



PRESS RELEASE

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HMGoG's Implementation of the National Dementia Vision and Strategy for Gibraltar

The month of September has been globally dedicated to world Alzheimer awareness month and today is world Alzheimer's and Dementia action day.

Government marked the day by hosting a coffee morning at Mount Alvernia. The aim of the event was to showcase professional developments in this field and positive aspects of dealing with dementia as well as providing support for sufferers and their families. Residents of Mount Alvernia and their families were invited to the event, as were members of the Gibraltar Alzheimer's and Dementia Society (GADS). The event was well attended and enjoyable. The Government can reflect on the tremendous progress that has been made and on the services that are currently available to sufferers of dementia and their families.

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a range of progressive neurological disorders. There are several types of dementia and individuals may present with a single or combination of types. Although more common in people over 65 years of age, dementia can also affect younger people; early onset of the disease can begin as young as age 30, 40, or 50.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is committed to providing the best possible quality of care for dementia sufferers. The Government is actively pursuing its new National Dementia Vision and Strategy for Gibraltar in a concerted and holistic way. This involves dedicated input from experts across the Gibraltar Health Service, the Care Agency's Adult Social Services and Elderly Residential Services.

The Gibraltar Health Authority

The GHA continues to address ways in which the services it provides can be made easier and better. It will be introducing ways of alerting clinicians when patients they are seeing suffer from dementia and ways of fast-tracking such patients in order to avoid long and stressful delays. It will continue to work to raise awareness of the needs of patients with Alzheimer's and Dementia across health and care professionals. The opening of the Day Centre (referred to below) will act to increase involvement in dementia care and will see the employment of additional professionals, including speech and language therapists, a physiotherapist, occupational therapist and a General Practitioner service dedicated solely to the elderly.



The Care Agency, Adult Social Services

The Care Agency's Adult Services play a key role in the ongoing support for people who have Alzheimer's and Dementia conditions. The team consists of qualified social workers, managers and administrative staff who have extensive experience and skills within all aspects of social care. Adult Services are committed to improving and developing the services available for dementia sufferers and their carers. These include home support, quick response for vulnerable people including those with dementia who require monthly contact calls to check on their safety, The team are also developing Safeguarding Procedures for vulnerable adults who may be at risk of abuse, and who may not have the mental capacity to make decisions about keeping themselves safe.

Elderly Residential Services

Elderly Residential Services provides care in accordance to the special and individual requirements of its residents. Over the last 12 months there have been many initiatives adopted by ERS in support of the National Vision and Strategy for Dementia. Staff has attended various training courses focussing on the need to treat people as individuals and always with the care and dignity that they deserve. Other training has encouraged the use of a wide range of activities in our care environment, with particular emphasis on dementia-friendly activities. Meanwhile, refurbishment at Mount Alvernia will bring it up to the dementia-friendly standard which already exists at the John Mackintosh Home. In addition, the specialised residential facility at the Royal Naval Hospital will soon be open for use. The facility is equipped with specialised furniture and equipment which have been masterminded by a UK firm which is a specialist in Dementia-Friendly Environments.

Investment and improvement

In addition, the new residential facility at the Old Naval Hospital, the Bella Vista Day Centre, is amongst the most significant investments into elderly care service provision in recent local history. The facility will form part of a range of brand new services aimed at specifically addressing the needs of both dementia sufferers and their families. The Day Centre represents a major shift in thinking from an Institutional model of care to a community-orientated model in which services will be available to help maintain functional abilities of individuals with dementia and offer support and daytime respite to their families. In many cases this will delay the need for institutional care and, importantly, will help keep families together for longer.

In addition, the Government Services will continue to work with and consult with the Gibraltar Alzheimer's and Dementia Society (GADS) as it is important that professionals take account of matters from the point of view of families and carers as well.

Minister for Health Dr John Cortes said :

"We are at a crossroads in serving our fellow citizens with Alzheimer's and Dementia. Recent and current investment is about to bear fruit and the service we provide will now improve beyond recognition. But it is more than just a public service. It is about general public awareness and having a Dementia friendly community, and in this respect in particular we will continue to work closely with GADS to achieve maximum awareness and understanding of the needs of our friends and relatives with these conditions and, very importantly, the needs of their carers, who do so much, very often in the background and without recognition."

Minister for Social Services Samantha Sacramento said : "We have come a long way in the field of dementia. I am proud of how all the professional services have worked together to formulate the national dementia vision and strategy which will undoubtedly benefit all our community. We must thank all professionals for



the difference that they make to enhancing the quality of care for individuals who suffer from dementia and I am also grateful for the input that we receive from GADS who support our services which in turn support them and their members.