

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Ministry of Equality seminar, “Maximising Communication Opportunities for Children and Young Adults with Autism”, a huge success**

In the Understanding Autism series, the Ministry of Equality arranged for Mrs. Gaynor Vatvani, Head of Speech & Language Therapy Service at the Gibraltar Health Authority, to deliver seminars as part of the national autism strategy on “Maximising Communication Opportunities for Children and Young Adults with Autism”.

A total of 5 sessions were held this week, catering for almost 250 people. As with all other seminars organised under the National Autism Strategy, some sessions catered especially for parents, family members and volunteers. Other specific seminars were directed at HMGOG professionals, front line staff and Civil Servants in senior and junior management appointments.

The Minister for Equality, The Hon. Minister Samantha Sacramento, MP, said “Communication is about who you really are as a person. It is important for children and young adults with Autism to be able to show other people their feelings, personality and ideas. In order to be able to successfully achieve this, they must have the right tools and support to develop functional communication skills. What better than to have a holistic approach were both family members and professionals that may be part of an individual’s environment, all benefit from the same knowledge in applying best practices?”

The feedback on our sessions has once again been overwhelmingly positive.

I am also absolutely delighted that for the first time in this series we have had a local professional deliver the training. Gaynor is an extremely dedicated professional who also, as part of her role in the multi-agency strategy working group which I chair, has been very influential in the forming of our policies. I wish to thank Gaynor for her excellent delivery of this important subject this week and of course my motivated team at the Ministry of Equality.

The Ministry continuously strives to raise awareness and to improve the lives of people with disabilities. They work tirelessly to bring equality to the doorstep of our society, paving the way for a more inclusive society. My Ministry are already planning future seminars.”