



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 191/2017

Date: 27th March 2017

---

### **‘PALS’ HAS BEEN A SUCCESS IN HELPING PATIENTS WHO NEED INFORMATION OR GUIDANCE**

The Gibraltar Health Authority’s new Patient Advocacy and Liaison Service (PALS) has become an effective means of providing information and guidance on all aspects of the health service and its administrative procedures. PALS, set up in November 2016, is available to members of the community who wish to make an enquiry about a problem concerning any area of the GHA, who require assistance in liaising with relevant departments and/or who wish to make representations to the correct administrative channel.

In its first five months, PALS has successfully handled over 200 cases. These cases vary in nature, from trying to speed up specialist appointments when there are genuine medical grounds to do so, to offering advice to patients on GHA processes and to providing information on the services available.

Jackie Mañasco, who manages the office together with Sharron Cantos, explained that they are available to assist and guide all users of the health service who request it, during normal working hours. She said: “I think I should make the point that we are not here to facilitate anyone ‘jumping the queue’, but to lend a hand when there are deserving cases who would need to be seen sooner for strictly medical reasons. We can speak to doctors, liaise with the hospital administration and, when there are genuine medical grounds, to shorten waiting times for referrals.”

PALS is not a complaints bureau or a substitute for the Ombudsman’s office, as the latter continues to transact all formal medical grievances.

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon. Neil F. Costa MP said: “The establishment of PALS was one of my first policy decisions as Minister for Health. The GHA is a large government entity and it is possible for individuals to feel lost in administration. PALS has been created to help the public, to offer advice, to consider the merits of individual cases, and, if necessary, to speak to doctors, allied health professionals and the Medical Director on their behalf. I very much encourage



the community to make use of this innovative and, in my opinion, excellent facility, which has been set up to improve patient care and the service provided to our community.”