



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **GHA Matron to Focus on, Support and Improve Mental Health Services**

As the public may recall, the Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA) announced in December of last year, the commencement of recruitment of a third matron, dedicated exclusively to Mental Health Services. After a successful recruitment process, the GHA is delighted to announce that Vikki Ward has been appointed to the post of mental health services matron and started in her new role on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019.

Mrs Ward qualified as a registered mental health nurse in 2004 and took up employment in the United Kingdom working at a medium secure unit. She received a promotion to Deputy Ward Manager during her time working in secure services. Following her return to Gibraltar, Mrs Ward commenced her employment at the GHA in 2009, where she worked within acute mental health services. In 2011, she was promoted to Ward Sister, in which time she has gained valuable clinical and managerial experience.

The matron's role, in drawing on her previous experience, is to work collaboratively, ensuring and enhancing the multi-agency team approach to care that is provided day-to-day. The matron also plays an important role in the observance of high standards of hygiene, infection control procedures and in the setting of standards and clinical governance across the GHA's Mental Health Services.

Mrs Ward's appointment follows the re-introduction of the modernised matron role in the GHA in October of 2017, when charge nurses Natasha Cerisola and Jolyn Gonzalez were appointed to the new posts. The new matron's commencement further supports the GHA's Mental Health Services, which have experienced some major reforms in the last 18 months, including the creation of a dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), the appointment of an additional Consultant Clinical Psychologist, increasing the complement of Consultant Psychiatrists from 2.5 to 4.5, adding the services of a new Counsellor and increased counselling sessions at the Primary Care Centre.

General Manager for Mental Health Services, Mr Christopher Chipolina said: "I am very excited at how this new addition to mental health services will help to further develop and enhance the standards, quality and effectiveness of the service we offer the community."

Ministry of Health, Care and Justice



Clinical Nurse Manager for Mental Health Services, Kay Rajkumar commented: “I see the addition of a 3<sup>rd</sup> Matron, who will concentrate their time predominately within the mental health settings, as an acknowledgement of a number of service developments over the last 18 months and future developments we wish to implement during 2019/2020. These developments are in line with patient, family and advocacy groups, which have met regularly with the Minister for Health, in order to improve on the extremely high standards we all expect of our health care system.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP added: “I would like to sincerely congratulate Vikki Ward on her appointment. Vikki has been part of the GHA family for 10 years. I am convinced that her vast experience and knowledge of our health services will stand her in very good stead as she embarks on a new chapter in her career. Although her duties will have changed with the added responsibilities that come with her new role, Vikki will continue to work in line with values and principles that our nurses follow so passionately, providing our patients with highly competent, safe and compassionate care and their utmost professional commitment. I look forward to closely working with Vikki, in order to deepen, widen and improve Gibraltar’s Mental Health Services.”