



PRESS RELEASE

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Inauguration of the New Primary Care Centre

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar and the Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA) had the great honour to inaugurate the new Primary Care Centre on Monday 14 October 2019. This is another project of true significance, and is, without question, the pinnacle of the overall review and reforms of Primary Care services over the last 3 years. Along with the new Children's Health Centre, these two brand new and bespoke centres represent the completion of this Government's manifesto promises in respect of healthcare.

The new Primary Care Centre (PCC) is located on the St Bernard's Hospital site with the entrance just next to the main hospital entrance. This, in itself, is a unique location in that it represents an opportunity to integrate both primary and secondary care services, and allows clinical and support services to work more closely together for better continuity and further improvement in patient care.

The main entrance to the new PCC leads to a large, welcoming reception area with staff waiting to help, advise and signpost patients and service users. The main reception desk leads to two waiting areas: the first is the Registration Department with staff experienced and trained to help service users register for healthcare or renew their health cards in private and discrete interview booths. To the right is a spacious seating area for patients attending specific nursing clinics such as the leg ulcer and lymphoedema clinics, phlebotomy (blood sampling) clinics and half of the General Practitioners' clinics. Also, close to this area, is the Telephone Sick Certificate office for patients to easily attend and collect certificates that have been requested over the telephone. A key area on this ground floor will be the Minor Illness 'See and Treat' service; easily accessible to ensure consultations are quick and efficient.

A central, bright stairwell, complemented by spacious lifts, leads from the ground floor up to both the first and second floors. The first floor waiting area and reception area lead onto GP clinics, Nurse Practitioner clinics and the new and enhanced Dermatology Service. The existing Dermatology clinic has been expanded to include more clinical areas for the Clinical Nurse Specialists, and a Minor Operations area where the team can remove skin lesions in a purpose-built, sterile environment. Once all primary care services have been moved to the new location, a priority reform will be to use this Minor Ops clinic for the removal of 'lumps and bumps' by GPs, making the

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minor surgical service more efficient, removing some of the pressure on the Hospital Day Surgery Unit, and offering GPs an opportunity to enhance their skills further.

The second floor has a number of administration offices and is mainly focused on the more specialised clinics, including the Well-Person Unit and Allied Mental Health Professionals, Psychologist, and Counsellors. This floor has been purposely designed to be more quiet and private, to ensure the best possible environment for clinics that require that extra degree of discretion. The Well-Person Unit has been enhanced to include a small laboratory area where samples can be tested straight away and the Counsellors' rooms have been specifically designed to be far more welcoming and comfortable.

In order for us to continue to provide the highest standard of primary care services without interruption, we will make a phased move to the new location, starting with the Registration Department and the first half of GP clinics after the official inauguration.

Dr Krishna Rawal, acting Medical Director, said: "This move cannot simply be considered a relocation of the existing Primary Care Centre; our move represents a great leap in the enhancement and improvement of primary care once again, and, in particular, the closer working relationships with our colleagues in secondary care".

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa, added: "It has been a singular honour to have started this project since the first plans were drawn up eighteen months ago. I think it is fair to say that primary care services have been transformed. Health services, as a whole, will become fully integrated and will be a model of best practice to which other health authorities can only aspire. It has been a true privilege to work with all members of the primary care team, and I can only thank every one of them for their hard work, dedication to patient care, and willingness to embrace change and improvements."

The Chief Minister, the Honourable Fabian Picardo, said: "What a wonderful way to end this term of Office and to include a new Primary Care Centre in the list of truly notable community projects delivered by this Government. Even the process of designing and building a new Centre has been incredibly positive; working closely with the primary and community care teams, reviewing existing services and introducing new services. It is the fruition of projects such as this one that make me deeply honoured to serve this community, and makes me justly proud and excited for our future."