



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **The Primary Care Centre and Advocacy Council Work Together to Provide Training and Raise Awareness**

The Gibraltar Health Authority's Primary Care team have welcomed the opportunity to work together with the 'Advocacy Council for Health Service Users with Additional Needs', to deliver informative talks and help raise awareness regarding disabilities and different additional needs.

The Advocacy Council represents various associations, societies and support groups, which support members of our community living with dementia, Down's Syndrome, autism, mental health issues and hearing impairments, amongst other conditions.

The Council members explained: "We work together to advocate for members of our community with additional needs and ensure they receive the care they need and deserve. Furthermore, frontline staff are key to delivering better value for service users and we are grateful for the opportunity to work with the GHA, to provide an important and informative educational programme".

The Advocacy Council brings a wealth of knowledge and shared experiences, which are conveyed to front line staff to improve communication and engagement with health service users, who may need extra requirements. The forum is working together to develop an on-going, structured educational teaching programme, specifically designed for the PCC staff. The aim is to help staff better understand issues affecting some service users, strategies to promote positive life changes, relational connectedness and care in how to manage complex health care needs.

The programme began with talks on "Understanding Disabilities", which were held over the period of two days, on 22nd and 23rd February.

The PCC's Clinical Nurse Manager, Ms Suzanne Romero, said: "Caring for people with disabilities can, at times, be challenging, though, ultimately rewarding and instructive. We endeavour to protect our most vulnerable service users and bring about improvements with appropriate structures and processes in place. We openly welcome this initiative, which will shape and influence future services."



Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Hon Neil F Costa MP, opened the talks, adding: “It is my fundamental view that we must ensure we work closely with our community and engage with our service users. The Advocacy Council provides invaluable support to our health professionals and I am pleased that we have formed such a strong relationship since its formation last year. We regularly hold meetings on different areas within our health services, which have already proven to be extremely constructive and useful. This is yet another beneficial initiative, where we can work together towards our common goal - improving and developing on the services we offer our community”.