposition!"