



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.33 p.m. – 6.20 p.m.

Gibraltar, Wednesday, 19th May 2021

Contents

Questions for Oral Answer	3
Economic Development and Enterprise.....	3
Q65-72/2021 Public Debt and Reserves – Details March and April 2021	3
Q62-63/2021 Financial Services Ombudsman – Intentions and budget.....	12
Q64/2021 e-government platform – General and licensing costs	14
Health and Justice	24
Q35/2021 Illegal parking on Devil’s Tower Road – Enforcement.....	24
Q36-37/2021 Mental Health Services – Public survey results; analysis report implementation	25
Q38/2021 Covid-19 testing – Plans to bring down costs.....	27
Q39-40/2021 Pfizer booster vaccines – Supply and roll-out.....	28
Q41/2021 Pfizer booster vaccines – Supply and roll-out	29
Q42/2021 Complaints about health care – Number received in last 12 months.....	30
Q43/2021 MRI services – Beneficial owners of AC Ltd.....	31
Q44-46/2021 Clinical standards in the GHA – Communications from Head of Clinical Governance.....	32
Q47/2021 Importation of cocaine, cannabis and heroin – Number of convictions.....	38
Q48/2021 Carrying offensive weapons – Convictions and injuries caused.....	39
Q49/2021 HM Prison – Mandatory and voluntary drugs testing	40
Q50-51/2021 COVID-19 vaccinations – Numbers administered to residents and cross- frontier workers.....	41

Q52/2021 Unvaccinated hospital visitors – Policy on visiting dying relatives	43
Q53/2021 Government subsidy of 10 social work students – Ultimate intention	45
Q54-56/2021 Dementia care – Update on Government strategy	46
Q57/2021 Health and care sector – Replacement of key workers	48
Q58/2021 Colorectal specialists – Whether in GHA	50
Q59/2021 Airport rapid testing station – Contractor	51
<i>The House adjourned at 6.20 p.m.</i>	52

The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 3.33 p.m.

[MR SPEAKER: Hon. M L Farrell BEM GMD RD JP *in the Chair*]

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: P E Martinez Esq *in attendance*]

Questions for Oral Answer

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE

Q65-72/2021

**Public Debt and Reserves –
Details March and April 2021**

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Wednesday, 19th May 2021.

We continue with Answers to Oral Questions. We commence at Question 65. The questioner is the Hon. R M Clinton.

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Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, can the Government please provide the total Gross Debt, Aggregate Debt after application of the sinking fund to Gross Debt, Cash Reserves and Net Debt figures for Public Debt for the following dates: 1st March 2021 and 1st April 2021?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Enterprise.

Minister for Economic Development, Enterprise, Telecommunications and the GSB (Hon. Sir J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, I will answer this Question together with Questions 66 to 72.

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Clerk: Question 66, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, can the Government's advise the balance on the General Sinking fund on the following dates: 1st March 2021 and 1st April 2021?

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Clerk: Question 67, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government advise if the £150 million loan from the Gibraltar International Bank was repaid in April 2021?

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Clerk: Question 68, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government provide a breakdown of gross direct borrowing as at 30th April 2021 analysed between debentures issued and bank borrowing, naming the lender, maturities and interest rates?

30 **Clerk:** Question 69, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, can the Government provide an analysis of all loans granted by the Improvement and Development Fund as at 31st March 2021, showing the borrower, amount outstanding, purpose, repayment schedule and interest charge?

35 **Clerk:** Question 70, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, can the Government advise why the Gibraltar National Mint Limited has borrowed £500,000 from the Gibraltar Savings Bank by way of debentures issued?

40 **Clerk:** Question 71, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, can the Government advise the level of reserves in the Gibraltar Savings Bank as at 31st March 2020 and 31st March 2021?

45 **Clerk:** Question 72, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, can the Government advise when and where does it intend to commence the 150,000 m² land reclamation project which is at the heart of its Post-Brexit National Economic Plan?

50 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Enterprise.

Minister for Economic Development, Enterprise, Telecommunications and the GSB (Hon. Sir J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, the Gross Debt in March was £647.7 million and in April £697.7 million.

The Aggregate Debt in March was £635.6 million and in April £677.7 million.

55 Cash Reserves and Net Debt: March cash reserves were £59.7 million and net debt £362.9 million. The April figures are stated in the Draft Estimates Book provided to the Hon. Member.

60 The balance on the General Sinking fund on the requested dates were: 1st March 2021, £12,119,734; April, £20,019,928.

The £150 million loan from the Gibraltar International Bank was not repaid in April 2021.

65 The gross direct borrowing as at 30th April is as follows: Bank, £325 million; Debentures, £372.7 million.

The amount outstanding of all the loans granted by the Improvement and Development Fund as at 31st March 2021 is £65,843. Gibraltar National Mint has borrowed this sum to invest in developing its business and provide income to the Gibraltar Savings Bank.

70 The Gibraltar Savings Bank reserves information requested is in the Draft Estimates Book provided to the Hon. Member.

The Government can provide this information when the reclamation projects are in a position to be proceeded with, which remains to be identified.

75 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Sorry, Mr Speaker. I beg your indulgence while I analyse what the Hon. Minister has said.

If I can take the Minister back to his answer as to the Cash and Net Debt at 1st March 2020, I may have misheard him: did he give a number of Net Debt of about 360-something? The maths does not quite work in my head.

80 **Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** The March figure was £59.7 million in the Cash Reserve; and £362.9 million is the Net Debt.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, I am sure he will appreciate that if he adds back, that will give an aggregate debt of £422.6 million, which does not seem possible – if his Gross Debt is £460 –
(*Interjection by Hon. Sir J J Bossano*)

85 Would the Minister then perhaps go back and ask someone to check the figures?
(**Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** Yes, Mr Speaker.) Because I think the number should be, for Net Debt, somewhere like £575.9 million.

Mr Speaker, again just sticking to the Gross Debt/Net Debt question, which was Question 65, can the Minister then confirm that Gross Debt in fact has risen from 1st February 2021 to
90 1st April 2021 by the amount of £75 million?

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: I not have calculated the figure myself, but I trust these calculations, Mr Speaker.

95 **Hon. R M Clinton:** I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

Would he then agree with me, Mr Speaker, that the £697.7 million Gross Debt is, perhaps understandably, the highest level that we have reported in this House?

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: Given the fact, Mr Speaker, that the Hon. Member supported that we
100 would borrow £500 million, it is a figure that will continue to be growing until the £500 million is all borrowed.

So I agree that it is higher than it has been before, and I predict that it will be higher still because we all agreed in this House to borrow £500 million.

105 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Mr Speaker, if I may, before I move on to my next question, what we agreed was what the level of borrowing headroom was, not that we *should* borrow £500 million. I think there is an important difference in interpretation. But anyway, Mr Speaker, I will leave it there.

Can I ask Mr Speaker, why the loan of £150 million from the Gibraltar International Bank was not repaid and in fact, rolled over?

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Hon. Sir J J Bossano: What I am advised by the Treasury is that as a result of the Covid, there is a lot of cash in the International Bank and in many other banks, and that since this is a revolving loan that we have got, which has got a year still to go, repaying that loan and then lending to somebody else would have resulted in the Gibraltar International Bank having to have an increase
115 in share capital, which we would have had to fund. The logic of not repaying it and triggering that situation was one that was discussed with the regulator and it was considered to be in the best interests both of the International Bank and the Government to continue to leave that amount unpaid at present.

It is probably the case that once the expected spending materialises of people coming out of Covid and being able to live more normal lives, we may see that that situation will no longer be
120 there, but of course, that expectation which many governments have in many parts of the world may not materialise. People may not go back on spending sprees after this, in which case at some point in time, we will no doubt have to repay that money and increase the share capital of the bank.

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Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, I am very grateful to the Minister for his answer.

I have two questions. He may tell us that he does not have the information or you may, Mr Speaker, decide that it is far too tangential from the original Question, but since the Minister has brought up the matter of the bank and the capital, it is important and perhaps ... I just ask two
130 questions. One is in terms of the risk-weighted assets of the bank, is it that lending to the Government of Gibraltar is deemed to be zero-risk weighted?

Secondly, does he have any kind of indication of how much additional share capital would have been needed by the bank if the loan had not been rolled over?

135 **Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** The answer to the first question is yes, that is the case; and the second one, I believe the figure would have been something of the order of £5 million.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Minister for his answer.
140 In respect of Question 68, I was given £325 million and £372.5 million. I assume £325 million was bank borrowing and £372.5 million was debentures. But if the Minister reads the Question, he will see that I did actually ask for some detail.

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: The Hon. Member is right, I have not given the interest. I think it has probably been given before, but I will get it again and provide it to them, because the only thing that is new there is the 250 that has been drawn down already from the £500 million, and he
145 knows the interest on that. But I will get it. I agree with him that I have not put it in the answer, but it will not be new information.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Minister.
150 Perhaps in the £325 million, and he may have this information to hand, if we assume the £150 million is with the Gibraltar International Bank, are we safe in assuming that the difference of £175 million is with RBS International/NatWest?

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: Yes, to my knowledge, there is no other bank lending to the Government.

155 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Mr Speaker, moving to Question 69, the Minister gave me one number: 600-something – I did not quite have time to catch it to write it all down. If he could repeat the number, and could he indicate who that was granted to? Again, I did ask for more detail in my question.

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: The number, Mr Speaker, is £65,843. That is the outstanding figure. These
160 sums go back quite a long time. One of them is Vineyards Management Limited. The other one is the Gibraltar Taxi Association. The first one is being repaid in 128 monthly instalments, of which 14 are still remaining. The second one is being paid in 120 instalments, of which 15 remain, monthly.

165 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Mr Speaker, I wonder if the Minister would be willing to provide us a schedule on this side of the House. It would be easier for us to understand the numbers and the borrowers. If he would be willing to do that, we would be grateful.

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: I will get him a copy, Mr Speaker. It is together with the other question,
170 but I will get him a copy when we are finished.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, in answer to Question 70, the Minister gave an answer of something like investment and development of the Gibraltar National Mint Limited. Can the
175 Minister advise what kind of development we are talking about? Given that this entity has been in existence for a while, why has it now found the need for half a million pounds?

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: The Gibraltar National Mint is a business. It is a business that is expanding. Therefore, it invests ... Half a million pounds is not a great deal of money, given that the company,
180 I think, has got a much bigger shareholding base. This is the first time. Rather than issue more equity, it decided to borrow the money from the Savings Bank and pay interest to the Savings Bank. The turnover is increasing. We are performing very well, profitably. The people that we have as partners, in the sense that they are the ones who effectively do all our marketing, in reality they guide us in terms of the issues. I think if we do 20 different coins a year, one or two are determined
185 by us and may or may not be successful and the other 18 are determined by the people who actually do the selling and the marketing. We are involved in assisting in that, but they are the

ones that guarantee us a minimum figure for sales, for example, and therefore rather than increase the equity, which has already got quite a big equity base, we decided to borrow the money, and that would mean some interest coming into the Savings Bank, where, as the hon. Member knows, with the low rate of interest, it is difficult to find things into which we can invest.

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Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, as the Hon. Minister knows, I am dying to see the results from the National Mint, of which he is so proud.

But if it is an expansion of sorts, can he give the House an indication of what it is that is new, that the business requires half a million? If it is doing so well, why does it need half a million pounds?

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Hon. Sir J J Bossano: Mr Speaker, the last thing I would want is that the hon. Member opposite should die, because I am very fond of him! So at the risk that there is of him dying, I am afraid that I am not prepared to be answering questions on the deals of a business because, as far as I am concerned, we are an investor.

200

Look, the Savings Bank invests in a whole lot of companies that are UK companies, where we lend them money, and that does not lead to me having to explain why I have invested more than half a million pounds from any one of those companies.

I can confirm to the Hon. Member that the return on that half a million pounds, which is better than we can get anywhere else, will be well worth having lent it to them as opposed to lending it to somebody else, and that is from the perspective of the Savings Bank.

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In terms of the operations of the company, when the accounts are finalised and published, he will be able to see them quicker than he would have done under the previous Administration, and I hope there will be sufficient information there to remove risk of death.

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Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, to absolutely guarantee that I will not drop dead, would the Minister be kind enough to agree to publish the full accounts, and not abbreviated accounts?

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: I can only agree to one thing, and that is to comply with the law and publish what is required – the same as any of our competitors do.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Can I just ask on this: I cannot recall exactly the Hon. Member's explanation last time when there was a question on the National Mint, but am I right in thinking that the purpose of the company now is to, in effect, take over the issue of commemorative coinage, and that is the business that we are talking about? Is that the business?

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Hon. Sir J J Bossano: I do not think necessarily commemorative coins. There are some things that are not coins that are sold in the market of coin collectors, but principally it is legal tender coins that we make, yes.

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Hon. K Azopardi: And this being a company that, as I understand, is owned by the Savings Bank – the hon. Member is the Minister with responsibility for the Savings Bank – does he not agree that in those circumstances ... ? And while of course we understand that the Government has to make a judgement, and so does the Savings Bank, as to whether it makes sense to lend to the company so that it pursues the business case, it may be that, obviously, the Government has made a judgment, thinking that there is a case for doing this because it is going to generate profit. But in those circumstances, does the Minister not think he can or should account to the House in a bit more detail as to the business case for it?

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Hon. Sir J J Bossano: Mr Speaker, the House is not being asked to provide any funding for anything here. This is not the money that is being used by the Government from Government revenues. This is the reinvestment of depositors' money.

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I know that the hon. Members believe that the best thing to do, which is what they used to do, is to keep it in cash, idle, and not use it. That is what they did when they were there, which meant in effect that they were spending a lot of money in paying interest rates without getting a return. But we do not have that philosophy.

Look, the Savings Bank actually owns the shares in Gibtelecom. If the Savings Bank thinks that Gibtelecom is a good investment and it does it, then the theory is that because we are investing the money of the Savings Bank, we should then have to give explanations about the performance of Gibtelecom – why do they need extra money, what are they going to use it for, what is it that they buy, what do they sell? However, if instead of, say, the money being put in Gibtelecom, the decision is taken in looking at where we want to invest that we want to invest in BT in the UK, which is another telco doing the same thing as the one here, then that one we do not have to give any explanations.

Well look, the answer is that the Savings Bank borrows money from the public and reinvests it for the purpose of generating a profit which could be higher. It is not higher because we have got less money invested in profitable things like this and more still in the bank waiting for a profitable opportunity. That money when it materialises is simply kept there for a rainy day, which is not growing as fast as I would like it to be, precisely because we are not doing more of this.

So the answer is that I do not accept that, because we invest in a company that is in Gibraltar or in a company that we own, we have to give more information than if we invest in a company that is owned by somebody else or of which we are a partner or ...

When they had the Government companies, not only did they never give any explanation, but they never made any accounts, and it was there, part of that time. In the previous history of Gibraltar, from the beginning of the first company under the AACR, the position has always been that the Government invest in a company, either because they want to do something through a state-owned company rather than the private sector or because they are looking for profitable opportunities that they feel are safe investments which bring in a return. That does not mean that we manage the company in this Parliament. We do not.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker –

Mr Speaker: This will be the last question.

270 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Yes, mine. (**Mr Speaker:** Yes.) The Hon. Member has ...

But does he accept that there is a distinction? This is the use of depositors' money, and the use of depositors' money is to be accounted to depositors. People are listening. We are asking legitimate questions. He is the Minister for the Savings Bank. The Savings Bank has taken a decision. All we are saying is, you do not need to account as National Mint necessarily, but under the guise of Savings Bank, with your responsibility, given that you are using depositors' money and we used to keep it in cash – you are using the depositors' money – on what basis is it being used? It is a perfectly legitimate question, surely.

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Hon. Sir JJ Bossano: I do not know who all those people are that the Hon. Member thinks exist, but all I can tell the Hon. Member is, look, nobody forces anybody to invest money in the Savings Bank. They have got plenty of other options. There is not one month that goes by without the number of depositors and the level of depositors going up. So that does not suggest to me that there is any concern, that there is not enough information and therefore ...

If I have my savings, I would not put it in an institution where I was worried that I do not know what they are doing with my money. I do not think that is true. It may be true that people who support him think that. I suggest that the people who support him – and that is why he knows about it and I do not – should stop putting money in the Savings Bank. We have now got something like £1.5 billion. We do not need the money of those who do not believe we are doing the right thing.

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290 **Mr Speaker:** The Hon. Roy Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

If I can move on to Question 71, which coincidentally is about the reserves of the Savings Bank, I appreciate that they are in the draft estimates, but they are drafts. I will not pursue the number further as we will be debating it no doubt in due course. But Mr Speaker, I would just like to ask him and he talks about keeping the reserves there as a rainy-day fund, does he not consider now is the time to take a dividend from the Savings Bank into the Consolidated Fund? Is not now a rainy day?

300 **Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** Well, it is quite sunny today actually, Mr Speaker!

I assume these questions are rhetorical, because if I am not doing something and he asks me do I not think that I should be doing it, if the answer were 'Yes, I think I should be doing it', then I would be doing it and then he would not be asking me why I am not doing it. So I do not know what the point is that he is trying to make.

305 Clearly it is raining less than it should be, thanks to the success of my hon. colleague, the Chief Minister, who was able to persuade Her Majesty's Government to provide a guarantee for a loan, which is at a rate of interest that the Savings Bank would not like to be lending at. So the position is that it is better that we make use of that money and if at the end of the day there is no other external source, then we can always fall back on this. That is the more sensible thing to do.

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Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, without actually mentioning any numbers, which I am prohibited from doing, does he not consider that it is somewhat ludicrous for the Government to be borrowing money from the Savings Bank when they could easily just obtain a dividend from the Savings Bank? Why pay the Savings Bank 3% interest, when you could just simply get the money yourself. It is a ridiculous round-tripping of interest payments. The Government is paying interest it does not have to pay. Mr Speaker, it makes no sense.

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In terms of rainy-day funds, if this is really a rainy-day fund then it should be used!

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: Mr Speaker, I cannot accept the hon. Member belongs to a party that for 15 years did not have a rainy-day fund and that in the first meeting of the first Parliament – House of Assembly as it was then – after the election of 1996, the first thing they did was say, 'The rainy day is today.' They emptied all the piggy banks and used all the money!

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Hon. Chief Minister: And never put it back.

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Hon. Sir J J Bossano: And they only became converted to the rainy-day fund in the last couple of years. (A Member: In opposition.) So they are not going to give me lectures on how we should do it because for 15 years, they thought it should not be done at all.

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So the answer is look, even if that were the case, the money that we are paying is not money that we are giving away. It is money that has contributed to the profitability of the bank and creating the ... And you think it is circular. Well look, if and when he gets into Government, he can either go back to the old system and stop using the Savings Bank, run it down to the ground, keep it just with an ordinary account and cash, and not have a rainy-day fund and do all the things that they did before.

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What we are doing is what I believe to be in the best interests of the Government and Gibraltar, which is what I am elected to do. (*Banging on desks*)

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, can I then ask the Minister, under what circumstances would he use the reserves in the Savings Bank? It would appear to me, Mr Speaker, that he has no intention of using them at all, for whatever political reason that he thinks linked to a manifesto that it is somehow a virtue that he has his money parked under the guise of the Savings Bank,

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when really this is money that belongs to the Government of Gibraltar anyway. It is ludicrous, it is a false economy to be borrowing when he has the money at his disposal. It does not make any sense.

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Hon. Sir J J Bossano: The sense is, Mr Speaker, that unlike him – and he has now demonstrated that in fact, his mindset is exactly the same as the 15 years, so he can no longer argue that what happened in the 15 years was wrong, because what he is asking me to do is precisely to bring the reserves of the Savings Bank down to £1,444.45, which is what I inherited from his party when they were in government. Clearly, I do not agree with doing that. I criticised it when they did it, and we have got a different policy.

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Does he not understand that the policy that the electorate want to see in place is the one that you see, because that is what they voted for, and they have been voting for that now since 2012, in the knowledge that that is what we are doing – it is not a secret – and that the policy that he wants me to adopt is the one that I have criticised? Well look, I do not do that! I do not criticise things from the Opposition and then do them in Government. If I criticise them for running these reserves down, why should I now do what they were doing, which I did not agree with when I was in opposition. When I was in opposition, I was saying it was wrong to do what he wants me to do and I am now doing the opposite.

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If he believes what his predecessors believed, he can do that, which is precisely what he says: we do not have any reserves, we do not need any reserves in the Savings Bank, and we spend them. Then there will be no rainy day fund.

Why is he so keen to see those reserves disappearing? So that he can say to the electorate that we failed and have not got a rainy day fund – is that what he is after?

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Mr Speaker: Right, a supplementary on the last question.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker – no, on this one.

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Mr Speaker: No, we are moving on to the last question, which is Question 72. Supplementaries on Question 72.

Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, he just made a speech that I need to respond to. *(Interjections)*

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Mr Speaker: No, I think we have aired this subject sufficiently.

Let us go on to the last ... You can ask supplementaries on the answers given to Question 72. *(Interjections)*

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Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, going on to number 72, as you suggest, can the Minister advise in terms of the 150,000 m² land reclamation, where was the site meant to be?

In terms of a timeframe, given that the Government has only just recently put out a tender for the removal of a fraction of the rubble mounds from the East Side, does he envisage this happening within the lifetime of this Parliament?

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Hon. Sir J J Bossano: Mr Speaker, I am here to provide information, not to engage in speculation, and the information that I provided is clearly that, as at this point in time, we are not able to give him information as to when it is going to happen or how long it is going to take. There are things that prevent us proceeding with this project at the moment and when we are able to move and we have information, we will provide it. Until we do, we will have to wait, like I am waiting.

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Hon. R M Clinton: Mr Speaker, can he indicate where this project was going to be sited; and to what extent does this hamper his post-Brexit National Economic Plan?

395 **Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** No, Mr Speaker, I do not propose to give him the information he is seeking now.

400 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. Member said a question ago that he is here to provide information. Have I understood his position now is that he is not here to provide that information on that specific question?

405 **Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, I have told the Hon. Member that the information will be provided when the reclamations are proceeded with, and I will not provide the information now. Quite apart from anything else, the exact size and place of the reclamation can change at any time between whatever I say today and whatever happens when we are ready to proceed with it.

410 So the answer is I will not provide the information, because that is not information that I can guarantee would be what will take place. Everything at the moment is, in fact, waiting for developments that will enable us to proceed with the things that we need to do.

415 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker –

420 **Mr Speaker:** Yes, this will be the final one.

425 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. Member has just said, the size might vary, so let me put the question this way: in his manifesto very specifically, it refers to 150,000 m – very specifically – and this land reclamation of 150,000 m² was a central plank to the post-Brexit economic plan. How is it that the post-Brexit economic plan can take off without his central plank?

430 **Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** First of all, let me say, Mr Speaker, that I welcome that the Leader of the Opposition is keen to see the post-Brexit economic plan take off, because it is a good thing for ... I welcome his support for that. Of course, there is no other economic plan other than that one, so it is either that or nothing, because they did not have one!

435 **Hon. K Azopardi:** You are the party in Government ...

440 **Hon. Sir J J Bossano:** I think the fact that it is the main plank of that plan is a matter of judgement. He may think it is the main plank, but there are things that were planned to have happened earlier, which have not happened for the obvious reason that nothing has happened since the beginning of the pandemic in anything to do with construction and so forth.

445 But I can tell him that in terms of delivering the plan and its benefit, the plan sets out a picture of what it is going to contain. That picture is dependent on a number of factors that we encounter once we set out as a Government to implement the policy that we defended in the election.

450 I have told the hon. Members opposite that my target is still to achieve the levels of economic growth from the new base that we were aiming to do from the original base, and I can tell him that the things that the projects that were designed to take place in the land that was designed to be created are all there still in the pipeline and that there are indeed more things than are contained in the manifesto which we will expect would materialise between now and the next election.

455 **Mr Speaker:** Right, next question.

DIGITAL AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

Q62-63/2021

**Financial Services Ombudsman –
Intentions and budget**

440 **Clerk:** We now move to Question 62. The questioner is the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Does the Government have any intention in the medium/long term to appoint a specially dedicated Financial Services Ombudsman?

445 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Digital and Financial Services.

Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, I will answer this Question together with Question 63.

450 **Clerk:** Question 63, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: What budget has the Government dedicated to the Financial Services Ombudsman?

455 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Digital and Financial Services.

Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, as the hon. Member knows, the Government will shortly appoint the Ombudsman as the Financial Services Ombudsman, once the arrangements are in place to provide him with the appropriate expertise to enable him to carry out his statutory functions. We are assisting in procuring favourable rates from private sector firms who may be interested in providing this expertise to the Financial Services Ombudsman as case handlers. Once we have this information available, we will be able to more accurately estimate the cost of providing this service.

465 **Hon. D J Bossino:** In terms of the medium to long-term policy? I thank the Hon. Member for the answer. Is it the Government's plan ...? This is just a sense I got; it is not on the basis of anything that he said when we debated the motion in relation to the appointment of Dr Coram. The sense I got is that this was almost like a stop-gap measure, but perhaps the Government may have had a future-term plan to appoint a specially dedicated Financial Services Ombudsman. Does the
470 Government have a policy to continue with this arrangement, or is it his intention in the future to have a specially dedicated FSO?

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, I think it is a case of we believe this will work. We believe that the Ombudsman will have the necessary expertise available to him to reach the appropriate judgements but obviously we will keep it under review and if we feel that it is not working or that
475 it could be improved, then of course we will revisit and review and come back with an alternative.

But at this moment in time we think it will work. Mr Coram is comfortable that it can work and therefore we need to see how we go in terms of whether we can arm him properly with the expertise available through case handlers to enable him to reach the appropriate decisions at the
480 appropriate times.

Hon. D J Bossino: I suppose a large measure is going to be determined also as to when he expects that Part 14 of the Financial Services Act, which is the one that is dedicated to the Financial Services Ombudsman, will be commenced. I understand it has not yet been commenced, and he
485 is nodding his head in agreement. Can he say when he expects that Part to commence.

Hon. A J Isola: Yes, Mr Speaker, it has not been commenced and it will be commenced as soon as we have the infrastructure ready for him to be able to work. So Mr Tipping from the Finance Centre is assisting him in engaging with all firms in Gibraltar who may be interested in providing services, and once we have that ready we will then appoint him. We do not want him to be receiving complaints without having the ability to deal with them.

Hon. D J Bossino: Does he envisage ...? Does he have a timeline as to when he expects to be passing, I think as the Minister responsible under the relevant legislation, the subsidiary regulations, which will assist the FSO to conduct his duties as provided under the Act?

Hon. A J Isola: We expect that to be in the short term – very shortly. Within, I would say, a couple of months.

Mr Speaker: Right, this will be the final question for the Hon. Damon Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Does he have any notion or any idea as to how many financial services disputes the Ombudsman is likely to encounter? I know it may be an unfair question, but given his experience of doing the job now since 2013, does he have any idea, any inkling as to what his likely workload is going to be?

Mr Speaker: obviously that will have a knock-on effect on the type of assistance he will require from outside his Department.

Hon. A J Isola: My understanding is that legislation covers complaints with effect from the date of commencement and therefore I do not expect there to be historical claims being brought forward. So my response to that would be: my guess would be as good as his.

Mr Speaker: Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. K Azopardi: Given the gamut of financial services areas – so insurance; I suppose companies and trusts, and so on and so forth – there will be other disputes of very specific funds, a very specific area – how are you going out to potential interested parties on case handling?

So, for example, surely it is not on a case-by-case basis, which would be an enormous amount of money on a case-by-case basis, if someone turns up as a complaint in insurance, then you go to someone to seek assistance. Is it on a case by case, which is probably going to ratchet costs up for the Ombudsman and the budget? Or is it going to be on a kind of a sectoral tender? So for example, you go out and see who is interested in providing case handling in insurance; then you put it out for some kind of mini tender between those people interested in doing case handling on insurance. Or is it going to be: 'I have gone out to the sectors. These are the people who are interested and what I am doing is I am going to contract some kind of secondment arrangement'?

I am sure the Minister agrees that it should be done on that on the basis that is going to provide the lowest outlay to the taxpayer. So will the Minister agree that he should explore all those options to ensure that we get the best deal possible?

Hon. A J Isola: Yes, Mr Speaker. As the Member knows, these professionals are not very cheap and part of our endeavour will be to ensure that we deliver value for money to the taxpayer.

I believe that what we need to do in the first instance is reach out to the firms both legal and accounting, and others possibly, who may be able to assist us with the more generic cases. I think they are primarily in banking, possibly pensions – insurance is an obvious one, although far more of them, but far less frequent in terms of complaints. So I think we need to capture the main areas and then see how we go, because the beauty of this system is it enables you to bring in more if you need them and if not, you do not need them, you do not use them. So it is very fluid and open.

The Ombudsman will be saying, 'I need some help in a particular area which I have not got cover for'; we will go and get it.

540 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q64/2021
e-government platform –
General and licensing costs

Clerk: Question 64, the Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

545 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Can Government give this House a breakdown of general costs including licensing costs associated with its e-government platform and can it specify how much has been awarded to date to companies like Dell and Deloitte?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Digital and Financial Services.

550 **Minister for Digital, Financial Services and Public Utilities (Hon. A J Isola):** Mr Speaker, it is not possible to give a breakdown of 'general costs' as requested by the hon. Lady in respect of all matters relating to the delivery of eServices, as the entire Government digital network – including all hardware, software, security, maintenance, licensing – all combine and contribute in different ways to the delivery of eServices.

555 The costs provided in the schedule that I will be handing over are broken down year by year, as accurately as we have been able to in the time available, over the past three years and include the significant costs incurred in accelerating the Basic eServices across Government with the resultant delay to the delivery of the Main eServices project.

These costs cover licensing and professional fees in respect of the following services:

560 (1) Licensing and maintenance of Government infrastructure.
(2) Design and delivery of eAdministration across Government – ERP, eProcurement, ePurchasing. This also covers invoicing where the previous payment voucher system has been discontinued and is now digital. This will also cater for the delivery of HR, Expenses and Payroll – a little behind.

565 (3) Design and delivery of eServices across Government; as a result of Covid we now have Basic eServices and full eServices. Basic eServices have been used this past year primarily in the DVLD and CSRO departments where some 20,000 applications have been processed with fees paid in excess of £525,000 for these transactions. All of these services will be modified to full eServices as and when we are able.

570 The Employment Service is now live and online offering eServices and an announcement is expected shortly on the commencement of eServices at the Income Tax Office.

As we move on from Covid, our focus returns to resolving issues on eAdministration as we continue to work through these, and to the delivery of full eServices on a gradual and rolling basis.

575 Mr Speaker, I must thank the teams at Digital Services, ITLD, Treasury, Ministry of Finance and all those Government Departments, including the GHA, who have worked so hard and closely with us to get to where we are today and to bring eServices and eAdministration to within touching distance to our community.

I now hand over, Mr Speaker, the appropriate copies.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 64

2018-2019

Company	Detail	Cost
Aqua Solutions	Hire Contract	£170.00
Aslam Ashraf - ERP	ERP Consultant	£7,541.03
ATS	Year renewal of IBM software maintenance for GIB0400 & GIBS400 i5-520's	£17,289.00
ATS	IBM Hardware maintenance for iSeries P10 IBM servers & Printers	£33,000.00
Avaap Consulting	Infor ERP Consultants	£404,429.90
Axsium	ERP MVS Consultants	£0.00
B2E Consulting	ERP FSM Consultant	£88,761.45
Bastion Key	Backup Service for Data, Email and Databases	£83,496.00
BCS	BCS Gibraltar Government Group Membership Fees	£3,000.00
Bland Ltd	Staff Secondment	£0.00
Ciklum	ITLD Developers backfill	£47,781.83
Continent 8 Technologies	Data Centre – hosting, power usage, IP service.	£340,000.00
Dark Trace	Cyber intelligence platform – Intrusion Detection System (IDS)	£37,920.00
Data Storage Corp.	Message Logic/ Archive and Email monitoring software	£2,940.00
Dell Boomi Consulting	Dell Consultants	£6,312.00
Deloitte Gibraltar Consulting	Deloitte ERP Consultants	£35,358.80
Deloitte Digital Consulting UK	Deloitte Digital Consultants	£2,242,421.65
Digital Corner	NAGIOS Sys logger – Network and System event logging software	£3,000.00
Digital Corner	Websense security suite yearly subscription	£35,000.00
Digital Corner	Cisco SmartNet (Security Plus, Firmware updates)	£83,902.00
Digital Corner	SSL Certificates – Extended Validation	£66,000.00
Digital Corner ²	User Licenses (Filecloud service)	£3,000.00
Digital Corner ³	Logmein Licence – Remote Access Software	£1,016.00
EESSI ¹	Dept for Work & Pension (UK) Yearly subscription	£20,000.00
Excelerate Technology	Civil Contingency software – integrated emergency services management suite	£30,000.00
Exclaimer	Support for Email Signature Manager (3 yrs support)	£869.00
Fire Security (Chubb)	Maintenance of Intruder Alarm	£500.00
Focus	Government Private Fibre Network SLA	£64,800.00
Fox Green	ERP Consultant	£5,400.00
Geoff Smiff Associates	Cyclops Integrated Judicial System	£311,000.00
Infor Consulting	Infor ERP Consultants	£595,977.75
Inspririt Learning	GHR and Training Consultant	£0.00
ITMS	DS Seconded worker	£40,000.00
Joseph Montovio	ERP Accountant Consultant	£0.00

GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT, WEDNESDAY, 19th MAY 2021

Maxava	Nomax Garrison x 2 AS/400 High Availability software	£4,412.50
Maximillian Peter Walsh	Developer	£0.00
Micro Business Systems Ltd	Tax digitisation system (Therefore software)	£2,173.91
Mild Enterprises	ERP Consultant	£6,000.00
Muhlbauer	Preventative Maintenance of Personalisation Equipment	£49,217.79
Near	VMware & RedHat Servers OS – Virtual Environment platform	£54,348.89
Near	Huawei Server Farm Maintenance – (New under warranty)	£159,710.68
Near ⁵	GIS maintenance	£5,000.00
Nearform	MyGov App	£0.00
NFS Hospitality	Gibraltar Court's Service – Rendezvous Annual Software Support	£1,528.00
n-gineering.tech	Support and proof reading	£0.00
ORACLE	Asycuda Mysql Enterprise Licences	£12,000.00
OSG (Blands)	Erasmus monthly maintenance contract (Employment)	£36,000.00
PDMS	Themis Software – Suspicious Activity Reports software required by GCID for anti-money laundering & fraud	£24,000.00
Performance Monitoring Systems	Redkite software licence for Airport/ City Fire & Rescue Service	£5,960.00
PFK Canillas	ERP Support	£34,565.50
Pirahna	Rocket Themes Subscription	£100.00
Pirahna Consulting	Consulting and Developer resource	£5,000.00
Proactis	Proactis Software	£108,849
Proactis	P2P subscription	£60,475.00
Proactis	S2C Subscription	£81,798.00
RIPE NCC	Public IP address block	£1,300.00
Rock Cool	Maintenance	£500.00
SAPPHIRE	Domain registration	£400.00
Secure Data	F5 LOAD BALANCER/ Websafe bundle licence	£18,886.00
Sermico	Business Messaging & Advanced Meetings	£881.50
Slack	Standard Plan Annual Licence	£0.00
Software One	Adobe Editor Licences	£7,000.00
Solar Winds	Help Desk Platform User licence	£4,500.00
Technocable	GHA DS Project Backfill	£28,437.50
Telerik	Developer License	£1,170.82
TQS	Rental of Koios Software for 1 Calendar year	£8,302.14
Trustmarque Solutions	MICROSOFT LICENCES (inc. SQL Licence)	£260,164.16
Visual Click	File/security auditing.	£1,000.00
Vitelsa	Support Parliament, Gibraltar Court Service & No.6 Convent Place Audio Visual System	£30,000.00

2019-2020

Company	Detail	Cost
Acastle	Country by Country Project support costs	£3,030.00
Aqua Solutions	Hire Contract	£170.00
Aslam Ashraf - ERP	ERP Consultant	£0.00
ATS	Year renewal of IBM software maintenance for GIBO400 & GIBS400 i5-520's	£16,000.00
ATS	IBM Hardware maintenance for iSeries P10 IBM servers & Printers	£32,000.00
Avaap Consulting	Infor ERP Consultants	£728,614.31
Axsium	ERP MVS Consultants	£118,314.81
B2E Consulting	ERP FSM Consultant	£15,950.92
Bastion Key	Backup Service for Data, Email and Databases	£91,846.00
BCS	BCS Gibraltar Government Group Membership Fees	£3,000.00
Bland Ltd	Staff Secondment	£38,636.41
Ciklum	ITLD Developers backfill	£116,205.94
Continent 8 Technologies	Data Centre - hosting, power usage, IP	£340,000.00
Dark Trace	Cyber intelligence platform - Intrusion Detection System (IDS)	£37,920.00
Data Storage Corp.	Message Logic/ Archive and Email monitoring software	£2,940.00
Dell	Boomi Integration Platform (Enterprise Edition).	£140,588.00
Dell Boomi Consulting	Dell Consultants	£0.00
Deloitte Gibraltar Consulting	Deloitte ERP Consultants	£681,425.36
Deloitte Digital Consulting UK	Deloitte Digital Consultants	£1,835,194.40
Digital Corner	SSL Certificates - Extended Validation	£51,000.00
Digital Corner	Cisco Meraki licences for schools (every 3 yrs)	£94,000.00
Digital Corner	AutoCad Licence	£1,107.00
Digital Corner	Codelobster – Code/Developer Editing tool/software	£334.00
DocuSign	Digital Signature System	£45,000.00
EESSI ¹	Dept for Work & Pension (UK) Yearly subscription	£5,000.00
Europort	Rental agreement for the use of Europort cabling service ducts	£10,000.00
Excelerate Technology	Civil Contingency software – integrated emergency services management suite	£30,000.00
Fire Security (Chubb)	Maintenance of Intruder Alarm	£850.00
Focus	Government Private Fibre Network SLA	£100,800.00
Fox Green	ERP Consultant	£0.00
Geoff Smiff Associates	Cyclops Integrated Judicial System	£311,000.00
GPS Gate	GPS tracking system for buses	£1,400.00

IBase	GCID requires an intelligence data management application that enables collaborative teams of analysts to capture, control and analyse multi-source data in security-rich workgroup environments	£10,500.00
Infor	HMGoG ERP financial and HR solution.	£400,000.00
Infor Consulting	Infor ERP Consultants	£1,107,858.12
Inspirit Learning	GHR and Training Consultant	£0.00
ITMS	DS Seconded worker	£16,854.54
Joseph Montovio	ERP Accountant Consultant	£21,080.00
Kentico	Web content management system	£61,727.00
Maxava	Nomax Garrison x 2 AS/400 High Availability software	£4,500.00
Maximillian Peter Walsh	Developer	£0.00
Micro Business Systems Ltd	Tax digitisation system (Therefore software)	£8,000.00
Microbusiness	Hard Disk crushing service - 500 disks (GDPR Compliant)	£2,375.00
Mild Enterprises	ERP Consultant	£0.00
Muhlbauer	Preventative Maintenance of Personalisation Equipment	£43,164.00
Near	VMware & RedHat Servers OS – Virtual Environment platform	£54,348.89
Near	Huawei Server Farm Maintenance – (New under warranty)	£150,000.00
Near ⁴	Veeam Virtual Systems Backup Licence	£5,577.00
Nearform	MyGov App	£0.00
Netgear 7	Navicat Database Management Software	£1,400.00
Newton	Sophos Enterprise Antivirus Solution (3 yearly)	£35,860.00
NFS Hospitality	Gibraltar Court's Service - Rendezvous Annual Software Support	£1,605.00
Ocean-gineering.tech	Support and proof reading	£2,125.00
ORACLE	Asycuda Mysql Enterprise Licences	£12,060.00
OSG (glands)	Erasmus monthly maintenance contract (Employment)	£36,000.00
PDMS	Themis Software - Suspicious Activity Reports software required by GCID for anti-money laundering & fraud	£55,000.00
Performance Monitoring Systems	Redkite software licence for Airport/ City Fire & Rescue Service	£5,960.00
PFK Canillas	ERP Support	£5,000.00
Pirahna	Rocket Themes Subscription	£100.00
Pirahna Consulting	Consulting and Developer resource	£58,170.00
Proactis	Proactis Software	£147,488
Proactis	P2P subscription	£79,802.00
Proactis	S2C Subscription	£81,798.00
RIPE NCC	Public IP address block	£1,300.00
Rock Cool	Maintenance	£500.00
SAPPHIRE	Domain registration	£2,000.00
Secure Data	F5 LOAD BALANCER/ Websafe bundle licence	£18,886.00

Sermico	Business Messaging & Advanced Meetings	£881.50
Slack	Standard Plan Annual Licence	£3,150.00
Software One	Adobe Editor Licences	£15,000.00
Solar Winds	Help Desk Platform User licence	£6,000.00
Strategy Object	Customs Asycuda SO Class Renewal	£9,447.00
Technocable	GHA DS Project Backfill	£20,312.50
Telerik	Developer License	£0.00
Textmagic	SMS Internet gateway (notification system via sms)	£500.00
TQS	Rental of Koios Software for 1 Calendar year	£9,000.00
Trustmarque Solutions	MICROSOFT LICENCES (inc. SQL Licence)	£387,000.00
Visual Click	File/security auditing.	£388.00
Vitelsa	Support Parliament, Gibraltar Court Service & No.6 Convent Place Audio Visual System	£30,000.00
Vizor	FATCA CRS & CBCR reporting module	£96,000.00

2020-2021

Company	Detail	Cost
Acastle	Country by Country Project support costs	£3,030.00
Aqua Solutions	Hire Contract	£170.00
Aslam Ashraf - ERP	ERP Consultant	£0.00
Atlassian	Jira Licence	£10,921.20
ATS	Year renewal of IBM software maintenance for GIB0400 & GIBS400 i5-520's	£16,000.00
ATS	IBM Hardware maintenance for iSeries P10 IBM servers & Printers	£32,000.00
Avaap Consulting	Infor ERP Consultants	£19,553.69
Axsiom	ERP MVS Consultants	£60,362.50
B2E Consulting	ERP FSM Consultant	£0.00
Bastion Key	Backup Service for Data, Email and Databases	£91,846.00
BCS	BCS Gibraltar Government Group Membership Fees	£3,000.00
Bland Ltd	Staff Secondment	£58,735.04
Ciklum	ITLD Developers backfill	£46,162.22
Continent 8 Technologies	capture subscription	£345,000.00
Dark Trace	Cyber intelligence platform - Intrusion Detection System (IDS)	£41,712.00
Data Storage Corp.	Message Logic/ Archive and Email monitoring software	£2,940.00
Dell	Boomi Integration Platform (Enterprise Edition).	£181,434.62
Dell Boomi Consulting	Dell Consultants	£1,044,172.79
Deloitte Gibraltar Consulting	Deloitte ERP Consultants	£723,241.75
Deloitte Digital Consulting UK	Deloitte Digital Consultants	£1,245,853.35
Digital Corner	NAGIOS Sys logger - Network and System event logging software	£3,000.00
Digital Corner	Websense security suite yearly subscription	£65,000.00

Digital Corner	Cisco SmartNet (Security Plus, Firmware updates)	£55,000.00
Digital Corner	SSL Certificates - Extended Validation	£51,000.00
Digital Corner	AutoCad Licence	£1,107.00
Digital Corner	Codelobster - Code/Developer Editing tool/software	£334.00
Digital Corner	RIPE software	£858.00
Digital Corner	Vidahost	£0.00
Digital Corner ²	User Licenses (Filecloud service)	£9,800.00
Digital Corner ³	Logmein Licence – Remote Access Software	£3,085.00
DocuSign	Digital Signature System	£45,000.00
EESI ¹	Dept for Work & Pension (UK) Yearly subscription	£125,764.00
Europort	Rental agreement for the use of Europort cabling service ducts	£9,000.00
Excelerate Technology	Civil Contingency software – integrated emergency services management suite	£30,000.00
Fire Security (Chubb)	Maintenance of Intruder Alarm	£850.00
Focus	Government Private Fibre Network SLA	£100,800.00
Fox Green	ERP Consultant	£0.00
Geoff Smiff Associates	Cyclops Integrated Judicial System	£300,000.00
GPS Gate	GPS tracking system for buses	£1,400.00
IBase	GCID requires an intelligence data management application that enables collaborative teams of analysts to capture, control and analyse multi-source data in security-rich workgroup environments	£9,500.00
Infor	HMGOG ERP financial and HR solution.	£400,000.00
Infor Consulting	Infor ERP Consultants	£677,147.00
Infragistics	Infragistic software licence (.net add ons)	£1,626.00
Inspriert Learning	GHR and Training Consultant	£107,737.50
ITMS	DS Seconded worker	£0.00
Joseph Montovio	ERP Accountant Consultant	£32,300.00
Kentico	Web content management system	£51,525.25
Maxava	Nomax Garrison x.2 AS/400 High Availability software	£4,604.00
Maximillian Peter Walsh	Developer	£5,673.51
Micro Business Systems Ltd	Tax digitisation system (Therefore software)	£51,630.00
Microbusiness	Hard Disk crushing service – 500 disks (GDPR Compliant)	£2,375.00
Mild Enterprises	ERP Consultant	£0.00
Muhlbauer	Preventative Maintenance of Personalisation Equipment	£48,700.00
Near	VMware & RedHat Servers OS – Virtual Environment platform	£54,349.00
Near	Huawei Server Farm Maintenance – (New under warranty)	£150,000.00

Near ⁴	Veeam Virtual Systems Backup Licence	£9,000.00
Near ⁵	GIS maintenance	£26,061.00
Nearform	MyGov App	£14,587.16
Nearform	Maintenance of HMGOG eGov App	£32,400.00
Netgear	Navicat Database Management Software	£1,400.00
Newton ⁶	Zuludesk	£16,000.00
Newton ¹	iPad/ Mac maintenance for schools	£22,000.00
NFS Hospitality	Gibraltar Court's Service – Rendezvous Annual Software Support	£1,686.00
<u>n-gineering.tech</u>	Support and proof reading	£0.00
Nuix	GCID requires Nuix Licence for an investigation workstation	£9,797.00
Ocea nQ	OHQ Subscription	-
ORACLE	Asycuda Mysql Enterprise Licences	£12,000.00
OSG (glands)	Erasmus monthly maintenance contract (Employment)	£36,000.00
PDMS	Themis Software – Suspicious Activity Reports software required by GCID for anti-money laundering & fraud	£58,339.00
Performance Monitoring Systems	Redkite software licence for Airport/ City Fire & Rescue Service	£5,960.00
PFK Canillas	ERP Support	£0.00
Pirahna	Rocket Themes Subscription	£100.00
Pirahna Consulting	Consulting and Developer resource	£52,470.00
Proactis	Proactis Software	£60,825
Proactis	P2P subscription	£79,802.00
Proactis	Capture subscription	£22,798.00
Proactis	S2C Subscription	£59,000.00
RIPE NCC	Public IP address block	£1,300.00
Rock Cool	Maintenance	£250.00
SAPPHIRE	Domain registration	£2,000.00
Secure Data	F5 LOAD BALANCER/ Websafe bundle licence	£20,000.00
Sermico	Business Messaging & Advanced Meetings	£0.00
Slack	Standard Plan Annual Licence	£0.00
Software One	Adobe Editor Licences	£15,000.00
Solar Winds	Help Desk Platform User licence	£6,000.00
Strategy Object	Customs Asycuda SO Class Renewal	£9,447.00
Technocable	GHA DS Project Backfill	£0.00
Telerik	Developer License	£0.00
Textmagic	SMS internet gateway (notification system via sms)	£500.00
TQS	Rental of Koios Software for 1 Calendar year	£9,862.94
Trustmarque Solutions	MICROSOFT LICENCES (inc. SQL Licence)	£387,000.00
Visual Click	File/security auditing.	£388.00
Vitelsa	Support Parliament, Gibraltar Court Service & No.6 Convent Place Audio Visual System	£30,000.00
Vizor	FATCA CRS & CBCR reporting module	£96,000.00

Vodafone	Yearly subscription of Prum Gateway for electronic exchange of biometric information with Law Enforcement Agencies.	£16,000.00
Zendesk	Customer service application.	£50,230.00

580 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, I would like to sum up what this comes to. From what I see there is not a total sum, so I do know if you want to allow me to tot it all up and come back with a supplementary because, obviously I cannot ask the question until I know the total. Thank you.

585 **Mr Speaker:** Fine, that is acceptable, yes.

Hon. K Azopardi: While the hon. Lady does that, I see from just looking at the figures for Deloitte Digital in the middle of the page, £2.2 million, plus then there are figures of £1.8 million plus another £700,000, so easily, even on my rudimentary mathematics, that takes us to over £4 million. Can he give us a bit more detail on that?

590 **Hon. A J Isola:** Yes, Mr Speaker, those relate to both the project of eAdministration and the project of eServices. In other words, the financial management administration plan that was designed and built and, indeed, tendered with them from three years ago. Those will be consulting fees from Deloitte UK. I believe, I do not think you have mentioned Deloitte Gibraltar. Deloitte Gibraltar have been supporting the implementation of eAdministration, so that is all in relation to the design, build, implementation and delivery of eServices and eAdministration across Government over that period of time.

600 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, I think I gave the sort of wrong figure because I had not spotted that there was another entry as well, which would take the sums to probably at least over £6 million. Does the hon. Member have a total for the consultancy fees for Deloitte?

605 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, I have given the total of every single penny that we have spent in three years, which is what the Question requested. The questioner's intention is split over the three years, so that you can see in each year the work that has been done, but I do not have totals. I am sure they can tot them up.

610 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, I do not know if the Minister would be able to help out and tell ... From one page, I have deduced it is almost £5 million. Perhaps as a mean figure, we are looking at something in the region of £12 million to £15 million, maybe. He should be able to give us a ballpark on what all these pages come to.

615 But can I ask him, if it is around that figure which I predict, is he satisfied that this amount of money – £12 million to £15 million in the period of three years – is he satisfied that we have got value for money in terms of this project? Does he feel satisfied with the expenditure versus the value for money for this project?

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, I am not quite sure what the £12million to £15 million refers to.

620 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, I got five pages of sums, but I did not get a total so far, so I have been trying to do the sums and I have only got as far as one page, which gets me to £4 million; so I am predicting around £12 million to £15 million.

Hon. A J Isola: If the hon. Lady believes that the total of the three years is 15, I have not done that number myself, but, as I tried to explain in my answer, these lists provide every single penny

625 that we spent from the data centre for our service to professional services to licence agreements
to Microsoft of half a million a year. This is the entire Government network, hardware, software,
infrastructure, maintenance, licensing – this is everything.

The reason why I said in my answer that I was doing it this way was because it was impossible
for me to understand what the hon. Lady meant by ‘general digital services’. So what I have done
630 is, I have included all the money that we spend in delivering the current IT systems that we have
in place, and I had for the last three years, as well as the work that is within those lists, which you
can easily identify from the information sheet you have, on the particular parts of the work that
has been done.

So, for you to say that it is £12 million to £15 million to deliver services is not right, because
635 this includes, as I mentioned, the Microsoft Office licence for the thousands of users at half a
million pounds every single year. This is one small example. If you go through it, you will see there
is Ciklum, for example, ITLD backfill developers– providing ITLD with software developers to help
them in the work that they need to be doing.

So the answer would be, no, I do not believe the hon. Lady is right, but if you ask me whether
640 it is a journey worth having been on, absolutely yes, and as we started yesterday, with the first
delivery of full eServices with employment and with tax coming on in the coming months, I am
confident that we will see not just the efficiencies, but the savings that we expect to get back from
this technology.

645 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, I thank the hon. Gentleman for his answer, but he
tells me that he thinks I am wrong, but at the same time he also tells me that he does not know
how much it all comes to, so I would like to know if the Minister with responsibility for Digital
Services should not be more aware of what this expenditure entails? At the end of the day, after
giving me a sheet of five pages, should he not understand or know what budget we are working
650 on at the moment?

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, I am not really quite sure where the hon. Lady is going with this. I
have given her a detail of five sheets of every single penny that is being spent. Is she trying to
suggest that I do not know what the money has been spent on, because if she does, the sheets
655 answered that question very simply. Of course I do, and that is why I have given her the
information.

If she cannot translate that information into a question to ask, then so be it. But do not make
suggestions that the Government does not understand what it is doing in this Programme when
it has five or six or seven pages of a detailed breakdown, which is what she has asked for, of every
660 single cost and expense we have had in the delivery of our IT systems, digital services, design,
implementation and everything else put together.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, I still do not understand how we are given five
pages, but not a total, but in any case we are talking about the general costs associated with the
e-government platform. So those are the general costs I asked for. I am not sure whether ... I
665 would like to ask the Minister whether any of these sums do not actually relate to the new project
but actually relate to constant costs with IT-related costs that had nothing to do with this new
incentive and they have all been bunched in.

So I was just asking specifically narrowly about the e-government platform, how much it cost
670 and whether we have actually got to a point where the expenditure merits the services that we
have right now.

Hon. A J Isola: Mr Speaker, I will read the first paragraph of my answer again, but perhaps more
slowly:

675 ‘It is not possible to give a breakdown of general costs general costs, as requested by the hon.
Lady in respect of all matters relating to the delivery of eServices as the entire Government digital

network, including all hardware, software, security, maintenance and licensing – all combine and contribute to the delivery of eServices.’

680 In other words, eServices is not a new beast. We still have e-mails. We still have servers. We still have data centres. Those are costs in delivering eServices but different component parts of it. The software, the licensing – these are all different parts of the delivery of this service.

So what I have tried to do is give a full and complete list of every penny that we spent in the delivery of our traditional and the delivery of eServices too, combined in very long, detailed answers.

685 Now, the hon. Lady just wants one number – a total. Well, I will do that next time.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Roy Clinton.

690 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Mr Speaker, I have two questions for the Minister. I would encourage the Government to add totals for everybody’s benefit, including their own.

First of all, Mr Speaker, if he looks at the first page, there are what look like small footnotes 1, 2, 3, I think it goes all the way up to 5 elsewhere. Does he know what they relate to?

Also I notice, there are line items that for some reason show up as zero in various places, and I wonder if he has any thoughts on that.

695 While I am on my feet, Mr Speaker, just one last, third question: are any of these costs relating to contracts that were discontinued in terms of the implementation of the service, i.e. contracts that were terminated for failure to perform?

700 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, in respect of the first part, these are obviously our internal lists being reproduced. The numbers will relate to the period of time of the contract. Some of them explain – for example, on the first page you have got a whole load of ‘Digital Corner’, because some of these firms, in their licensing agreements with us, require us to pay the local agent. So we pay the licence fee of that service to the local agent. We have tried to put the information in: for example, the fourth from the bottom, ‘Filecloud service’ – that is a particular licence. If you go
705 up a few more: ‘AutoCad Licence’, the £1,000. Some of these, we have tried to add as much detail as we can to the answer, but the footnotes have stayed from the previous ones, which would give different details which were not requested.

In respect of which of these contracts are no longer there or have been terminated through failure to provide a service, I would have to get back, because 90% or 95% or most of these
710 contracts, if not all of them, are actually managed by ITLD, so I would have to come back to you, as I do not have enough information to be able to answer that question.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

HEALTH AND JUSTICE

Q35/2021

Illegal parking on Devil’s Tower Road – Enforcement

715 **Clerk:** Question 35, the Hon. E J Phillips.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government confirm that it will enforce the illegal parking on the dual carriage way on Devil’s Tower Road?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

720 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, we can confirm that the RGP and Gibraltar Parking Management Services Ltd are already actively enforcing illegal parking on Devil's Tower Road, and will continue to do so, as is the case with the rest of Gibraltar's roads.

725 **Hon. E J Phillips:** I am grateful for the answer. Just one short further question. As the Minister knows, I get a number of complaints in relation to traffic, particularly those vehicles that park on that stretch opposite the supermarket. I am not sure if she gets complaints or she does not get complaints, I do not know, but as far as I am concerned, my constituents send me complaints about that particular stretch, which is constantly utilised by cars to drop off/collect shopping
730 outside supermarkets. I just bring it to her attention and wonder whether the Police are absolutely aware of that particular area that I have referred to.

Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, on the basis that the information provided has been provided to me by the Royal Gibraltar Police, apart from that and on the basis that I am sure that
735 they are aware of their duties, then Mr Speaker, the answer to that is yes.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q36-37/2021
Mental Health Services –
Public survey results; analysis report implementation

Clerk: Question 36, the Hon. E J Phillips.

740 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state when the Government public anonymous survey of mental health services was completed and when it will publish the results?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

745 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 37.

Clerk: Question 37, the Hon. E J Phillips.

750 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state if it will publish road map to implementation arising from the publication of the Mental Health Situation Analysis Report?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

755 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, the process relating to the survey has not yet been completed. Insofar as changes and improvements to the Mental Health Services in Gibraltar, the Government will be making appropriate announcements at the relevant time. This will include progress on matters arising from the Mental Health Situational Analysis report.
760

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for that answer, although it will not do much to allay the concerns of many of the charitable organisations that work in this area that have recently, of course, made public statements about the failing in the delivery of this particular care.

765 But I want to ask the hon. Lady this question: back in November 2020, she said in relation to the report that she was pleased to publish the report – albeit 18 months late, because it was sat on a desk, Mr Speaker – with a very clear plan and a vision as to how to bring together our services in a joined-up way that addresses the needs of the community. She also said in the same public announcement, ‘a great deal of work already undertaken since *its* [the report – my emphasis] receipt.’

770 So in other words, Mr Speaker, a great deal of work had already gone into this during the 18-month delay that the Government had in publishing this report. Therefore, the suggestion or the answer to my question that she has not yet completed it suggests that not a lot of work has gone into it, and I think that many people in our community would be very surprised, particularly the Mental Welfare Society and other charities dealing mental health, that the Government two years on is doing very little to help those most vulnerable in our community. Does she agree with that analysis?

Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, no.

780 If the hon. Gentleman were to listen to understand, then he would have heard the answer to my question properly, in that, Mr Speaker, I think it is very clear from my answer that when the progress is reported, it is in fact wider than what we find in the Situation Analysis Report that, Mr Speaker, I am confident, once public announcements on the progress are made, that people will be very pleased on the marked improvements.

785 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, I take it from that answer that the Situation Analysis Report, as she will know, revealed very significant shortcomings in relation to the delivery of mental health care in our community. A significant damning report, in my view, and I think we have debated this before on television together.

790 But what she is saying now is that as a result of that report and the Government’s further investigations, there has been a wider analysis. Mr Speaker, what is she saying? Are the issues concerning mental health provision in our community *worse* than the report has revealed?

795 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman certainly has an art for inventing and translating what I just said. That is not what I have said, Mr Speaker. He knows, because we have had this conversation and we have had it in private and we have had it in public, that we have an action plan and an action matrix that relates to addressing the issues that are highlighted in the Mental Health Situation Analysis Report. That is one thing.

800 He also knows that, in addition to that I commissioned at the beginning of this year for someone from the UK to come in and spend three months in Gibraltar immersed in our Mental Health Services and all the other public sector bodies, including third sector organisations, so that we could prepare a Mental Health Strategy. It means, Mr Speaker, that the improvements going forward are not just those that are highlighted in the Situation Analysis Report. It is more positive than that.

805 It does not mean, as he is trying to insinuate, Mr Speaker, that the situation is worse. We have looked at the situation and looked at the criticisms that that report made and have addressed those, but we have gone further because our strategy, which the hon. Member and members of the public will see when that is published, will go wider, because our strategy goes very heavily into wellbeing and early intervention and a lot of things that can be done before accessing the services, Mr Speaker. So the hon. Gentleman needs to learn not translate my answer inaccurately and to try and stop putting words into my mouth.

810

Mr Speaker: This will be the final question.

Hon. E J Phillips: I have had two so far. I am only allowed two supplementaries per question? I have had two questions asked on the Order Paper. How many do I have, Mr Speaker, with respect?
815 *(Interjection)* That is why I am asking the question, how many can I have?

Mr Speaker: I would like you to ask this question and this will be the last question. So please go ahead and ask a question.

820 **Hon. E J Phillips:** I am grateful, Mr Speaker.
I am still quite confused, because the hon. Lady talks of action plans and roadmaps in the same breath by making public statements about their availability, the fact that they have done all this work. The mental health charities are doing fantastic work in our community and trying to respond to the mental health crisis in our community, and she is failing to publish information that would
825 help members of our community understand what the plan is, Mr Speaker. What she should be doing is helping those who are very concerned about mental health provision and who have said very publicly in our community that the Government is failing. She should at least try to alleviate the concerns of many in our community who take mental health very seriously indeed and publish the action plan. Does she agree?

830 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, the Government takes mental health issues *extremely* seriously, and the relevant announcements will be made as soon as we can, because we have embarked on a massive project in relation to mental health to improve the services that we deliver, to improve our communication with the public. Mr Speaker, we are almost at the end of that stage where we have been undertaking all this work, particularly since the beginning of this
835 year, but as we know, a lot of work has already been undertaken in the last few years. We will be in a position to make an announcement on these changes very soon, Mr Speaker, but I cannot accept what the hon. Gentleman is saying. He is trying to insinuate that mental health is not important for our Government. It is one of the most important tasks that we have embarked on,
840 Mr Speaker, and I am not going to labour the point. I think that we all know what the mental health situation was when they were in government, but I am not going to go that far, Mr Speaker.

I am going forward. I am looking forward, because I am absolutely committed in improving the good services that we already have, Mr Speaker. Our services have come a very long way from where we found them, but I am absolutely committed and absolutely determined to improve
845 them even further.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q38/2021
Covid-19 testing –
Plans to bring down costs

Clerk: Question 38, the Hon. E J Phillips.

850 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state that it intends to work with companies offering Covid-19 testing to bring down the costs to the end user/customer?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

855 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, yes.

860 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker will note, of course, that the Government did make an announcement in relation to travel quite recently – after I filed the question, of course; that is fairly convenient for us that we get some of our answers answered in public, but there we go.

So I understand that the number has come down to £30 per test. Is that right, Mr Speaker? Am I wrong, from £50 to £30?

865 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, for clarity, the situation has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that a question was tabled by the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Gentleman will know, given that it is in the public domain, that we announced on 14th May that any tests booked after Monday, 17th May would be reduced from £50 to £30.

870 Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman will also know that, additionally, because we have imposed a separate requirement for testing which we announced earlier this week, on account of developments over the weekend – we ventilated it earlier this week; the Chief Minister mentioned that as well – in relation to the rapid tests undertaken for those who are landing, those will be at no cost. But we are talking about two separate tests.

875 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, just one question. I recall quite recently, and I think this was just before we filed this question, that in the British Parliament, I think the Transport Secretary confirmed to their Parliament that they were trying their very best to reduce the cost to the customer. I think it was down to £48.50 for a particular test, I do not recall that, but what level of engagement has the Government done to try to bring the cost of testing down to the end user? You said it is having discussions, but where is the line that you are trying to bring them down to?

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I seem to recall that yesterday or the day before when I made my Statement to the House, I dealt with these issues and I dealt with exactly the same questions for clarification from either the hon. Gentleman or one of his colleagues. When I announced that, the concern that was being put to the Government was that we were going to suffer a £4 cost, and how were we going to make sure that we recovered it? So, Mr Speaker, I explained that we believed that with the cost of the tests as it is, we had sufficient to net off any cost – this is not an area where the Government wants to make profit – of the tests on arrival against the cost of the certificates and tests required by the United Kingdom for arrival in the United Kingdom, that is to say, departure from Gibraltar.

885
890 Mr Speaker, we could have the debate again if you think it is necessary, although this is Question Time, but I think we have already clarified how we have dealt with the issue.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

**Q39-40/2021
Pfizer booster vaccines –
Supply and roll-out**

895 **Clerk:** Question 39, the Hon. E J Phillips.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government state what discussion the Government have had with the British Government in relation to supply of booster Pfizer vaccines?

900 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 40.

Clerk: Question 40, the Hon. E J Phillips.

905 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state how the Government will roll out the Pfizer booster to citizens?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

910 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, the Government of Gibraltar works closely with Public Health England about all aspects of the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

At this stage, no definitive decision has been made by Public Health England or the UK Government on the booster.

915 As no decision has yet been made by the UK, no formal plans have been made. However, tentative planning is underway in Gibraltar should a booster vaccine be required and, given that this will be undertaken by the same management team who delivered the vaccination programme in Gibraltar, I have no doubt that it will be just as successful.

Q41/2021

Pfizer booster vaccines – Supply and roll-out

Clerk: Question 41, the Hon. E J Phillips.

920

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, since asking this question, of course, I believe the Government have accepted the problems that have existed in relation to appointments, but I will ask it anyway, so that we can ask another supplementary.

925 Can the Government state why, despite the Minister for Health's statement on 19th April 2021, members of our community continue to experience significant problems in accessing face-to-face appointments?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

930 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for asking a question he already knows the answer to but I will read my prepared answer. (*Interjection*)

Mr Speaker, the demand on services post Covid-19 has been extremely significant, particularly since the announcement at the end of April of increased availability of face-to-face appointments.

935 This demand and a combination of other factors such as reduced clinics because of the number of bank holidays following the announcement, and other reasons explained in Press Release 354/2021 on 6th May, resulted in the public experiencing difficulties in the week following the announcement. However, after looking at what occurred that week and meeting with management, the system should now be back to normal, and in fact enhanced with the
940 introduction of more face-to-face appointments and the ability to book advance appointments.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, I think one of the points that was made in the exchanges of press releases outside this place was in relation to the use of digital technology to make the process easier, because I think that actually the question of face-to-face appointments has been a very
945 significant issue in our community for a long time actually, for as long as I have been using the Health Service, Mr Speaker, and I wonder whether the Minister has had discussions with the Hon. Mr Isola in relation to how we can deploy technology to improve the system. One of the issues

that comes to me from constituents is well, surely this must be an easier process. I know the Hon. Member for Financial Services has discussed this before – digital services and financial services, Mr Speaker – he has talked about that before in this House, but I wonder whether there have been advanced discussions between the ministries on how to make that a lot easier, so that we can we create an easier process for patients accessing GPs?

Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, the Hon. Mr Isola and I work incredibly closely when it comes to the digital improvements of the GHA. In fact, there have been some changes to the system already in the last week or so, and further changes are planned, and that is something that we are programming and will be implemented in phases. As and when these improvements are implemented, we will announce them accordingly, so that the public understand what these changes are and how they work.

960

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q42/2021

Complaints about health care – Number received in last 12 months

Clerk: Question 42, the Hon. E J Phillips.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government state the number of complaints received by the GHA or the Government in relation to all aspects of health care in Gibraltar in the last 12 months?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, during the past 12 months, the GHA has received 62 formal complaints.

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Hon. E J Phillips: I appreciate that this was not included in the question, but unless the Minister has the information to hand, does she know, in terms of categorisation, what those complaints concerned? They could be medical malpractice; they could be, 'I am not getting my GP appointment', for example. If she does not have the information that is fine, I will ask it next time round, but if she does, it would be helpful if she could disclose it.

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Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, I do not have the exact detail. The details that I have break down the department against which the complaint has been raised – for example, A&E and waiting times. The information that I have is the number of complaints against the Department, but it does not tell me what the complaint is, but it is a discussion that I am happy to have with the hon. Gentleman, and it may be that it is more appropriate to have this discussion behind the Speaker's Chair when I have the information.

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Hon. E J Phillips: I am grateful for that answer, and I certainly will take her up on the offer, but there is just one aspect of the question which I am not too sure was clarified and that was: these are complaints received by the GHA. I believe that is correct, but not by the Government. I think I said 'or the Government'. Does the Government receive them separately from the GHA?

990

Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, the GHA has a complaints procedure and if someone outside of the GHA were to receive a complaint, then the complaint would be referred to the GHA's complaints procedure, so it would be encapsulated in this.

995

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q43/2021
MRI services –
Beneficial owners of AC Ltd

Clerk: Question 43, the Hon. E J Phillips.

1000 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government confirm the names of the ultimate beneficial owners of the company AC Ltd, which it is understood will be providing MRI services to the Gibraltar Health Authority?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

1005 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman's information is wrong. Neither the Government nor the GHA have entered into any contractual arrangements with any company for the local provision of MRI services.

1010 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, my understanding from notices that have been displayed at GHA premises, which have been shown to me and relate to permissions to buy a company by the name of AC Ltd, a company that I cannot discover on the companies website – because obviously the Government encourages me to do that every time a company pops up, to have a look at the Registry, to see whether it exists ... AC Ltd, in the form that I have written this question, does not
1015 exist. AC Ltd is a company that is reflected on the formal notices on these buildings, particularly at Europort, for instance, and it refers to the provision of MRI services. So, can the Government confirm what the current position is, insofar as MRI services at the Gibraltar Health Authority?

1020 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** No, Mr Speaker, because whereas I understand that there is a planning application, this is not on GHA premises.

1025 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, the Government has had a history in relation to the MRI issue. The first time the Government brought this issue to the House, I believe it was the previous Minister for Health, Minister Balban, in relation to ... I think the phrase was 'bringing MRI home'. The Government then changed its policy and sent it out to tender, effectively, and asked companies to come up with proposals in relation to the provision of MRI services to Gibraltar. What we find now is that on particular buildings that may not be within the GHA precinct –
(*Interjection*) Yes, I know. I am just trying to summarise for the benefit of you answering another question. If the building in question, which I believe is in the Europort complex ... In my
1030 understanding, this company has applied for permission for the use of MRI services to Gibraltar. Are those services also going to be supplied to the Government?

1035 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, a private company has made an application. Private companies and private businesses are entitled to make whatever applications they wish. This application is not on GHA premises. They are in Europort, which is a very large footprint in an area in Gibraltar where lots of businesses operate, but this application in particular is not on GHA

premises. I understand that it is an obligation that has been made and displayed on Atlantic Suites. I know what the hon. Gentleman knows. I know that there is a notice of a planning application in Atlantic Suites. Atlantic Suites does not belong to the GHA. The GHA does not have anything in Atlantic Suites.

1040

I would be grateful, Mr Speaker, if the hon. Gentleman would not paraphrase what I say, erroneously and incorrectly. A business has made an application. As far as I am concerned, as Minister for Health it is not an application that I have had any involvement with, nor has the GHA had any involvement with it, but a business is entitled to make an application for a business and then it is a matter for the business, but it is not, as the question poses, anything connected with the GHA.

1045

Hon. E J Phillips: Just one further question, Mr Speaker. It appears that AC Ltd is not a company that is incorporated within Gibraltar. AC Ltd as a company, as she rightly says, has placed the relevant notice for permission at Atlantic Suites. The question I would like her to answer is whether AC Ltd, apparently a company not incorporated in Gibraltar ... Has the Government been in discussions with AC Ltd, or is it intending to enter into contractual arrangements with AC Ltd for the provision of MRI services to the Gibraltar Health Authority?

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Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, no. But he also said something about the notice being displayed with the permission of the Minister. No. It has got nothing to do with the GHA. *(Interjection by Hon. E J Phillips)*

1055

Mr Speaker: Does the hon. Member wish to clarify?

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Hon. E H Phillips: I am grateful, Mr Speaker. I wish to clarify, yes, because the very simple question is: is the Government in discussions with AC Ltd for the provision of MRI services to the GHA, or does it have a contractual relationship with AC Ltd for the provision of MRI services?

Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, again, no. To the second point, no. In fact, I have no idea who AC Ltd are.

1065

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q44-46/2021

Clinical standards in the GHA – Communications from Head of Clinical Governance

Clerk: Question 44, the Hon. E J Phillips.

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Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, can the Government state, from the cases investigated by the Head of Clinical Governance at the GHA, Prof. Derek Burke, in the last two years, whether the number of those patients who have suffered preventable harm order is unduly high?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister Health and Justice.

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Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 45 and 46.

1080

Clerk: Question 45. The Hon. E J Phillips.

1085 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Can the Government state whether it is aware of an email issued by Prof. Burke to his GHA colleagues in November 2020 where he claims that the GHA has, and I quote: ‘been effectively taken over by a cabal of about a dozen individuals and their followers. These individuals have paralysed the management structure and prevented a number of safety and quality initiatives from being completed. They are directly or indirectly the root of many of the preventable harm and deaths we have investigated in the past two years.’?

1090 **Clerk:** Question 46, the Hon. E J Phillips.

1095 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, can the Government state whether it is also aware of an email issued by the Head of Governance, Prof. Burke, to his GHA colleagues in November 2020, in which he claims: ‘I am clear from observations, from the experiences and concerns you have shared with me and from my personal experiences that the main weapons of these individuals are intimidation, coercion and bullying of staff into their submission to comply with their views.’

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister Health and Justice.

1100 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, Prof. Burke’s role is to investigate any concern where it is thought that clinical standards may not have been met. However, every clinical case varies and it would be impossible to compare any level of clinical concern or harm to any other country or jurisdiction.

1105 In relation to Questions 45 and 46, yes, the GHA is aware of these emails.

1110 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, this particular email that was sent by the Head of Governance to his GHA colleagues is an extremely serious set of allegations concerning ... A cabal is being described, a cohort of individuals within the GHA, which has very serious allegations and consequences, I assume, for members within the GHA. In fact, I am sure the unions are involved.

1115 When did the Government first become aware of these concerns? We are not talking about simple concerns about mismanagement here. What we are talking about are very serious concerns that have indirectly or directly impacted on the health of members of our community, and indeed the words ‘preventable death’ is being used in the context of these complaints, so I just wondered, first of all, when the Government was first put on notice of these extremely serious allegations, which, when I first saw them, I could not believe, and I must say I was quite shocked by it. I was just wondering when the Government was first on notice of it.

1120 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, I have, during my time in the GHA, met with the Clinical Standards Compliance Director, Prof. Burke, in relation to issues that he raises. On each matter Prof. Burke provides reports, and these reports are in the process of being investigated. Individual circumstances have ... There is a process, there is an investigation, there is an outcome. These matters are something that we are engaging in.

1125 Let’s remember the reason why we introduced clinical standards: it was to make sure that we improve the safety standards of the healthcare that we provide in Gibraltar.

1130 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker, whilst I am grateful for the answer, these are very serious allegations of bullying, intimidation, coercion and mismanagement of the GHA, which has – let’s not beat around the bush here – led to the death of individuals within our community. What is the Government doing about it?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman has now said something which is so serious that it requires to be addressed directly. The hon. Gentleman has said that the

1135 allegations in respect of bullying etc., which he has recited, have led to the deaths of individuals in our community. As far as the Government is aware, there is not the slightest shred of evidence of that scandalous and, frankly, frivolously made allegation.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, our understanding is that it is all part of the same email, and Question 45 says, as a direct quote from the email of the Head of Clinical Governance:

They are directly

– some of the deficiencies –

or indirectly the root of many of the preventable harm and deaths we have investigated in the past two years.

1140 If the allegation has been made, it has not been made by my hon. Friend to my right, it has been made by the Head of Clinical Governance of the GHA. The question that we are asking, and the Chief Minister may perhaps be rejecting it on that basis, but the question we are asking is: given that this was six or seven months ago, what has the Government done to investigate this particular set of issues, because presumably this is not just another report from the clinical
1145 standards that might be about this or that or some particular department, these are very wide ranging and serious issues that have been raised by the Head of Clinical Governance. Given that it has been raised by the person charged with reviewing clinical standards, and they are very serious, what have the Government done since receipt of that to investigate it, firstly? And, secondly, can the Government say that, having investigated it, it is not true?

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, the Minister has already said that she has met with the individual in question to further seek to probe for information that might relate to the allegations as they are set out in that and other communications to her, in order to ensure that the Government can say, as I have said with confidence here, that there is not one shred of evidence
1155 that there is anything behind those allegations.

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Indeed, Mr Speaker, I will tell the House more. When these allegations were first put to the Government, they were put to me, and so I called Prof. Burke to address the whole Cabinet within days of the allegation landing on my desk. The whole Cabinet understood that if there were anything that might suggest that there have been preventable deaths in Gibraltar, we immediately
1160 acted to deal with that issue. The whole Cabinet was addressed by Prof. Burke. I asked Prof. Burke to give me and the Cabinet not the names of those alleged to have been involved in bringing those deaths about, but the names of the persons who had deceased in those circumstances, so that the Government could put to the Coroner the names of those individuals and their deaths could be investigated. I have not yet been provided with a name.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Can I just ask, on that meeting of Prof. Burke with the whole Cabinet, was it after or before the letter of November 2020? And if so, can he give us a general range of when that happened?

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Hon. Chief Minister: Before. Frankly, Mr Speaker, in the past 24 months, time has become a little elastic, so I am not confident in giving a date, but the Cabinet minutes will show what date it was.

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Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, if it was before, and he then wrote this letter ... Having written the letter, it requires, surely, further investigation and discussions – and it is six months on, so can the Government say that not only had they met Prof. Burke before he sent the letter, but having sent the letter what have they done about that?

1180 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I have told the House that when Prof. Burke first made the
allegations and brought them to the attention of a Minister he brought them to the attention of
me and, I believe, the Minister for Health at the same time. I took the immediate decision that
Prof. Burke should address the whole Cabinet. He addressed the whole Cabinet days later. He was
asked to give us the names of the individuals whose deaths he said he had identified as being
preventable and arising for the reasons set out. He has not yet provided any such name. My
1185 intention, which I think would be the intention that should garner the support of every right-
thinking member of our community, is to then, given any name, report that name to the Coroner
for a full coronial investigation into an alleged preventable death in Gibraltar.

The allegation did not elicit, when it was challenged, any response that could lead to such an
investigation that might enable either a full coronial investigation or blame thereafter to be
1190 apportioned for preventable death, because preventable death is going to result in either
negligence or a crime being relevant. Similar allegations, if not identical allegations, have
subsequently been made by Prof. Burke in subsequent letters, which have been challenged in the
same way by the Hon. Ministers who have been in receipt of those letters and have elicited no
further detail of the sort one would expect in order to be able to deal with such an allegation,
1195 which can lead to a loss of confidence in the Health Services if there is anything behind it, and
indeed that would require a serious and coronial investigation.

There is no alternative, in my view. If there is a preventable death reported to the Government,
to the Health Authority or to any responsible person, that death must be investigated at the level
of the Health Services and it must also, if it was preventable, be investigated by a coroner. That
1200 remains the Government's position. We have not been given any such names.

Mr Speaker: Final question.

1205 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister is saying that it is not just one letter, there
had been a series of letters of a similar nature from Prof. Burke, in relation generically or more
specifically in instances, but a series of letters which have drawn the same conversation and the
same kind of response from the Government, and indeed from the Head of Clinical Governance.
In those circumstances, and given that it is a process of months, does Prof. Burke retain the
confidence of the Government?
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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, the Government does not engage in discussions about the
confidence it has in any one of its employees or those with whom we have contracts for services.
Prof. Burke is not here to deal with those issues. I am happy to deal with the issues that the hon.
Members have raised in the way that I have dealt with them. Yes, I have already disclosed that
1215 there is more than one communication, but I think he would agree with me that the responsible
thing to do, faced with such an allegation, where the lives of Gibraltarians are alleged to have
been lost in a preventable way, is to immediately seek to investigate them. And when the
allegations are put repeatedly and the questions are put to try to elucidate further information,
we have a responsibility to continue to seek to elucidate that information, which is what I and
1220 successive Ministers for Health who have been in receipt of these allegations have repeatedly
been seeking to do.

Mr Speaker: Marlene Hassan Nahon.

1225 **Hon. E J Phillips:** Mr Speaker ... *[Inaudible]*

Mr Speaker: Just the lady, and then we will come back to you.

1230 **Hon. E J Phillips:** It was my question in the first place. Can I conclude my questioning? I assume
the hon. Lady –

Mr Speaker: Why did you allow the Leader of the Opposition to speak, then, if you had not concluded your questions?

1235 **Hon. E J Phillips:** I gave way, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: No, you did not give way.

Hon. E J Phillips: I did ... *[Inaudible]*

1240 **Mr Speaker:** We are talking about minutiae here now.

Hon. E J Phillips: I suppose the answer is that it is my question ... *[Inaudible]*

Mr Speaker: I agree! Okay, let's now let the good lady, who has been waiting patiently ...

1245 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, I will take that.

The one thing that has not been mentioned in this discussion over the letters is that previous to the email of November 2020, when the leader of clinical governance discusses this cabal of a dozen individuals, there was actually a letter by 32 GPs, in August 2020, signalling their lack of confidence in the leader of clinical governance. That is, from what I understand, all the GPs in Primary Care and a proportion of the ones in secondary care as well. So, what we are looking at is that between the three months of the lack of confidence and the letter back from Prof. Burke about the doctors, I would like to ask Government what actually happened.

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1260 Did Government take this into account, the fact that there would have been a tension, a bad atmosphere and low morale between the doctors, perhaps leading to some sort of retaliation on behalf of the leader of clinical governance, based on the lack of competence they showed against him? What I would like to know is what action did the Government take in those three months and how is it that they can justify the leader of clinical governance still being in position, considering that he enjoys zero confidence from the staff and this tension has built up where it has turned into some kind of blame game? Is that responsible to keep this individual in his role, Mr Speaker?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Mr Speaker, I would say to the hon. Lady that she needs to consider the opposite. If a person who is a professor, appointed to be Head of Clinical Governance, says in writing to the Government that there are preventable deaths, and the thing that the Government does is to get rid of him at that moment, I put it to her that she would come to this House to say that the Government had got rid of Prof. Burke to silence him because he had made these allegations and that morale was very badly affected because there are preventable deaths in the Health Authority, an issue which has been raised by a visiting professor who is responsible for clinical governance, and the Government has dismissed him when he has made that allegation.

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1280 But the hon. Lady is absolutely right because she has juxtaposed the two things that are relevant here. There is serious concern in the professional body in the GHA – the GPs, the nurses and some of the consultants – about some of the issues that have arisen in the context of how clinical governance has been dealt with, and there is serious concern expressed, in the way that you have heard in this House today, by the Head of Clinical Governance, which has led to the allegations that have been made, which the Government has sought to follow up directly and through other health professionals as well. None of us here, or there, are clinical professionals, and some of the terminology can be used by any party to a clinical dispute, if they are clinical people, to pull the wool over the eyes of those who are not clinical, whether they are legal or otherwise professional. And so, what the Government has been responsible in doing is ensuring that we hear what all sides are saying in this respect.

1285 Mr Speaker, I end my response to the hon. Lady by reminding her that in the context of the serious allegation contained in the letter by Prof. Burke to me and to the previous Minister for Health and subsequently in the communications to the hon. Lady, as far as this Government is concerned this is not an issue that can be determined politically or professionally, this is only an issue that can be determined judicially or quasi-judicially, because if there is a preventable death it must be investigated coronially.

1290 And so we have to be careful of trying to make this too political. She has put her finger on the issue that the doctors, as she says, have also raised issues. Hon. Members have raised the concerns of Prof. Burke and I think everybody would agree that the only responsible way to act ... This is not petty politics, this is important; these are the lives of Gibraltarians allegedly lost in a preventable way, which has to be dealt with dispassionately, very carefully and pointing in the direction of a traditional coronial investigation and determination. When we have sought that, we have not had the information necessary to proceed to that level. It may be that we do get that information, in which case I have already told the hon. Lady what the course of action would be, unless it were agreed that there were an issue of negligence rather an issue which is criminal, in which case it may be that the advice the Government receives is different. But these are the most serious, sacrosanct issues that we could be dealing with, the lives of the people we represent and the lives of Gibraltarians.

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Mr Speaker: This will be the last question from the good lady.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1305 I thank the Chief Minister for his answer, because it goes some way to explain the puzzle of what has been going on in this respect. One thing that I do not believe he has answered is before the letter about the accusations about the cabal, in November, what process did the Government take between August and that letter in November, three months? What process did the Government take to understand the doctors' issues and why they manifested a lack of confidence, in such a global amount of doctors here, against the leader of clinical governance? I would like to know what happened in those three months and if that issue was dealt with, please.

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1315 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, considerable work was done as a result of all of the aspects of this. The hon. Lady is pointing to one. We have had questions about another aspect, but there are many aspects to this, and considerable work was done, not least the hon. Lady meeting with representatives of that medical body and my meeting with those representatives also and their industrial relations representatives, which are Unite the Union – I think exclusively Unite the Union, I do not think it is the other union. There were a number of meetings in respect of the structure of clinical governance and matters relating to how clinical governance is to be done in the future, in a way that is considered to be less ... Sorry, let me not talk about what it will be less. Let me tell the hon. Lady what it will be more. It will be more done in a committee style, so that there is confidence that there cannot be one person's view where there may have been issues between individuals in the past that would then expose an individual who is being investigated on a clinical governance matter to having to be judged by somebody who they may feel is already predisposed against them. So, what is envisaged is a change in the structure of how clinical governance is done.

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1330 I should, just in that respect, Mr Speaker, inform the House that clinical governance was not something that was undertaken objectively in our Health Services before. It was something that was introduced by this Government. We took the first step of introducing objective clinical governance, which is designed to find when there are problems – not to attribute blame but to find when there are problems – so that the health systems can learn from that, and we are now hopefully going to be able to take a further step, which is to develop clinical governance from being just a small part of what we do to being present in everything that is done in our Health

Services, and this is one of the important parts of the work that the hon. Lady is doing with the unions and with the professional body in the GHA.

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Mr Speaker: The Hon. Elliott Phillips, and this will be the *final* question.

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Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, I must say I find the answer by the hon. Gentleman, the Chief Minister ... I find a lot of weight in what he has said and the analysis that he has expressed. I agree with much of what he has said, insofar as it is not political, it is not professional, it is quasi-judicial, potentially judicial. He may remember I have been involved in many of the coronial inquests, which deal specifically with the deceased – how he came by his death, rather than attributing civil or criminal liability. That is the purpose, as he alluded to, of a coroner's inquest.

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I wonder, Mr Speaker, putting that all aside and given what he said about clinical governance, whether something that Government should give serious thought to ... given the allegations in respect of both sides of this particular matter and given the systemic issues that are evident around clinical governance, whether the Government might consider a public inquiry into this particular subject. I say that now, not to pressurise the Government to make a decision, but given the significance and importance of this question to our community and public safety in health and safety, will the Government consider that as a potential avenue?

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is about to cause a preventable death. By agreeing with me so vehemently, he is going to give me an unexpected stroke. But I appreciate that this is an important issue, and I think that we need to demonstrate the maturity of this place by not going party political on an issue as important as this.

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The Government is already doing considerable work with the Ministry for Health – and I distinguish the Ministry for Health from the Health Authority, and the professionals in the Health Authority and those who represent individuals in the Health Authority; that is to say the union – to investigate how different areas of the GHA which have been the subject of some of these allegations are operating and how they can operate going forward. Given that we may not have the data that we need to have coronial investigations, we are certainly ensuring that we look at how we are doing things in particular areas and continue to learn from best practice. That is what I call the recasting of health services in Gibraltar post pandemic, which is work that is ongoing with the unions, and all this dovetails together in order to ensure that the Health Services that we are offering our community are, of course, value for money, but also as best as possible inspired by best practice in the lead jurisdictions in offering free at the point of delivery healthcare, such as the United Kingdom. It is not the only system, but it is the system from which we take most inspiration. The hon. Lady is doing considerable and, if it were not her, exhausting work in ensuring that this is something that is dealt with very quickly, and is being assisted in that by professionals in whom the Government and the professional body in the Hospital have great confidence.

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Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q47/2021

Importation of cocaine, cannabis and heroin – Number of convictions

Clerk: Question 47, the Hon. D A Feetham.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, how many convictions have there been in each of the last three years in respect of (a) the importation and (b) the supply of cocaine, cannabis and heroin in Gibraltar?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

1380 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, during the policing year 2018-19 there were three convictions for importation of cocaine and three for cannabis. In the same year, there were three convictions for the supplying of cocaine and two for cannabis.

1385 In the policing year 2019-20 there were two convictions for importation of cocaine and two for cannabis. In the same year, there were two convictions for the supplying of cannabis.

In the policing year 2020-21 there were three convictions for the importation of cannabis.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q48/2021

**Carrying offensive weapons –
Convictions and injuries caused**

Clerk: Question 48, the Hon. D A Feetham.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, how many convictions have there been in the last three years for crimes associated with the carrying or injuries caused by the carrying of knives, guns or other offensive weapons in Gibraltar?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, in relation to the carrying of offensive weapons, the number of convictions during the last three policing years were: 2018-19, 11; 2019-20, 14; 2020-21, three.

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Convictions relating to injuries having been caused by offensive weapons during the same period, were: 2018-19, three; 2019-20, one; 2020-21, zero.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, in relation to the answer that the lady has just provided – and thank you for the answer – does she have a breakdown as to whether those offensive weapons were knives, guns or any other type of offensive weapon?

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Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Yes, Mr Speaker, I do. For the policing year 2018-19, six related to knives, one related to a gun and four related to another weapon. I am sorry, I do not know what the other weapon was. In relation to the convictions, two related to knives and one related to another weapon. Convictions of carrying a weapon, five related to knives, three related to guns and six other weapons. And for convictions of wounding or injury, one related to knives.

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For policing year 2020-21, I am afraid I do not have the breakdown, but I think it is two relating to knives and I do not know how many for other weapons, but I think it is one from the further information that I have, because I have the fine, so I am assuming it is one.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q49/2021
HM Prison –
Mandatory and voluntary drugs testing

Clerk: Question 49, the Hon. D A Feetham.

1420 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, how many inmates at HM Prison have been the subject of (a) mandatory drugs testing and (b) voluntary drugs testing in the last four years?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

1425 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, all drugs testing currently undertaken at HM Prison is voluntary, and in the last four years 149 inmates have been tested.

1430 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, this has been a topic that we have discussed in the past. I have asked questions about this, and in fact it was Mr Licudi who answered at the time. Just as a prelude, so that the House and listeners understand this, we introduced, when we were in government, drugs testing, and that must have been about 2010. My understanding of the answers that were given by Mr Licudi when I asked this question was that they felt that they did not have the resources or the wherewithal to basically undertake mandatory drug testing, but that that had been sorted out. It was about four years ago that he provided me with that answer.

1435 Why is it that there has not been any mandatory drugs testing, despite the fact that I was told in this House that this was something that could now be performed in the light of changes that had taken place during the stewardship of Mr Licudi?

1440 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, the mandatory drugs testing is something that has been introduced as a matter of principle, but in terms of operation, the mandatory drugs testing, as I understand it, requires testing at a specific lab that is approved by the Home Office, and this lab is in the UK.

1445 My understanding is that a lot of the progress that was necessary for this to be implemented last year was slowed down due to Covid, but I am sure that now, at this stage, we are able to take that up again. It is a question that I have asked myself as a result of this Parliament question and that is the answer that I have been given, but it is something that I have said I would now like to look into further.

1450 **Hon. D A Feetham:** I am very grateful that the hon. Lady will look at this further because the reality of this is that legislative underpinning for mandatory drugs testing was introduced 10 years ago and there has been zero mandatory drugs testing.

1455 I do not necessarily blame the hon. Lady, because she has inherited the portfolio from others, but obviously she is responsible for the Government as a whole. I do not think that the answer, with respect to her, stacks up, because the same answer that the hon. Lady has provided me as to why it has not happened was the answer that Mr Licudi provided. It was some time ago that that was provided, and he also expressed optimism to this House that it was all now sails to the wind that this was going to happen imminently.

1460 Can she at least give the House an undertaking and an assurance that this year at least all the issues that need to be sorted out will be sorted out, so that we can, at long last, have mandatory drugs testing, which, as I understand it, is Government policy, and obviously they see the benefits of mandatory drug testing so that we can more effectively deal with drugs at the Prison?

1465 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, yes, in the context that I am a relatively new Minister for Justice, given that pretty much everything that we have been able to deal with in the last year

has been Covid related and we have also an even newer Superintendent of Prison, I have already spoken to the Superintendent of Prison on this matter, and we have agreed that we are going to meet to look into this further.

1470 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q50-51/2021
COVID-19 vaccinations –
Numbers administered to residents and cross-frontier workers

Clerk: Question 50, the Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, of the 37,478 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccines administered at 29th April 2021, how many were to residents and how many to cross-frontier workers?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 51.

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Clerk: Question 51. The Hon. K Azopardi.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, of the 32,054 second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine administered at 29th April, 2021 how many were to residents and how many to cross-frontier workers?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, of those first doses administered, 28,630 were to residents and 8,848 were to non-resident, cross-frontier workers.

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Of those second doses of the vaccine administered, 27,052 were to residents and 5,002 were to non-resident, cross-frontier workers.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, do these stats also include the odd cases that have been reported in the press of people not quite fitting into the category of residents or cross-frontier workers? One of my colleagues was mentioning to me people who had arrived on a yacht and had been vaccinated. Is that not true? I see the hon. Lady shake her head. I thought there was a report. *(Interjection by Hon. Miss S J Sacramento)* I see, right.

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Because I asked this question on the date of the deadline of the filing of questions, since 29th April does she have an update with her on the situation as of today, of resident and cross-frontier workers? Not in terms of first doses; I am more interested in the second doses.

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Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, the vaccine has been provided to us by the UK government on the basis of very strict criteria, and it has only been made available to residents, or, in the case of non-residents, to cross-frontier workers.

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There is no question of anyone arriving on a yacht and receiving a vaccine and leaving. From recollection, what I read in some report was that someone who was on a yacht was complaining because they had asked for the vaccine and the vaccine was refused. That is the only circumstance that I am aware of. I do not know what situation the hon. Gentleman is referring to. I will check it

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if the hon. Gentleman gives me more information, but it is very unlikely on the basis that if people are not resident or do not fit into the classification of being a cross-frontier worker, then they are not entitled to the maximum.

1515 The latest statistics I have relate to 18th May, yesterday. Mr Speaker, did the hon. Gentleman ask me about second doses for frontier workers? In that case, the total is 8,330.

Hon. K Azopardi: And for residents as well?

1520 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Sorry, Mr Speaker, for residents, second doses is 27,940.

Hon. K Azopardi: So, am I right to say that – because obviously I noticed that the GHA had made a final call for people to come through and get into the system – it is still an ongoing process to get to ...? Would it be fair to say that we are close to the ceiling, that the ceiling is around 28,630, which is the first doses, or is it a higher ceiling?

1525 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, predominantly what the GHA is undertaking at the moment is second doses, because it is the second doses of the first doses that were administered when we closed the deadline. So we closed the deadline, then we had ... This is a programme that is extremely complex, Mr Speaker, and I try to understand it, but it is very scientific in the way that
1530 they prepared it and it is very, very organised to make sure that the second dose is always within 21 days of the first dose; but that does not mean that the first dose was administered immediately after we closed the deadline. It may well have been administered two or even three weeks after because at that point, when we did the deadline we were still probably administering second doses of people who were within the time.

1535 It is now very much a question of second doses, but some people have called in and if a first dose is available because the programme allows it, then exceptions are made for as long as people comply with the requirements.

Hon. K Azopardi: Can the Minister help with ...? Does she have a figure or does the GHA have
1540 a figure of the people who have expressed an interest and have registered using the online form, but they are currently unvaccinated because, for example, they are not here – students, that kind of thing? What is the kind of number that we are talking about of people who have not yet had it, even though they have expressed an interest and, for whatever reason, are in a programme for possible vaccination, but have still not started?

1545 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, the only group of people who are entitled to a vaccine who have vaccine reserved for them are students, and I know that there is a number reserved for students, and we have students on a waiting list that is specifically for students who are unable to take them actually because they are not here, but I do not know the number. But I can find the
1550 number out and tell the hon. Gentleman another day.

Hon. K Azopardi: Just a final question on that. In terms of what the Minister says, they have got vaccines reserved for students because students will be coming back maybe in late May, maybe June and so on, and given the shelf-life of the vaccine and so on and so forth, when she
1555 talks about reservation, does she mean stock in Gibraltar? Does she mean that there is a sort of small request for maybe 200 or 300 vaccines that can be shipped over?

Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, it is actually both, because all students who are in the UK have been asked to register. So on the basis that we know from the students who have
1560 registered, because part of the registration process asks when they return to Gibraltar, so on that basis, if the 21-day period for the first and the second vaccine is available within the expiry date

of the vaccine, then those vaccines are put aside, but we always have that little request, just in case.

1565 **Mr Speaker:** The Hon. Marlene Hassan Nahon.

1570 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, following the line of questioning between the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Minister, I wanted to ask a question, mainly for clarification. When we talk about cross-border workers and their level of priority in terms of the vaccine, I just wanted to ask the Minister whether cross-border workers who work here and pay into the Social Security pot and pay their taxes, are they not just as eligible and given the same right as everybody else to enjoy the process of vaccination? We were talking about the difference between cross-border workers and local residents. I wanted to ask her, shouldn't this be treated equally, in terms of these are people who are paying their taxes and are paying into the social security system?

1575 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Yes, Mr Speaker, they are. That is the point: that ordinarily the vaccination programme would have been made available to residents, but on this occasion, through negotiations with the UK, we have included cross-frontier workers into the vaccination programme by virtue of the fact that they do contribute by way of their social insurance.

1580 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

Q52/2021

Unvaccinated hospital visitors – Policy on visiting dying relatives

Clerk: Question 52, the Hon. K Azopardi.

1585 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Mr Speaker, what is the policy on allowing unvaccinated individuals to visit terminally ill or dying relatives in hospital?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

1590 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, restrictions on visiting across all GHA sites have been put in place to protect patients who are considered to be clinically vulnerable. Visitors who are vaccinated are one of the best ways to protect their friends and relatives when they are visiting, as well as other patients and staff members.

1595 However, in the case of unvaccinated visitors, the approval for them to visit a terminally ill or dying relative was considered on a case-by-case basis and at the very least, for a shortened visit and wearing full PPE.

1600 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Is the Minister aware of reports of unvaccinated individuals who have not been able to visit the terminally ill or dying relatives who, indeed, have passed away?

1605 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, no, because the policy of the GHA, whereas at a time when visits were not allowed for people who were unvaccinated, there has always been a policy in place – and the Hon. Member will know from previous press releases – that even unvaccinated people were allowed in to visit a relative if that relative was dying, so we have always made that exception.

1610 We have always made that exception throughout the pandemic and since the introduction of vaccines, and that has always been the policy of the GHA. There has not been any occasion where, in the circumstances where someone was dying, that a relative was not permitted access to be with their dying relative, because in the case of someone coming to the end of life, then in those exceptional circumstances arrangements for PPE and all other safety arrangements have been put in place when someone is dying.

1615 **Hon. K Azopardi:** If that is the case, how can it be that there have been people posting on social media that they have not been allowed to visit their dying relatives who have passed away?

Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Because, Mr Speaker, the premise of the hon. Gentleman's question was if I had received reports. Mr Speaker, I do not consider a post on social media a formal report.

1620 **Hon. K Azopardi:** Of course, it may not be a formal report, but is it not worthy of investigation to see whether, indeed, it is true or whether it is not true?

1625 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman is asking me to take Facebook posts at face value as a parliamentarian; but not only that, Mr Speaker, because now he is asking me to in Parliament across the floor of the House, even if that were true, to disclose medical information about the relative of someone or posted on Facebook. Mr Speaker, I do not think that that is normal practice, acceptable practice or parliamentary practice.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker –

1630 **Mr Speaker:** This is the last question.

Hon. K Azopardi: Mr Speaker, obviously, I respect your ruling, but it is a pretty serious issue. I am surprised the hon. Lady thinks that for some reason there is an issue in not following up a Facebook post, because they do it all the time – whenever you tag a Minister you get success, because you get a reply! (*Interjections*)

1635 The issue is not whether it is said in a letter or in a letter to the *Chronicle* or in talking to GBC; the issue is it is worthy or not, surely, to investigate whether it is true. In the context of the fact that the Government appears to maintain the view that no person who has wanted to see a dying relative has been unable to. If people are complaining that that is the case, it is surely worthy of investigation to see whether that is correct.

1640 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Well, Mr Speaker, I know that the hon. Gentleman is not blessed with many followers in his social media feeds and therefore he might think that it is relatively manageable to deal with issues on social media; but he should know that it is not correct by any stretch of the imagination for him to have got up and told the House – and therefore, he may wish to reflect on whether he wishes to correct the record – that when Ministers are tagged on social media, a response is elicited. That is not true.

1650 The hon. Gentleman should know that first of all there are Ministers who are not on social media. Second, he should know that on occasions, sometimes Ministers who are tagged on social media *may* respond to social media. *Some* Ministers may respond on *some* occasions on social media. But that is not to say that on every occasion a Minister who is tagged, it is elicited.

1655 Third, Mr Speaker, Hon. Members should know that we are not monitoring social media. We are *not* monitoring social media. At one stage there was a controversy suggesting that we were spending money monitoring social media. When we clarified that we were not, then the issue becomes that 'it is disgraceful that we are not monitoring social media'.

Well, Mr Speaker, I entirely agree that if there were instances of individuals who are not vaccinated who have been prevented from seeing dying relatives, that would be extraordinarily

serious because the GHA has a mechanism in place to provide for those individuals. But, Mr Speaker, I think the hon. Gentleman will agree with me that actually, if we have not received actual complaints about that, then it is very likely that it has not happened. It may be that somebody may have feared it would happen, but then subsequently it has not happened.

I can tell the hon. Gentleman that – forget social media – when you are Chief Minister of Gibraltar, when you are Minister for Health in Gibraltar, in traditional media – in other words, in letters or what we might call emails, now almost traditional media – you will immediately get an issue, less serious than this, if somebody believes it should be brought to your attention. Nobody has written to me to say, ‘A tragedy has befallen my family. Your Government’s policies are prevented from seeing my loved one passing away.’

Mr Speaker, given what we have now told the House, given the public statements that the hon. Gentleman has issued, the question really is not whether the Government has received these complaints or these issues, because the hon. Lady has clarified. The question is whether the hon. Gentleman’s public statements, all of them so vehement in their defence of this alleged eventuality, which we do not believe has actually occurred, are based on facts or on him just believing what he reads on social media.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q53/2021

Government subsidy of 10 social work students – Ultimate intention

Clerk: Question 53, the Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, what was Government’s ultimate intention when it subsidised 10 students to undertake a social work degree?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, the Government’s intention when it set up the BA (Hons) in Social Work was to offer the opportunity for a social work degree to be undertaken locally.

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Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, from what I understand, the Government subsidised 10 students at £500 per month times two and a half years equalling an investment of £15,000 per student and a total of £150,000 in the total amount of what it cost for these 10 students to get a degree, where they were given expectations of jobs in the end, and part of the contract of the bursary was that they would have to accept jobs locally when available.

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So my question is, after spending £150,000 on 10 students, does the Government consider this to have been value for money? From what I understand now, there are two to three vacancies. How has this cohort profited from this degree and how is Government able to justify this investment into the degree for these 10 students?

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Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, I will start with the second point first, and that is the point of expectation of a job in the Government upon completion of a degree that is funded by the Government. I have gone through all the press releases that were issued at the relevant time, as well as the *Hansards* of Budget speeches, and there is no single expectation of a job in the Government after the completion of a degree in any of those. Mr Speaker, what it says in all the

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press releases is that it offers individuals interested in ... and I am going to quote from a press release, Mr Speaker:

Social work is a highly rewarding yet highly demanding profession that attracts a fairly small number of school leavers. It is a profession that commonly attracts more mature individuals. Locally many individuals interested in undertaking a profession have found it difficult to leave their commitments in Gibraltar for that purpose ...

1705 – for studying abroad. All it says after graduation, Mr Speaker, the only reference in the press release is: after graduating students will become eligible to apply to the HCPC for registration. Then they can apply to work as qualified social workers.

1710 Mr Speaker, I am sure that the hon. Lady is aware that the Government subsidises and funds by way of a grant approximately 1,000 students in university and no job in the public sector is guaranteed at the end of any of those. When she refers to the bursary and the clause in the bursary, it will be the same clause as anybody who has gone to university, which says that if the Government needs to call upon your services upon graduation, then the Government, for having funded your studies through the taxpayer, can be entitled to do so. That was certainly a clause when I received my grant when I went to university a long time ago, Mr Speaker.

1715 But one thing is for the Government to have organised this training and the offer of this degree locally and another is that there is an expectation that every single person who graduates from this degree is then going to be employed by the Government, because that is not an expectation that is given to absolutely anyone who undertakes a degree, Mr Speaker. I regret that the hon. Lady takes that view.

1720 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, that was my understanding from a few conversations with students who now are hoping that they might get jobs. Can the Minister perhaps give us any visibility as to whether in the near future or mid-term future there might be vacancies coming up for these graduates?

1725 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, yes, of course, and as and when vacancies in the complement of social services arise, then it will be open to a competitive process. So if there are nine or 10 graduates and we have three vacancies, then the recruitment will be for three people because we have to live within our means and we have to stick to our budget. It will become a competitive process and the best three will be selected. This works exactly the same way as when
1730 teachers go off to university and study, and teachers will then apply for the vacancies that arise.

Certainly it is the long-term intention that the more local social workers we have in Social Services, the better. That was the rationale for the setting up of the degree and the opportunity to do it locally, but that is not the same to say that everyone who graduates at the end of the year will be employed by Social Services. We cannot employ 10 if we do not have 10 vacancies.
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Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q54-56/2021
Dementia care –
Update on Government strategy

Clerk: Question 54, the Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

1740 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Can the Minister for Health give this House an update on where it is at with regards: (1) the Dementia Strategy Committee; (2) the Dementia Coordinator; (3) the Dementia Liaison Manager?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

1745 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 55 and 56.

Clerk: Question 55, the Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

1750 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** What is Government doing to raise awareness on dementia, how to recognise it, and eliminate any associated stigma?

Clerk: Question 56, the Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

1755 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** What is Government doing to raise the profile of dementia and encouraging the community, organisations and businesses to be 'Dementia Friendly' and become a 'Dementia Friendly Community'?

1760 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, now, as we restore, restart and recover, we will revert to all strategic development as soon as possible.

1765 Regrettably, Mr Speaker, we have not been able to advance on the Dementia Strategy over the last year as much as we would have liked to. As the whole of Gibraltar is aware, all the GHA resources this year have been diverted to dealing with the pandemic and saving lives.

1770 I think it is important to note, however, that all those living with dementia were in no way forgotten about during the pandemic and were supported with increased domiciliary care and a community dementia outreach clinic, providing therapeutic treatments, clinical care and meals on wheels.

1775 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, only in July last summer was I told by the previous Minister for Health that the committee, the liaison manager and the co-ordinator ... I quote: 'We are expecting that this will happen some time within the last quarter of the year.' This was back in July, and obviously we did not have another outbreak of Covid really till Christmas. So considering that the Minister says that elderly people with dementia are prioritised and were prioritised, wouldn't the best priority have been to actually fulfil the commitment made by the previous Minister for Health?

1780 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, the commitment is there and has always been there, but the hon. Lady may recall that when we were at our worst was in the last quarter of last year, and whereas the highest number of deaths that we had in Gibraltar was in December and in January, it all started earlier on in the last quarter of the year. There is nothing that I would have loved more than when at the end of August, when I was appointed as Minister for Health, to have done everything we could do when it came to the Dementia Strategy, because the strategy, Mr Speaker, and the dementia vision is something that I started at the very beginning back in 2013, when I was Minister with responsibility for elderly residential services then. For me, it has been extremely satisfactory to see the previous Ministers for Health and how they have developed it and launched it, as it was launched by Neil Costa when he was Minister for Health. There is nothing more that I would have loved to have done in the last quarter of last year, to have developed further the Dementia Strategy, than have to be dealing with the Covid pandemic.

1790 But Mr Speaker, let us not forget what was happening at the end of last year. Our resources and our full focus and priority were that: saving lives. Now that we are coming out of the pandemic

1795 and we are starting to restart everything else, now let's go back to the strategic work that we have unfortunately had to put on hold.

But every single member of our community in Gibraltar knows that they have an absolute commitment to further and to develop all resources relating to dementia from this Government. I am sure it enjoys the support of everyone in this House.

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Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, so can the hon. Lady give us a new timeline or a new deadline as to when she can commit to the Dementia Strategy Committee, Co-ordinator and Liaison Manager, and also some visibility as to how she is going to fulfil the strategy to make our Gibraltar a dementia-friendly community – some visibility over the plans, please.

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Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, as soon as I can make these announcements, as well as with all of the other strategic development, I will. And the sooner, the better, Mr Speaker. It is something that I cannot wait to do.

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Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q57/2021

Health and care sector – Replacement of key workers

Clerk: Question 57, the Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Is Government in the process of replacing key workers across various health and care centres?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, Government has various ongoing training programmes. Trainees have placement opportunities throughout the health and care sector after their training, and are offered the opportunity to apply to work across the health and care sector when these opportunities arise.

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Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, the reason I ask this question is because there is a lot of insecurity, especially from parents of children with special needs who are feeling a little threatened by what they are hearing, that some key workers who have spent a lot of time and trust with their children are going to be removed in favour of locals who are perhaps on the unemployment list and do not have the same skills or have not spent the same amount of time forming those bonds with the residents or the students and children. I would like to understand from the Minister if these parents have reason to be concerned and to prepare themselves for some change in key workers or if the ones who have long-standing carers who these children or young adults are very much connected to can rest assured that these workers will not be removed from their children.

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1830

Thank you.

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Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, in the cases where it is relevant, this process has been discussed at length with family members by those in the Care Agency. Mr Speaker, it is the policy of the Government where a vacancy in a service arises, that that vacancy be filled by someone who is a resident and with whom we have invested local training.

1840 This is very much a programme, Mr Speaker, that we have embarked on or with the agreement
of the unions, because the long-term plan is that this is what is going to give the service users of
the facilities that continuity long-term.

Mr Speaker, one of the things that has resulted from ... or has been brought into great focus
during a combination of last year dealing with Covid and dealing with Brexit is over-reliance on
1845 frontier workers, Mr Speaker, and therefore it is absolutely important and essential that we invest
in people who are resident in Gibraltar to give us that continuity and to minimise that risk.

Now, because continuity is so important for these individuals, the relationship with the people
has already been established – because the placement is undertaken in the institution as part of
their training, so that relationship starts there – but after the training then there will be a period
1850 of shadowing, so that the individual already has a relationship with the person who is coming in.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, I consider the Minister's answer quite concerning
for the families of children and young adults who are very much connected to their carers. When
she talks about continuity long-term, I think the best continuity one could give these children and
1855 young adults is to be around the very people who they trust and have been with. That is continuity,
Mr Speaker.

But on the question of over-reliance, I would like to ask how the Minister can marry the
prospect that we understand and hear from Government about a shared Schengen Area into the
future, where there will not be any divisions and fewer borders, for lack of a better word, yet we
1860 are looking to rely less on the very neighbouring area that we are supposed to be so connected to
post-Brexit with this new prospect of Schengen possibility.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, the Government hopes and expects to be able
to conclude that treaty. We are optimistic that we will be able to, but we are not certain that we
1865 will. In fact, it is common ground across the floor of the House that it is better to have no treaty
than to have a bad treaty. We cannot start the negotiation by putting ourselves in a situation in
any aspect of our economy, whether it is the health and care sector or otherwise, where we would
become more dependent as we go into the negotiations which might not be fruitful, than we were
before the negotiations are completed.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, based on the New Year's Eve Agreement, if there is going to be a four-
year period of bedding in, at the end of which choices may have to be made and a position will
have to be taken by the Government of Gibraltar, as it then will be – and I hope that we will be
returned at the next general election and we will be there again – I am sure that we will only
1870 continue if certain arrangements continue and not if new arrangements come in. It would be
foolish to put ourselves in a situation of further dependence now.

The hon. Lady needs to understand that these are not indefinite contracts that are being
ended. These were always contracts for a fixed term and when those contracts started, there was
no relationship between the individual being cared for and the individual providing the care. And
now, Mr Speaker, perhaps there will be a change, but it is a change that will be properly managed
1880 through people who are properly qualified and to people who are from Gibraltar, and who are
therefore more likely to eventually stay in those jobs whatever happens in relation to the treaty.

So, Mr Speaker, I have been here before in this situation in relation to other individuals, where
we have been asked by Members Opposite in the time that we have been in Government why
these changes are happening and we have said because we are training Gibraltarians and we are
1885 putting Gibraltarians in jobs, which is our stated policy position – to find long-term jobs for
Gibraltarians – and, of course, to continue to be an engine for the economies all around us, but in
this area to provide long-term jobs for Gibraltarians, and actually subsequently those Gibraltarians
have built those relationships with the people that they care for and they have continued.

But we also have to understand that in the context of these relationships which the hon. Lady
1890 and I have been in discussion with the unions on, on a number of occasions, the commitment that
is being sought is one-sided. So in other words, what is being sought is that the Government say,

1895 'I will never change the carer because the carer has built the relationship with the person being
cared for.' There is nothing to stop the carer, and it has happened on many occasions, to say, 'I've
found a better job; I am going'; 'My family circumstances have changed and I'm going to leave';
1900 or 'I seek a promotion'. So we have to understand that in that context, and we say these things,
Mr Speaker, with the greatest sensitivity, because we do understand that the relationships
between those who require care and those who provide care are sometimes as close as family
relationships. I have experienced that with a relative in care and the bond that is created between
those who are caring for our loved ones, who need that care, is sometimes akin to much beyond
friendship. But we have a responsibility to manage the job market, to do so sensitively and to
create those same relationships in a way that will have the longevity that our sometimes
precarious political situation requires us to give them and in a way that ensures that we are also
creating local worthy long-term employment in the process.

1905 **Clerk:** Next question.

Q58/2021
Colorectal specialists –
Whether in GHA

Clerk: Question 58, the Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

1910 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Can the Minister of Health confirm if there are presently any
colorectal specialists working out of the GHA?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

1915 **Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs**
(Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, if the question is meant to ask if there are any colorectal
specialists working in the GHA, then the answer is yes.

1920 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, yes, that was the question and if the Minister tells
me yes, I would like more detail on the specialist, because I have three cases of constituents who
have been told that there have not been specialists since back in January and have been delayed
in their care for four months, leading them to have to go to the UK because simply they are told
to go home because there is no specialist that can see them. So perhaps if she can point me to the
colorectal specialist, I can tell my constituents who they have to go to, because at the GHA they
have been told to wait because there aren't any.

1925 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, I am very surprised to hear that and I would invite the
hon. Lady to continue the practice that she usually does, that if she hears something like that that
is a bit strange in relation to the GHA and clearly serious, to ask me immediately so that I can help
immediately, and not wait for a month for the question to be put on the floor of this House.

1930 Mr Speaker, there was a changeover in relation to doctors, and a locum was engaged and it
may have been that there was a window between one doctor being absent and the locum being
recruited, but I can very much confirm that there is a doctor in place at the GHA.

1935 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, I thank her for that answer, and I am sure she knows
that obviously, I always tried to go to her first, because when it is people's health more than
anything, it is no time to make any political points; but unfortunately, I have learnt of this after

the situation has unfolded and after they have had to go to the UK, so my question was genuinely generic, do we have a specialist?

1940 Can I just ask her perhaps later to explain to me behind the Speaker's Chair, who these specialists are, and whether I can also ask her now whether the GHA has embarked on a general colorectal screening programme for patients?

1945 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, there has always been a colorectal screening programme for patients, but there is no mystery in who the consultant is or not, because an individual cannot be referred to a consultant by myself or by the hon. Lady. An individual needs to be referred by a GP.

Mr Speaker: Next question.

Q59/2021
Airport rapid testing station –
Contractor

Clerk: Question 59, the Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon.

1950 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** To whom was the contract for the rapid testing station outside the Gibraltar Airport awarded and how did the Government come to award this contract to said person(s)/entity?

1955 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and Justice.

Minister for the Health Authority, Justice, Multiculturalism, Equality and Community Affairs (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento): Mr Speaker, this contract was awarded to Maritime Medical Services Ltd as a result of a competitive tendering process.

1960 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, there are some individuals who have approached me, telling me that there was not a competitive tender process. I hold my hands up here, this is why I am asking the question in good faith as to whether there was one, so I would appreciate if perhaps the Minister could give me a little bit more detail of how that tender took place, so that I can inform those individuals who insist that there was no tender at all, and it was directly allocated.

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Hon. Miss S J Sacramento: Mr Speaker, there is absolutely no question of this being directly allocated to anyone. The tender process was: invitations to tender for the contract went out on 22nd October 2020, and there were various entities who tendered.

1970 So if the hon. Lady does not want to take my word for it, then she can ask the other people who tendered for it, who will then confirm that there was a tender process. One organisation was successful, other companies were not successful, but they all tendered before a panel and a board.

1975 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, after that final question by the hon. Lady, I move that the House should now adjourn till tomorrow at 3 p.m. in the afternoon to continue with Questions.

Mr Speaker: I now propose a question that this House do now adjourn until Thursday, 20th May at 3 p.m.

1980 I now put the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Thursday, 20th May at 3 p.m. Those in favour; those against? Passed.

This House will now adjourn to Thursday, 20th May at 3 p.m.

The House adjourned at 6.20 p.m.