



PRESS RELEASE

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New dementia care residential facility opens at Hillsides

A new residential facility for persons with Alzheimer's and Dementia was officially inaugurated today by Chief Minister, Fabian Picardo QC MP and Minister for Health, Care and Justice, Neil F. Costa MP. 'Hillsides' is located at the site of the old Royal Naval Hospital and close to the Bella Vista Dementia Day Centre, another vital elderly care facility and milestone in the provision of elderly care services, which opened in January 2017.

The new residential facility provides care and accommodation for 52 patients diagnosed with dementia and in need of full time, high-dependency, specialist care.

Following advice from Bob Wilson Chaplow, UK specialists in the field of dementia care, the Hillsides design focused on maximizing the comfort and wellbeing of patients. Features such as en suite bathrooms, increased floor area in bedrooms and communal areas, were incorporated into the designs, together with all necessary equipment to give residents the highest possible standards of care.

The construction phase has presented innumerable challenges, which have had to be overcome, as the original project by the previous administration envisaged 92 beds, subsequently reduced in number to create a fit for purpose facility with better and more spacious living conditions. Much of the infrastructure including air conditioning, lighting and electricity wiring, has also had to be reconfigured or redone from scratch during a protracted period of works.

Hillsides boasts a fully equipped kitchen area, snoezelen room, plus hairdressing and chiropody services. There is also a pleasant garden area with different types of flowers and plants for sensory stimulation. All rooms are colour coded for dementia, while furniture has been specifically designed as recommended by our UK dementia consultant. The soft flooring throughout the building similar to that in toddler parks, and signage is also dementia friendly.

Additionally, verandahs on the various floors have been opened up to enhance views and give a greater sense of unrestricted space to patients.

Staff will also benefit from adequate amenities and there will be eight beds available to provide respite for family carers.



Patients will move in between now and July when the centre is expected to be running to full capacity.

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon. Neil F. Costa MP said: “I think everyone can see that this Government is unswervingly committed to continue improving the services for vulnerable adults within our cherished elderly community. It was vitally important that we got things exactly right, after inheriting plans which were described by medical experts as “displaying a shocking philosophy of ‘quantity’ rather than ‘quality.’” We took the view that designs must always have the interests of the residents at heart and insisted on the new, excellent design we see today. I am therefore delighted to see the fantastic Hillside dementia residential care home opening its doors today. I must thank Susan Vallejo and the team at the Elderly Care Services and the staff at the GHA and the Care Agency for all their efforts in bringing this excellent project to fruition.”

For his part the Chief Minister said: “Along with the Bella Vista Day Centre, Hillside was a key feature of the GSLP/Liberal Government’s ‘Dementia Strategy’, which was launched in 2016. These are both excellent facilities providing quality care for elderly citizens. The people of Gibraltar can rest assured that care for vulnerable elements in the community will continue to be a top political priority for my administration and we will continue to invest financial and material resources to ensure that they can have dignified care and the best possible quality of life.”