



PRESS RELEASE

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GHA introduces enhanced community mental health services to include after hours and weekend support

The Gibraltar Health Authority is delighted to announce that as from 19th June 2017, the Community Mental Health Team introduced a phased enhancement and extension to their service provision, through the introduction of an 'outreach support team'. This team will offer an additional tier of support for community patients outside normal hours.

Although still at embryonic stages, the new extension to the service will see the phased introduction of a number of new initiatives aimed exclusively at improving the quality of life for patients and carers in the community and will continue to develop as the service grows.

The new components will ensure that a more robust support network is available to patients after-hours and will be a welcome addition to the existing on-call team. Some of the services that will be available will include, a nursing after hours on-Call service, (17:00-08:00hrs; 7 days a week, including Bank Holidays), improved discharge packages, incorporating more supportive structures for people moving back into the community from Ocean Views Hospital, improved supervision and management of patient caseloads that require more input or monitoring, increase in frequency of home visits and checking compliance with medication. Following the necessary training, a mental health support line will be available to our known patients/carers incorporating a combination of phone and physical presence and, where necessary, linking with the excellent team at Club House to offer advice and support. It is anticipated that these innovations will have a positive impact in reducing the need for admissions or length of stay in hospital and add resilience to a community centred approach to mental health.

Ocean Views Manager, Christopher Chipolina welcomed this initiative, stating: "These reforms will ensure a more robust out of hours support network and will be a welcome addition to the existing on-call team aimed exclusively at improving the quality of life for patients and carers in the community."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa added; "I am extremely pleased with the introduction of the 'Outreach Support Team'. These innovations will provide



greater support to some of our society's most vulnerable members. There are further improvements in the pipeline, such as the support line, which will not only be available to patients, but their families and carers too. Professionals from the GHA, working together with Clubhouse and Samaritans, will be available to offer caring, compassionate and expert advice round the clock."