



## PRESS RELEASE

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### INAUGURATION OF THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar and the Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA) are immensely proud to announce the inauguration of the Children's Health Centre. This truly landmark project, marked by the commissioning of a fully child-friendly environment and co-location of primary and secondary care Paediatrics, is the culmination of 24 months of work and is the fulfilment of a key manifesto commitment for this Government.

The Children's Health Centre (CHC) is located in Block 9 of Europort, less than a two-minute walk from St Bernard's Hospital. Ramp access leads to the main entrance which opens into a bright, airy, modern, and beautifully furnished space with clear signage in keeping with the colours of the GHA Core Values.

The main space, with ample area for prams and buggies, leads the eye to floor-to-ceiling windows looking out over the GHA gardens and the water beyond. This space is complemented by a quiet and private room for breastfeeding. At the far end, there is a delightful, open play area with clean and well-chosen toys. Seven bright, welcoming, and fully equipped dental clinics are found in this area. An undersea marine theme decorates the walls and leads to nautical scenes around the main seating area.

Close to the main entrance, directly on the right side, will be the Child Health area where Gibraltar's child health surveillance with health visitors takes place. To the right of the reception desk, near the Child Health area, will be the out-patient area with five dedicated clinic rooms staffed by various child healthcare professionals. Specifically included here are the brand-new, daily scheduled specialist GP clinics taking place side by side with the Consultant-led Paediatric Development and Disability service. These are the first of primary and secondary care services to co-locate. This clinical area is decorated with lively and cheerful jungle scenes.

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The left of the reception area is comprised of other community services such as Paediatric Dietetics, Diabetes Care, Speech and Language services, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and Gibraltar Young Minds (GYM).

The whole Children's Health Centre is modern, bright, and designed to flow well, with themes that are cheerful and welcoming. All are designed with the ability to afford a child-friendly and calming clinical environment and with children and their families in mind.

In order for there not to be any disturbance to the seamless delivery of care, there will be a phased approach to commencing services in the new Children's Centre. Phase 1, commencing on the 17 July, will include staff induction and Child Health clinics, Neurodisability assessment/reviews with Paediatric multi-disciplinary team assessments, Paediatric Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Dietetics, Diabetes clinics, and Gibraltar Young Minds.

This will be followed by Phase 2, commencing on the 12 August, with Dental services and the Occupational Therapy sensory room.

Specialised GP clinics will commence as from early September and will see the commencement of primary care services, such as specialist GP services, nurse practitioner clinics, community midwifery and child protection assessments. Secondary care services, which include visiting consultant clinics, the new adolescent service and a consultant paediatric service for children with complex and chronic health needs will also form part of the second phase of implementation.

It is important to note that patients should continue to attend the existing PCC at the International Commercial Centre. For phases 1 and 2, attendances at the Children's Health Centre at Europort will be by appointment only. The GHA will issue online notices and information leaflets to the community for all information.

By the end of September, a lift will be installed to provide better access to persons with additional mobility needs. Parking availability has also been arranged for service users and this will be introduced, by late August, on a pay and display basis with a two-hour free parking for persons attending the centre.

The more elective primary care aspect of services in the Children Health Centre will be fully complemented by the new Primary Care Centre, which will continue to provide services to children, especially children with acute illness. The new Primary Care Centre based in St Bernard's Hospital would be in an enhanced position to provide the desired care for the acutely unwell child by virtue of the physical proximity to comprehensive A&E services and the full Paediatric team housed on the same site as St Bernard's Hospital.

Parents can be assured of reliable offers of assistance by the dedicated appointments teams both at the Children's Health Centre and in the main Primary Care Centre when deciding on the most suitable type of GP appointment and safest venue of access for their child at the point of



presentation of need. This is truly the hallmark of a creative new model of Paediatric health care that Gibraltar is proud to announce.

Mrs Rose Suissa, Primary Care Manager, commented: “It has been a great honour to be so involved in this project since the very beginning. I am so very delighted to see the Children’s Health Centre being opened to our community. I am equally excited to see the services expand and develop over time, as we review our services and work closely with our health care teams and services users.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP, added: “There have been incredibly dynamic changes and marked improvements in healthcare across the GHA. All the work and initiatives in Primary Care have improved access to our GPs and clinical staff, and I have been immensely proud to be part of the transformation of the service. The opening of the Children’s Health Centre will forever be a memorable moment of deep satisfaction and pride for me personally and for the Government. This Children’s Health Centre is something incredibly special, modern and to rival leading healthcare systems in other countries. To my mind, this project, along with the new Primary Care Centre, will now launch many more reforms and enhancements in care as both primary and secondary care become so much closer and more integrated. As a parent, and a Gibraltarian, I feel privileged and extremely grateful that we have access to a modern and dynamic centre of this standard when attending to our children’s healthcare needs.”

The Chief Minister, the Honourable Fabian Picardo MP said: “My Government have always maintained our willingness to listen to our community and improve services in Gibraltar in consultation with service users. This is indeed a very proud moment for me as Chief Minister and, equally importantly, as a parent, to see this welcoming and bright new Children’s Health Centre open for patients. This has to be one of the standout projects for our health services, and I am very excited to watch the services establish and grow in time. I am also enormously proud of the enthusiasm and determination of the primary care teams, and in particular Mrs Rose Suissa, to deliver something truly incredible and a lasting legacy to the health and wellbeing of our children.”