



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Positive Feedback received from the Family and Community Centre**

The Ministry for Health, Care and Justice and the Care Agency are extremely pleased with the response it has received since the Family and Community Centre was officially inaugurated by the Honourable Mr. Neil F Costa MP, on the 27th September 2017.

The Drop-In service opens once a week to parents and children below school age whereby parents attend and take an active role in the preparation and the provision of activities. These have included baking, story time and play activities.

Further, the Family and Community Centre has provided an invaluable opportunity to families by offering them support and guidance, with the opportunity to meet other parents, as well as enjoying quality time with their children in a warm and comfortable environment.

The Centre has seen a steady increase in attendance, with initial numbers ranging from 11 children and 9 parents, to 28 children and 20 parents. Parents have been delighted with this new initiative and have commended the Care Agency on the provision of this welcoming and supportive service. The Family and Community Centre has also opened its doors to an older group of children on Thursday afternoons between 5.30pm to 7.30 p.m. During these sessions, the Centre worker and an experienced volunteer have been working closely with these children and have provided them with the opportunity to engage in outdoor and indoor activities. The number of children attending these sessions has increased since the onset of this initiative, with numbers rising to a total number of 15 children.

Another highly welcomed initiative has been the introduction of a Positive Parenting Programme, called Handling Anger. Both the Care Agency and Childline staff were trained together to deliver these programmes which have been proven to assist parents in caring for their children in a positive and enriching manner. The parenting programme commenced on the 13th October 2017 and has run for four weeks. The Care Agency will continue working together with Childline and other Departments, such as the Youth Service, the Department of Education, the Gibraltar Health Authority, the Royal Gibraltar Police and the Citizen's Advice Bureau, to ensure that they continue to work together towards building a brighter future for our children.

The Head of Children's Service, Ms Nicole Viagas, commented that she is very pleased on how this service is developing and said that "the Care Agency is fully committed in helping families to nurture

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a new generation of happy and confident children. When families are listened to, and are provided with a place where they feel supported and can share their views and feelings, they in turn feel that they are a valuable member of our community”.

The Chief Executive for the Care Agency, Mrs Natalie Tavares noted that engaging older children and young people was very important to the team. She highlighted that “having volunteers involved in this project provided these individuals the opportunity to give something back to the community. This is truly a vocational area of work”.

The Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Mr. Neil F Costa MP expressed his immense pleasure and satisfaction at the already evident success of the Family and Community Centre. He commented: “Her Majesty’s Government of Gibraltar is committed to improving the well-being of children and their families, especially through the implementation of early intervention. We will continue to invest and support this area of work to ensure our present and future generations enjoy all available opportunities to become secure and emotionally healthy members of our society”.