



PRESS RELEASE

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Care Agency announces a new Family and Community Centre

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar and the Care Agency are delighted to announce that a Family and Community Centre has been inaugurated today at Mid Harbour Estate. The Family and Community Centre will create an invaluable resource for children, young people and families from all walks of life.

There is compelling evidence to show that the provision of early help and support to families avoids difficulties for children and their parents at later stages in their lives. This early help and support can be offered in a variety of ways and can focus on different factors, which affect children, young people and families.

The Mid Harbour Centre will provide a multi-agency service and will be instrumental in offering the different organisations working directly with children, young people and families the opportunity to engage with them in different ways. This excellent resource will be used and supported by different organisations such as the Gibraltar Health Authority, Drug and Rehabilitation Services, the Youth Service, Department of Education, Citizen's Advice Bureau and other voluntary organisations and support groups.

The Family and Community Centre is confident it will make a positive difference within the community. It will run structured programmes such as the Incredible Years parenting programme and will also offer informal drop-in sessions. The latter will provide parents the opportunity to meet other parents and make friends, or seek advice from the professionals at hand.

The Head of Children's Services, Ms Nicole Viagas, pointed out that "the aim of the Family and Community Centre will be to meet the needs and enhance the strengths of our community. The Care Agency will ensure that it is a community-led initiative whereby the programmes and early support offered will be tailor-made to meet the needs experienced by those in the community. Our mission is to provide an empowering, community-focused service, which enables families to thrive. I am extremely grateful at the opportunity to work with the different staff teams who will run this service and to those persons who have worked relentlessly to make this possible."

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon Neil F. Costa MP, stated: "It is with extreme

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satisfaction that I announce the opening of the Family and Community Centre, completing yet another of our manifesto commitments. I am grateful to my colleagues the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia for making this possible by allocating the premises for this particular use and my predecessor the Minister for Housing and Equality Samantha Sacramento for developing the concept that has come to fruition today.

The service provided by the Family and Community Centre will be a multi-disciplinary one. The Care Agency, together with other departments and organisations working with children and their families, have explored different options and services so as to ensure that the Centre's use is maximised to meet the varied needs of our community. This means, for example, that the Youth Service will also have an allocated time slot. We fully embrace the opportunities which this centre will offer and support the vision for this service."