



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 11 a.m. – 1.10 p.m.

Gibraltar, Friday, 13th December 2024

Contents

Prayer	3
Confirmation of Minutes	3
Announcements	3
Congratulatory to GBC on success of Open Day and to Lt Col John Pitto on becoming leader of Royal Gibraltar Regiment	3
Questions for Oral Answer	4
Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport	4
Q1014/2024 Bayside Sports Complex – New hockey pitch.....	4
Q1015/2024 Netball World Youth Cup 2025 –.....	5
Venues and accommodation facilities.....	5
Q1016/2024 Ottawa Chambers shooting range – Compliance with international regulations	6
Q1017/2024 Pickleball facilities – Update re progress.....	7
Q1018/2024 Lathbury Sports Complex – Repairs to swimming pool.....	7
Health, Care and Business	8
Q1019/2024 Ocean Village and Marina Bay – Oil spillage and rubbish pollution.....	8
Q1020/2024 Electricity generation – Breakdown for period 1st January to 30th November 2024	10
Q1021/2024 National Focal Point for Tobacco Control – Individuals and departments to be involved in consultation.....	11
Q1022/2024 GHA Zero Tolerance Policy – To whom applicable.....	12

Q1023/2024 GHA staff dealing with service users – Guidelines and training	13
Q1024/2024 GHA medical records – Format.....	14
Q1025/2024 Radiology results from Spanish providers – Waiting period and when chased	16
Q1026/2024 Clinical practice guidelines – Platform providing access to medical professionals	18
Q1027-28/2024 St Bernard’s Hospital – Meal provision for in-patients	19
Q1029/2024 Wound Care Clinic – Location	20
Q1030/2024 Minor Injuries Unit – Average waiting times	21
Q1031-33/2024 St Bernard’s Hospital Intensive Care Unit – Breakdown of staff complement; nurse-to-patient ratio; staffing issues	21
Q1034-35/2024 ENT appointments – Average waiting times to see a specialist	22
Q1036-37/2024 GHA legal proceedings – Negligence claims; out-of-court settlements.....	23
Q1038, 1041-43, 1046-48/2024 GHA industrial grade domestic staff and labourers – Numbers employed; pay for experience and loyalty; recognition of efforts during pandemic; responsibilities; industrial action and impact of 10% allowance sought	25
Q1039-40, 1044-45/2024 GHA cleaning – Number of cleaners employed, hours worked, equipment provided; frequency of cleaning hospital theatres	25
Q1020/2024 Electricity generation – Breakdown for period 1st January to 30th November 2024 – Supplementary questions	31
Q1049/2024 Companies incorporated in Gibraltar – Breakdown of those trading principally in Gibraltar and those not	34
Q1050/2024 Zero Carbon Footprint Company Ltd – Loan to North Mole BESS One Ltd	35
Q1051/2024 GHA insurance cover – Current limit	36
Q1052/2024 GHA Accountability Agreement – Status and intention to publish	37
Q1053/2024 Covid public inquiry – Whether still Government’s intention to convene	37
Q1034-35/2024 ENT appointments – Average waiting times to see a specialist – Supplementary questions	38
Q1039 and 1043/2024 GHA cleaners, domestic staff and labourers – Supplementary questions	39
Q1049/2024 Companies incorporated in Gibraltar – Breakdown of those trading principally in Gibraltar and those not – Supplementary questions	40
Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism	41
Q1054/2024 Three Kings Cavalcade – Adjustments for people with supported needs or disabilities.....	41
<i>The House recessed at 1.10 p.m.</i>	42

The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 11 a.m.

[MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Judge K Ramagge GMH *in the Chair*]

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: J B Reyes Esq *in attendance*]

PRAYER

Madam Speaker

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Friday, 13th December 2024.

Order of Proceedings: (i) Oath of Allegiance; (ii) Confirmation of Minutes – the Minutes of the 11th meeting of the 15th Parliament, which was held on 27th, 28th and 29th November 2024.

5

Madam Speaker: May I sign the Minutes as correct?

Members: Aye.

10

Madam Speaker signed the Minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Congratulations to GBC on success of Open Day
and to Lt Col John Pitto on becoming leader of Royal Gibraltar Regiment**

Clerk: (iii) Communications from the Chair; (iv) Petitions; (v) Announcements.

15

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, with your leave, before the proceedings of the House take off, may I start by congratulating everyone at the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation for the fantastic job that they did yesterday on their Open Day, which is a focal point of the community's activities in December and is a focal point of charitable giving for the whole community. May I congratulate them on behalf, no doubt, of the whole House and the whole community, for having collected the record-breaking sum of £300,000. May I extend those congratulations not just to those who are the familiar faces that we see in front of the camera but also the less familiar faces to those who are not involved in the business of politics, for example, who are behind the cameras and who are such an important part of getting that show on TV last night and the recordings that go on throughout the year, as well as those who join the GBC in this period to manage the auctions etc. A massive congratulations on behalf of the whole community for that record breaking amount.

20

25

Also, Madam Speaker, I had a call yesterday with CBF and Lt Col John Pitto, who today takes over the leadership of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment; a Gibraltarian once more in charge of the

Royal Gibraltar Regiment, something I am sure the whole House will also be very pleased to hear.
My congratulations to all of them. (*Banging on desks*)

Madam Speaker: Any ...?

Hon. D J Bossino: Simply to associate the Opposition bench with every word that the Hon. the Chief Minister has uttered in respect of the GBC Open Day. It is now one of the features, as he rightly points out, of our social calendar. Not only does it provide large doses of fun for everybody during the course of the day and then watching overnight on their television sets, but it also gives a lot of money to charity, which is the focal point of that event. It is something that we, certainly on this side of the House, support the GBC on, and those who made their donations. I am glad that the Hon. the Chief Minister also made his own personal donation. He dedicated a song to me – I think it was *War Is Over* – and encouraged me to make an equal donation, which I did; mine was *Living on a Prayer*.

Leaving that to one side, I do not know what the final figure is; I am not sure that the Hon. Chief Minister himself does, (*Interjection*) which is a record breaker – he is not misleading the House, is he? – and it seems that the donation of the registration number plate did certainly pay dividends on this occasion. I think they managed to raise in excess of £100,000 for G1B, and that is something on which we congratulate the Government in terms of that particular initiative, because at the end of the day it is all good money for charities.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I also associate this side of the House with the words of the Chief Minister in respect of Mr John Pitto's current role at the Gibraltar Regiment. Mr Reyes will be very pleased with that. It is good to see a Gibraltarian discharging that responsibility once again. He is well known, I think, to many of us. He is certainly well known to me, I know his family very well, and I have absolutely no doubt that he will discharge that role and responsibility diligently and with his usual panache and flair, so I look forward to Mr Pitto discharging that responsibility into the future. (*Banging on desks*)

Clerk: (vi) Papers to be laid; (vii) Reports of Committees; (viii) Answers to Oral Questions.

Questions for Oral Answer

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, CIVIL CONTINGENCIES AND SPORT

Q1014/2024

**Bayside Sports Complex –
New hockey pitch**

Clerk: Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.
Question 1014. The Hon. E J Reyes.

Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.
Question 1014. The Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Good morning, Madam Speaker. Can Government provide details, together with costs and timeframe, in respect of the new playing surface it hopes to provide for the hockey pitch at Bayside Sports Complex?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

70

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, the project is still subject to the tender process, so at present I am not at liberty to discuss this as information may be subject to change.

75

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I made a note in the tender process. However, I am told by those very actively involved with hockey that it is affecting their timetable a bit. Therefore, I ask the Minister for Sport: is he aware that this could have a knock-on effect and consequences on the Hockey Association's preparations and participation in international competitions? Hockey is one of those associations that in the past has been very actively involved in international competitions, and even though the game may be played away from home, it is the preparation, the build-up, the coaches being able to try, on home ground, the new tactics, to try and catch their opponents out by surprise. So, can the Minister try to give us some assurances on timetable, which I asked for? I think the cost element of the question cannot be answered because of the tender process, and even to try to probe further would hinder the competition – we always try to get the best value for money – but at least on the time frame is there any possible commitment from the Minister?

80

85

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, I cannot give a commitment because the process is ongoing. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the GSLA is in constant contact with the Gibraltar Hockey Association, and I believe that the president of the association recently gave an interview to GBC on the matter.

90

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1015/2024

Netball World Youth Cup 2025 – Venues and accommodation facilities

Clerk: Question 1015. The Hon. E J Reyes.

95

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide details of the sporting venues and accommodation facilities it will provide to the Gibraltar Netball Association in connection with their hosting the forthcoming international games in 2025?

100

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, all of the GSLA's sporting facilities, where relevant, will be made available to the local organising committee. There may be a need to use school sports halls as well. In terms of accommodation, the local organising committee has been liaising with local hotels, who have been very supportive of the event.

105

Hon. E J Reyes: I note the answer given, Madam Speaker, but the Minister has not made any mention whatsoever of the manifesto commitment to build a purpose-built facility for netball, something that we will call their home. I believe it was within the Bayside Sports Complex area. Can we have an update on that as well, please?

110

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, I agree that an announcement has not been made, but I can assure the hon. Gentleman that it will not affect the World Cup in 2025.

Hon. E J Reyes: I do not quite understand the answer, Madam Speaker. I am asking for an update on that commitment. In fact, I believe, if I am not mistaken, that the Hon. the Chief Minister has even sent a letter out to the association with some sort of preliminary design drawings and so on. What is the update specifically relating to that project?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, the update is that we are working on the project.

Hon. D J Bossino: I think it is an important point that my hon. Friend raises in respect of the venues and accommodation. The Hon. the Minister says that he is in discussions with hotels but is he looking at any other venues beyond the hotel offering? His colleague the Minister for Tourism, I think at the last session of the House, alluded to the fact that the hotels were 100% at full capacity only a few weeks ago. So, in that context, whilst it will be a success, I am sure, that the Minister for Tourism will attribute to him and to his work, how will this be addressed by the Hon. the Minister for Sport in respect of this particular sporting event?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, the organising committee met with the Gibraltar Hoteliers Association over a year before the event and were able to secure all of the rooms that they require, as well as booking Airbnbs on the Rock.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1016/2024

Ottawa Chambers shooting range – Compliance with international regulations

Clerk: Question 1016. The Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Is Government satisfied that the new shooting range and auxiliary facilities to be provided at Ottawa Chambers, 20 Dudley Ward Way are or will be fully compliant with international regulations set out by the governing body of the sport?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, the new shooting range the hon. Member refers to is a purely private and commercial project. There is no involvement from HMGoG or the local shooting fraternity.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The developers of these new range facilities are promoting the venue in such a manner that it will be an attraction not only for tourists but for local people. Since there is going to be an investment in infrastructure and so on, my question was referring to the international regulations set out by the governing body because should we be able to host an international event – the example was just the previous question on netball – then there is the question of having as many venues as possible, and that can only take effect if they meet the international regulations. I may build in the patio of a housing estate a small five-a-side football pitch for youngsters to kick a ball around, but will it meet the international regulations, looking ahead and hoping to see further development in the sport?

160 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, with regard to investment, it is important to remember that it is a private and commercial company, but I am assured by the company that they are in communication with the National Rifle Association of the UK to be affiliated with them as part of the international regulations and as set out by the governing body of the sport in the UK.

165 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Is the Hon. the Minister able to divulge to this House which company is involved in this?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, I am sure that it came up in the DPC, but I cannot recall the company. They did apply for planning, so it would have been public information, but I do not know.

Q1017/2024
Pickleball facilities –
Update re progress

170 **Clerk:** Question 1017. The Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide updates on the progress made in the last quarter of this year in respect of possible plans to provide pickleball sports facilities in Gibraltar?

175 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, the answer remains as set out in answer to Question 499/2024. In addition, pickleball is currently being played three times a week at the Europa Sports Complex.

180 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q1018/2024
Lathbury Sports Complex –
Repairs to swimming pool

Clerk: Question 1018. The Hon. E J Reyes.

185 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide details of costs in respect of problems recently experienced at Lathbury Sports Complex swimming pool, indicating how long the pool was out of use whilst repairs were carried out?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

190 **Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, the pool at Lathbury was reopened a few days after I provided the answer to Question 654/2024. It had been out of use for approximately three weeks and, as explained at the time, there are no costs for the repairs.

195 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I am grateful for that, Madam Speaker. I take it, because I have not had any other feedback, that there have been no further setbacks or problems. However, we believe

something that has come to my notice only this morning. It now seems that the other swimming pool, the one we affectionately know as the GASA swimming pool, seems to be out of action. I know it is short notice, but is the Minister aware of what the problems are this morning in respect to that swimming pool?

200

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, I do not know; I am sorry.

205

Hon. E J Reyes: I accept that, Madam Speaker. May I ask the Minister, would he make a commitment to investigate that, when possible, through his CEO and so on? And, because there are no further meetings of this House this side of 2024, can the Minister commit to at least make a public statement so that regular users of that pool – it is very popular, especially with those of my age and the elderly – can plan ahead rather than have their schedules totally disrupted, turning up at the premises only to find it is closed?

210

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, I will look into it, yes.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

HEALTH, CARE AND BUSINESS

Q1019/2024

Ocean Village and Marina Bay – Oil spillage and rubbish pollution

Clerk: Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.
Question 1019. The Hon. G Origo.

215

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, what programme does the Government have in place, if any, for the cleaning of Ocean Village and Marina Bay from oil spillage and rubbish pollution?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

220

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Ocean Village and Marina Bay are private marinas and as such the Gibraltar Port Authority is not responsible for any clean-up operations inside the marina. This falls under the respective marina's responsibilities. However, the Gibraltar Port Authority are always available to render assistance if this request is received.

225

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, Ocean Village and Marina Bay have a pontoon walkway which I pass through most days to work. It is located behind Water Gardens. It is a popular destination for people to make their way to work, and it is also popular at night in terms of culture and the social life that takes place in the marina area. My understanding is that it is too big a job for the Ocean Village management to carry out, in particular with respect to the policing of rubbish pollution. The marina essentially is a public place. Can enforcement be better carried out to prevent the influx of rubbish in particular? Most of the plastic is human waste. These offences are punishable. What is the point of having these offences if we are not enforcing them properly? So does the Minister have any plans to assist and address this issue?

230

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, is the hon. Gentleman in that question – I ask rhetorically – suggesting that we should retake possession of the marina, that we should compulsorily purchase it and deprive the owner of his rights in respect of it? Or is the suggestion

235 that we should clean someone's private property for them, that somebody who has a large area
and is making a very large amount of money from having that area – because they are charging
berthing fees, they are charging rental fees and they are charging licence fees for the external
240 areas there – should be bailed out by the taxpayer? I am sure that that is not the hon. Gentleman's
suggestion, and when he thinks again about the question he has asked he will realise that if
somebody takes a large demise from the Government for the purposes of making large amounts
of money, then they also take on obligations to maintain the cleanliness of that area, obligations
which they often pass on to those who are letting, licensing or buying from them, and they
themselves need to enforce the covenants. The Government is not going to be able to do any of
the things that the hon. Gentleman has suggested, and on reflection I think he will realise that he
245 was wrong to even suggest that we might.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, I thank the Hon. Chief Minister for his answer but the premise
of my question stems from the fact that this is a public walkway where members of the public,
tourists and anyone can walk through. The Ocean Village management company does not have
250 the power to prevent access. They cannot lock up the access ways which members of the public
have the right to walk through.

I think this is an issue that has a simple solution and I am surprised by the answer. I think a few
months ago we had answers to questions in Parliament and I believe two litter wardens were
employed by the Government. Wouldn't a simple solution be just to employ and have one of these
255 litter wardens situated here, in a public place where people are essentially littering and carrying
out offences? Is that not something that the Hon. Chief Minister is willing to consider?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, the last time I checked, the hon. Gentleman was
qualified as a lawyer, and therefore he will know, although it must have escaped him, that the
260 litter wardens do not have jurisdiction in those areas. They are demised. They are private. Because
there is an easement of access for the public does not make them public areas. Of course, one
cannot commit an offence against other individuals in those areas because that is an offence
under our law even if one does it in one's own home. Offences like assault, for example, are
offences wherever they may be committed, but littering of a public place is not littering of a place
265 to which the public have access. Those are two completely separate things.

I do note that the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that we should employ a warden for that
place – that is what he said, and when he looks back at *Hansard* that is what he will realise he
said – and with the cost consequences of that, what he is suggesting is that the public finances of
Gibraltar should further be subjected to the employment of another individual, paid for by the
270 taxpayer, to clean the area that belongs to a private entity. Again, on reflection, the hon.
Gentleman will realise that he is wrong to even suggest this. But I say this to him gently. I know
that that he is a lawyer; this must have escaped him. Perhaps he did not understand the
consequences of the leases that were granted by the GSD Government in that area; the rights that
were passed by the GSD Government to the owner of that area; indeed, the rights that were in
275 the control of the previous tenant, which the GSD Government consented to the assignment of,
at a very large premium; and the other consequences of what the hon. Gentleman is saying in
terms of the officers of the Department of the Environment being able to enter into any other
private place and enforce the Government's laws as to litter in public places, in private places to
which the public have access, which are two, in law, completely different things. I am not giving
280 the hon. Gentleman the Government's answer. He needs to understand. I am giving the hon.
Gentleman – perhaps I should not – the law, and he, of course, is just as able as I am to look it up
and understand it.

Madam Speaker: I know that there is a request for a further supplementary. I do not know
285 what is in the hon. Member's mind, clearly, but I am just going to flag that supplementaries have
to relate to areas of Government responsibility. If this is a private entity and Government does

not have responsibility over it, I am not minded allowing any further supplementaries on that subject.

290 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, because in listening –

Madam Speaker: I hear what the hon. Member says, but I may disallow it.

295 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I am going straight to it. The Government does have a specific responsibility for the area closer to the Water Gardens, which the hon. Member referred to before. Those are pontoons that berth boats that come under a Minister's responsibility, not the private ownership of the developers of Ocean Village and so on. Those more towards the south end are berths that are licensed out to locals. They are part of a Government Department's responsibility and not the private sector, so the impact of the pollution at sea does affect those licensees of the berths that
300 come under the Government's responsibility.

Madam Speaker: The question is?

305 **Hon. E J Reyes:** The question is: further to what the Chief Minister was explaining about the private ownership and so on, the part that refers to Government ownership and responsibility, what measures to help alleviate this pollution of the area is Government planning to tackle?

310 **Hon. Chief Minister:** None, Madam Speaker, because the pollution does not appear to affect that area. All of the complaints relate to the area which is to the east. The hon. Gentleman's reference is to the south west; this is all to the east. It is against the quay, where the commercial area is, in the area of what one might call deep Ocean Village and deep Marina Bay. Those are all private and there is no complaint of anything affecting the area of the berths and the pontoons there, all of which have recently been redone, by the way, by the GPA and the Ministry for the Port and is now looking absolutely fabulous. I understand that the berth holders there are
315 delighted with the work being done on their behalf by the GSLP Liberal Government I am proud to represent its 14th year.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1020/2024
Electricity generation –
Breakdown for period 1st January to 30th November 2024

320 **Clerk:** Question 1020. The Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can the Government provide details as to the actual amount of electricity generated in Gibraltar, in megawatts, between the period 1st January to 30th November 2024, broken down by the source from where the electricity was generated?

325 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I now hand over schedule with the information requested.

Answer to Question 1020/2024

Date	Temporary North Mole Power Station		South District Power Station		North Mole Power Station		Renewables	
	Units Gen kWh	Percentage	Units Gen kWh	Percentage	Units Gen kWh	Percentage	Units Gen kWh	Percentage
Jan-24	1,847,747	9.73	2,159	0.01	16,977,500	89.38	167,500	0.88
Feb-24	2,745,662	15.97	48,718	0.28	14,195,500	82.57	202,000	1.17
Mar-24	3,183,804	17.06	22,038	0.12	15,218,300	81.56	233,800	1.25
Apr-24	3,051,988	17.89	6	0.00	13,639,700	79.95	369,300	2.16
May-24	3,610,487	20.32	2,335	0.01	13,703,300	77.14	448,100	2.52
Jun-24	3,431,977	19.25	9,000	0.05	13,991,400	78.49	392,800	2.20
Jul-24	3,830,890	19.60	7,425	0.04	15,330,200	78.43	378,700	1.94
Aug-24	3,961,275	16.31	12,675	0.05	19,983,100	82.29	326,100	1.34
Sep-24	3,150,849	16.48	21,578	0.11	15,640,800	81.81	304,200	1.59
Oct-24	2,958,835	16.15	681,770	3.72	14,442,200	78.85	234,200	1.28
Nov-24	1,576,232	8.93	1,456,832	8.25	14,473,500	82.01	141,700	0.80
Dec-24								

Madam Speaker: We will move on to the next question and come back to the schedule when the hon. Member has had a chance to look at it.

Q1021/2024

**National Focal Point for Tobacco Control –
Individuals and departments to be involved in consultation**

Clerk: Question 1021. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Minister outline the individuals or departments who will be involved in the National Focal Point for Tobacco Control's intended consultation to explore the opportunity to strengthen tobacco legislation in Gibraltar?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the consultation has been developed by members of the National Focal Point for Tobacco Control, these being a Parliamentary Counsel from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, the Collector of Customs, the Director of Public Health and a Health Promotion Officer with the lead for tobacco control.

The intention is that the consultation is published online and for paper copies to be provided at the Primary Care Centre for any member of the public to submit a response. There will also be an invitation for any organisation, Government department, professional group or charity to submit a more detailed response. The responses will be analysed by the Public Health team and a summary of the findings provided to the National Focal Point for Tobacco Control for discussion and consideration.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful for the answer. Does the Hon. Minister have a timeline as to when this consultation is due to begin?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Imminently, Madam Speaker, but we do not have a firm date yet.

Hon. D J Bossino: Did the Hon. the Minister for Health say how long the consultation process is expected to be open for?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I do not have that information available, but the National Focal Point will be deciding on that.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am not alighted on the detail – I am sure that my learned and hon. Friend Mrs Ladislaus is – but may I ask what the focus of the Focal Point for Tobacco Control is? What is it trying to achieve? What are the terms of reference behind this, if I may ask?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the National Focal Point for Tobacco Control is a statutory body set up by statute.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1022/2024
GHA Zero Tolerance Policy –
To whom applicable

Clerk: Question 1022. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Does the GHA's Zero Tolerance Policy extend to its own staff's treatment of one another and of service users?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the GHA's Zero Tolerance Policy applies to 'all members of the Authority's Staff, including those on contract and those working primarily for other organisations but on the Authority's premises' and 'all persons on the Authority's premises including patients and visitors.' The policy 'shall not apply to any persons who, in the expert opinion of the relevant clinician, are not competent to take responsibility for their actions.' It otherwise applies across the board.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful, Madam Speaker. I raise this, to give the context, because it has been raised with me by a few members of the public now, that sometimes they do not receive treatment that they are happy with, particularly from across the counter and on the telephones. This is why I raise it. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps give some information as to what the consequences are in the event that there is a complaint made by a service user about a member of staff?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the Zero Tolerance Policy states that each individual complaint is raised internally. The issue is that often members of the public are unable to receive a breakdown of what the internal procedure has been. The matter is handled by Clinical Governance and it is part of the role of Clinical Governance. The consequences are usually that the individual member of staff is brought in and spoken to and is sometimes handed what is called a zero tolerance letter after it is passed to the Review of Harm Group. So, there is a procedure on this currently in place. However, the GHA is currently reviewing and redrafting its Zero Tolerance Policy with a view to mirroring the NHS Trust Equivalent Violence and Aggression policies and procedures.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful. Could the Hon. the Minister perhaps give a little bit more information also as to the protocol when a member of the public is abusive towards a member of staff at the GHA?

400

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the same process applies. It goes internally to Clinical Governance, it is then reviewed by the Review of Harm Group; and, on the odd occasion, a letter has been provided to a member of the public on issues raised.

405

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1023/2024
GHA staff dealing with service users –
Guidelines and training

Clerk: Question 1023. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

410

Hon. J Ladislaus: Does the GHA have guidelines in place as to how its staff are to deal with service users and the public? Is training in place for staff dealing with service users and the public; and, if so, how often does that training take place and in what format?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

415

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, no, we do not have guidelines in place. Administrative grades working within the GHA are offered the opportunity to apply, by the Department of Personnel and Development, yearly, to training prospectuses, to undertake customer care training, which is designed for employees to enhance their service delivery skills and communication.

420

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful again for that reply. Could the Hon. the Minister perhaps confirm to the House who delivers the training that is commented upon?

425

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, it is the Department of Personnel and Development that delivers the training.

Hon. J Ladislaus: May I just confirm that it is not compulsory training; they are given the option as to whether they opt in or out?

430

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the question relates to GHA guidelines on the issue. We have to distinguish here between the GHA guidelines and what members of staff are required to do. GHA guidelines are not in place, for example, for doctors, nurses and nursing assistants because they have their own bodies which they respond to. For example, doctors have annual appraisals and revalidation every five years. This ensures that there is training in the same way that there is continuous professional development for most other careers. Doctors and nursing and allied health professionals will have training that is required by their own regulating body rather than by the GHA, and the admin staff have annual training which is on customer service etc. So, guidelines per se are not issued by the GHA for the clinical staff, but there are guidelines in place that are set by each and every statutory body that regulates the different professions. Admin staff are regularly undergoing training on customer care etc. The GHA is currently working on setting mandatory training for all grades, and this will include customer care training.

440

Hon. D J Bossino: If I may, I think what my hon. Friend was asking was whether, as far as the admin staff are concerned, it was mandatory. I think the current position, if I can glean that from the two answers that the hon. Lady has given, is that those in that category of employee within the GHA framework are not guided by their own professional bodies because they will not have one. As it currently stands, it is offered to them by the Department that she referred to and they can seek to receive that training, but at some point it is going to become mandatory. So the question is at what stage does the hon. Lady think that that offer will become a mandatory one with which the admin staff will have to comply?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the GHA is currently working towards a programme in order to implement it, but we have no timelines in place yet.

Hon. D J Bossino: And just to be clear, this is to be provided by the GHA and not – I cannot remember the name of the Department that she referred to – by the Department that offers this? I had assumed, because it impacted on the administrative grades, it would be provided under the Civil Service umbrella, as opposed to the Gibraltar Health Authority umbrella, which is, as the hon. Lady knows, a separate statutory body. Is it the idea that this mandatory training will be imparted by the GHA as opposed to the Government service?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the answer that I have been provided with confirms that the training that is currently provided is provided by the Department of Personnel and Development. I do not have specifically stated where the mandatory training is going to be provided, and I would not wish to be accused of misleading Parliament.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1024/2024
GHA medical records –
Format

Clerk: Question 1024. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Are all medical records for GHA service users held electronically, and do they include test results? If so, since when have medical records been held electronically and are any records still held in hard copy?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, at present we have a hybrid system as we are in the process of transferring all hard copy records electronically. I can confirm that we have about 70% of all of our records in electronic format to date. This process started two years ago. Test result records are already coming electronically, so this data is saved according to our system when received.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, could the Hon. the Minister confirm who is working on the digitisation process, please? Is it something that could be perhaps outsourced, given that it has already taken two years?

485 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I would imagine that it is the GHA's Informatics and Digital Services Department that is carrying out this procedure. Given the nature of the data, I think is preferable that the process remains in house.

490 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Would the Hon. the Minister be able to provide a timeline as to when this is expected to be completed? We are having reports constantly of loss of chunks of medical records and medical records not being provided to medical practitioners, and it is causing serious issues. Just to provide a real-life scenario, I recently had somebody come to see me and they had been experiencing significant issues. One of the issues happened to be because on her records a test that was carried out many years ago was missing, and that would have provided the doctor with an insight as to the medical background. That is why I urge for a timeline.

495 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the timeline that I have been provided with is that within 12 months this should be completed.

In order to assuage some of those concerns, currently all blood tests, radiology results and, for example, nerve conduction results are received electronically by the clinician that requests the results. We have numerous systems that do that. Any tests which are carried out from this date onwards will be received electronically. The remaining 25% to 30% of the records that are outstanding digitally should be put on electronically within the next 12 months.

500 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** When the Hon. the Minister says that they are received electronically, can we assume that they then go straight into the patient's digital folder, so to speak; they are not just received and then action has to be taken in order to put it under that folder? Is that correct?

510 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** That is correct. There are numerous systems now. There is HIS, there is MODULAB and there are numerous other systems. When those records are received they go directly on the patients' records.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

515 **Hon. D J Bossino:** May I ask ...? Sorry. There is one point, only because of the way that the Hon. the Minister has answered, as to whether this provision of services, digitalisation of these records, is being done internally or externally. The hon. Member said – I am trying to avoid the word 'she'... She imagined, rather, that it was going to be done by the GHA internally, but may I ask the Hon. the Minister for Health whether, given I think it is a legitimate question that my learned and hon. Friend has raised by way of supplementary, this answer can be provided at some point during the course of this session. Alternatively, my friend would no doubt need to file a specific question for the next meeting.

525 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Apologies, Madam Speaker, but I thought I had answered the question. The digitalisation process will be carried out in house. The Department carrying it out is either Informatics or Digital Services, but it will be carried out in house and it will continue to be provided in house.

530 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, it may have changed because I do not personally recollect that, but my hon. Friend Mr Clinton says he does. It may have been from answers, in the previous Parliament, provided by her predecessor in post, Mr Isola. I think the information that we had was that this was being done by an outsourced company. The name may be Micro Business Systems or something like that. This is why we on this side of the House seek to pursue the point. But if that is the answer, then then that is the answer.

535 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** I wish to clarify that. That may have been the position in relation to Ocean Views, but to my understanding, the digitalisation of the records in St Bernard's have always been carried out in house. But I can confirm that.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1025/2024

**Radiology results from Spanish providers –
Waiting period and when chased**

540 **Clerk:** Question 1025. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, on average, how long do scan results take to be received by the GHA from Spanish medical providers? What period must lapse before outstanding results are chased by the GHA?

545 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, on average it takes just over 3.5 days to receive a result for a routine appointment from Spanish centres.
550 Radiology clerks usually chase results twice a week.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful, Madam Speaker. Could the Hon. the Minister clarify whether the average time varies between Spanish providers?

555 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Yes, Madam Speaker, the average time does vary between Spanish providers.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Does the Hon. Minister have the lower end and the higher end of the range within which it varies?

560 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, Scanner Sur takes three working days, usually, to get back to us, HC takes three working days to get back to us, Quirón takes five working days to get back to us, Xanit takes seven working days to get back to us, PET takes two working days to get back to us, and *Parque San Antonio* takes two working days on average. All the figures provided
565 are average.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Just one further: is the Hon. the Minister aware that there are some service users, who have actually come to see me as well, who are complaining that there are some results that have been completely lost? They have not had calls. I believe one of them was about five
570 months. The tests had been undertaken, they had been chasing and there had been no results forthcoming. Is the Hon. the Minister aware of such instances, and what is being done to look into these instances of results being lost or just not arriving?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, any such complaints should go to the PALS system in the Hospital, or indeed to the complaints system in the Ministry. If these complaints are flagged to us, we will of course action them on a very speedy basis. Any complaint that arrives at my office, if there are any results missing, for example, we will try to get to the bottom of where the fault lies in order to ensure that (1) those results are obtained, and (2) if there is a flaw in the system, that flaw is corrected. So, I would strongly advise members of the public, if they do feel that scan
575

580 results are missing, to either attend the PALS office, which is located on the ground floor of the Hospital, or to send an email to the Ministry at complaints@gha.gi, in which case we can action any such issue and we can make sure that there are no flaws in the system.

Madam Speaker: Yes?

585

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Does the Minister know if the GHA has a policy which is clear and transparent on how the results, once received by the local authority, are relayed to the general public?

590

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, we have systems in place in order to ensure that there is an adequate system. There are two systems, to my understanding. One is called ICRIS and one is called PACS. The scans are requested through a through a system called ICRIS. Whenever a clinician requests a scan for an individual, there is an audited system in place called ICRIS. The results are requested, the request is audited by the radiologist, the time of appointment is notified within the system and then, in house, it appears in the ICRIS system. This then generates an email to the relevant clinician once the scan is done and the results are available, at which point there is a separate system, called PACS, which then enables the clinician to view the scan. The clinician can view the scan on the PACS system and a report from the external provider – and the translation, where necessary – is provided within the system.

595

600

These systems are fully audited. This is the reason why I would urge members of the public to contact PALS or my office if a scan result is not received, because the systems are fully audited, so we can actually go into the system and look at where the fault lies, if indeed there is a fault.

605

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for the extensive and detailed answer, which did not quite answer the question. My question was more about the communication with the general public, who often leave appointments not knowing exactly how and when they will receive their reports. This, I am sure she will appreciate, is of huge concern to some people and certainly a worry for the rest of their family. I will repeat the question: is there a clear policy and one that is publicly available to view as to how patients will be communicated?

610

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, there is a clear procedure that is in place in order for systems to go through and in order for the patients to receive their scans and their records. If there is a flaw in that system, again I would urge members of the public to go to PALS, to go to my office. The answer to the hon. Member's question is that yes, the results should be delivered as quickly as possible, as quickly as a clinician has them. Whether there is a need or not for a policy – which I am not aware of; I do not have any information of such a policy being in place – the answer is that the clinicians will give the results to the members of the public as soon as they are available to the members of the public.

615

620

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Following that reply, where clearly there is no structure in place as to how to inform people and members of the public are not aware of how they will be ... In order to allay their worries, would the Government commit to addressing this flaw in the system and coming up with a policy that addresses far better communication to allay people's fears and stresses?

625

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, that is precisely what we think we are doing. We think we are coming up with a procedure that actually sets out in an audited fashion exactly what the system is and exactly what the timeline for the system is. We cannot get any more accurate information than we already have on the system. You are required as a clinician to input on the system, to request the scans, to request everything, and then we see exactly the timeline from

630

that system. I already believe that we are putting in place everything necessary in order to ensure that the results get to the public as quickly as possible.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1026/2024
Clinical practice guidelines –
Platform providing access to medical professionals

635 **Clerk:** Question 1026. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, does the GHA have a platform where medical professionals are able to access clinical practice guidelines? If so: (1) since when has that platform been up and running, and what preceded it; (2) what was the cost of setting it up; and (3) how is it maintained and by whom?
640

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the GHA provides medical professionals access to clinical practice guidelines through a variety of platforms. These include online international and NHS-based systems, the hospital intranet, and mobile applications available to all doctors. These platforms have been implemented at different times over several years. Prior to their introduction, clinicians primarily relied on printed guidelines and direct consultations with colleagues. The costs associated with setting up these platforms vary
645 widely, depending on factors such as licensing fees, infrastructure development and training. Specific financial details would depend on the particular platform in question. Maintenance of these platforms is carried out by a combination of the GHA's IT Department, clinical leads and external service providers, ensuring that the systems remain current and functional.
650

The GHA covers an extensive breadth of clinical services, each with its own set of guidelines. This breadth, while ensuring comprehensive care, makes it challenging to provide a succinct answer to such a broad question. The platforms range from specialty-specific guidelines to overarching clinical resources, making it important to clarify which platform or service is being referred to. Should the hon. Member wish to narrow down the scope of the question, I would be more than happy to provide detailed information on the specific area of interest.
655

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, could the Hon. the Minister perhaps comment as to whether we rely on any of the free online resources provided by UK providers – I am looking at resources such as the National Library of Medicine's free search service – or whether we rely on resources like Embase or the Cochrane Library, which I believe attract fees?
660

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, if the specifics of those two platforms are provided in a question next time, I am very happy to provide details on whether we rely on it. I would not wish to stand here and say whether or not we rely on it. We do rely on two platforms, for example – the BMJ Best Practice platform and a platform called Up to Date, which supports clinical decisions made by our clinicians on the ground. If the hon. Member would provide us with the specific reference tool that she wishes to have the answer on, I am more than happy to provide the information.
665
670

675 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. the Minister perhaps confirm whether there are any guidelines which are specific to the GHA, to Gibraltar, that have been produced in house, and whether we have a platform for medical experts to turn to those guidelines?

680 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, because it is quite a specific question, I would need notice of that question.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1027-28/2024
St Bernard's Hospital –
Meal provision for in-patients

Clerk: Question 1027. The Hon. J Ladislaus

685 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Are in-patients of St Bernard's Hospital given meal options between which to pick, or is it the case that they must eat the one option on offer on that specific day?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

690 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 1028.

Clerk: Question 1028. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

695 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** What was the average monthly cost of meal provision to in-patients at St Bernard's Hospital, broken down by month from January 2019 to date?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Healthcare and Business.

700 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the catering department prepares four menus, which consist of normal, soft and light/low fat options and a vegetarian diet. Patients are served the appropriate menu option, adhering to the patient's dietary requirements and as clinically indicated. The situation in Rainbow Ward is slightly different, as the patients there are offered a choice. All the diets are based on the feeding requirements of the patient's needs. This process is carried out daily with updates received from the ward sisters. If there is a dislike on the set menu,
705 the availability of another option is offered adhering to the patient's dietary requirements. A three-week rotation of the menu allows a variation so that menus are not repeated.

In answer to Question 1028, it is not possible to provide the average monthly cost of meal provisions to in-patients, as all provisions are ordered jointly for the internal and external meals.

710 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, drilling down on what the Hon. the Minister has just said, in respect of external meals, could the Hon. the Minister perhaps confirm what encompasses those external meals?

715 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the kitchen provides meals to St Martin's, HM Prison, Bruce's Farm, Waterport Terraces, to Cancer Relief and St Bernadette's. *(Interjection)* Apologies, to Waterport Terraces day centre, not Waterport Terraces per se. *(Laughter)*

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful for that clarification because I was about to order, if that was the case! (*Interjection by Hon. Chief Minister*) Exactly, this is what I raise.

720 **Madam Speaker,** I rise because, again, I have had various complaints brought by members of the public that hospital food is perhaps not the most tasty. I understand that it is prepared in big batches and it is very difficult, but could the Hon. the Minister give some information as to where the ingredients are bought from, and are they bought on a daily basis fresh?

725 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, to my limited understanding, the ingredients are bought on a daily basis and bought fresh.

Hon. J Ladislaus: When the Hon. the Minister says that that meals provided externally and internally, are all those meals the same? Are the meal options the same, for example, for the
730 Prison, as for the Hospital?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, to my understanding, yes, they are.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1029/2024
Wound Care Clinic –
Location

735 **Clerk:** Question 1029. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, where is the Wound Clinic at the PCC located, and is it located there throughout the year?

740 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the Wound Care Clinic is situated on the ground floor of the PCC next to the main waiting area and it is located there throughout the year.

745 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful. Could the Hon. the Minister confirm whether that clinic has ever been moved out in order to accommodate, for example, the programmes rolled out during the winter for the flu jabs or the Covid jabs?

750 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, my understanding is that the Wound Clinic was moved to its present location during Covid. It was elsewhere before Covid, but since the Wound Clinic has been moved to its present location, it is permanently in the present location.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Does the Hon. the Minister believe, or has she had information to the contrary, that the Wound Clinic is adequate in space and resources for staff to carry out their work effectively and efficiently?
755

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I have had no complaints from staff or clinicians in respect of this.

760 **Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

Q1030/2024
Minor Injuries Unit –
Average waiting times

Clerk: Question 1030. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

765 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Is the GHA's Minor Injury Unit, which is/was located in A&E, still in place: and,
if so: (1) how many patients have been seen from 14th May 2023 to date; (2) what was the average
waiting time from triage to being seen between 14th May 2023 to date; (3) what was the average
waiting time from arrival to triage between 14th May 2023 to date; (4) what was the average
waiting time from being seen to discharge between 14th May 2023 to date; and (5) what was the
770 average total time spent at A&E by a service user who had been seen by the GHA's Minor Injury
Unit between 14th May 2023 to date?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

775 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, yes, the
Minor Injuries Unit is still in place and the answer to the specific questions are as follows: (1)
12,122 patients have been seen in the Minor Injuries Unit from 14th May 2023 to 6th December
2024; (2) the average waiting time in minutes from triage to being seen is 23 minutes from 14th
May 2023 to 6th December 2024; (3) the average waiting time from arrival to triage is 13 minutes
780 from 14th May to 6th December 2024; (4) the average waiting time from being seen to discharge
is 53 minutes from 14th May 2023 to 6th December 2024; and (5) the total average time spent by
a service user who has been seen by the GHA's Minor Injury Unit is 88 minutes from 14th May
2023 to 6th December 2024.

785 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, is it the case that the GHA's Minor Injury Unit will continue
in place for the foreseeable future, or are there any plans to stop this department's service?

790 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, not only as the Minister for Health and having that
responsibility but as a mother of two small boys, I can assure the hon. Lady opposite that the
Minor Injury Unit is one of the most successful units in the A&E department; it is extremely
successful. The A&E department also runs extremely well and there are no plans whatsoever to
change the Minor Injuries Unit.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1031-33/2024
St Bernard's Hospital Intensive Care Unit –
Breakdown of staff complement; nurse-to-patient ratio; staffing issues

Clerk: Question 1031. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

795 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many staff, broken down by titles and responsibilities, make up the
complement of staff at St Bernard's Hospital Intensive Care Unit?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

800 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer
this question together with Questions 1032 and 1033.

Clerk: Question 1032. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

805 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** What is the nurse-to-patient ratio at St Bernard's Hospital Intensive Care Unit?

Clerk: Question 1033. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

810 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** In the past six months, have there been any issues with staffing levels or of a staffing nature at the Intensive Care Unit of St Bernard's Hospital? If so, please outline the nature of those issues, whether there has been a resolution and how longstanding those issues have been.

815 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 1031, the GHA's Critical Care Unit currently has 30 registered nurses in its complement.

820 In answer to Question 1032, a comprehensive summary of critical care levels nurse-to-patient ratios is as follows. Level 1 patients are those that do not require organ support or one-to-one care; for example, they may need IV therapy, oxygen or monitoring. These patients are on a 2:1 patient to nurse ratio or less. Level 2 patients are those requiring high-dependency care needing single organ support excluding mechanical ventilation, such as renal hemofiltration or close monitoring. These patients are on a 2:1 patient to nurse ratio. Level 3 patients are those requiring
825 intensive care and requiring two or more organ support or needing mechanical ventilation alone. These patients are on a 1:1 patient to nurse ratio. The Critical Care Unit in St Bernard's Hospital has 13 beds and caters for intensive care patients, coronary care and high-dependency patients. The minimum staffing levels during a day shift are seven to eight registered nurses and one to two nursing assistants. During a night shift the unit is staffed by five registered nurses at a minimum.

830 In answer to Question 1033, there have been no issues relating to staffing levels at the CCU in the past six months. Staffing rotas are reviewed continuously to ensure the unit is safely staffed at all times. As the House is aware, as a matter of policy, HMGoG does not comment on conduct, disciplinary or grievance matters. If issues of a staffing nature are reported, these are investigated and actioned upon, where necessary, by GHA Workforce.

835 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful and I do understand and appreciate that specific matters are not commented on, but could the Hon. the Minister confirm whether there have been any such issues raised generally by staff?

840 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as stated a second ago, there have not been any issues related to staffing levels at the CCU, and that is as far as we can comment.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1034-35/2024
ENT appointments –
Average waiting times to see a specialist

Clerk: Question 1034. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

845 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** What was the average waiting time, broken down by month, for a child to see an ENT specialist at the GHA from the time of referral to the first appointment with the ENT specialist as from 1st October 2023 to date?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

850

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 1035.

Clerk: Question 1035. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

855

Hon. J Ladislaus: What was the average waiting time, broken down by month, for an adult to see an ENT specialist at the GHA from the time of referral to the first appointment with the ENT specialist as from 1st October 2023 to date?

860

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I now hand over a schedule with the information requested.

Answer to Questions 1034-35/2024

Year	Month	Median Wait Time for child (Weeks)	Median Wait Time for adult (Weeks)
2023	October	12	17
	November	7	17
	December	7	19
2024	January	7	19
	February	8	19
	March	8	21
	April	9	20
	May	10	19
	June	10	21
	July	8	19
	August	10	18
	September	9	17
	October	6	15
	November	6	15

Madam Speaker: We will move on and revert to supplementaries on this later.

Q1036-37/2024

GHA legal proceedings – Negligence claims; out-of-court settlements

865

Clerk: Question 1036. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Aside from negligence claims, how many claims have been issued against the GHA annually since 2011, broken down by year? Of those claims, how many (1) concluded in an out-of-court settlement; (2) concluded following a trial; (3) were discontinued by the claimant or claimants; and (4) were struck out by the courts?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 1037.

Clerk: Question 1037. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How much has the Government of Gibraltar paid out since 2011, broken down by year, in respect of (1) out-of-court settlements following pre-action letters to the GHA and/or its legal representatives in respect of claims against the GHA, excluding negligence claims; (2) out-of-court settlements following discontinued legal proceedings against the GHA in respect of claims, excluding negligence claims; and (3) court orders arising from claims against the GHA, excluding negligence claims?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I have been informed by the GHA that the requested information for Questions 1036 and 1037 is not readily available and is not possible to provide in the timeframe available. However, the GHA has started gathering all the relevant information. I would be happy to provide this to the hon. Member if she is permitted to ask again in the February session or thereafter. Going forward, these records will be updated regularly by the GHA in order to provide this information as and when requested by questions in this House.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful. I imagine that the question is for the Hon. Speaker: would I be allowed to file such a question again in February? I would be minded to do so.

Madam Speaker: Yes, I would have no objection to that but I would ask the hon. Member to remind me of that if I were to hold it inadmissible, because I may forget.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, may I make a caveat that whenever hon. Members ask about anything to do with insurance – and I had this issue when I was a Member of the Opposition – I am conscious that we will have to check whether we can disclose that under the terms of the policy, and that there may be that issue. Again, it is not an issue that we will want to keep from hon. Members but we may not be able to disclose it publicly. I am not the expert in insurance, he is sitting at the end of the Government bench, but if we are not able to disclose it publicly we will no doubt be able to at least give the hon. Lady the indication behind the Speaker's Chair on the covenant that she should not disclose it publicly. It is being compiled but it may not be shareable across the floor of the House is all I am saying. If it is, we will; if it is not, we will share it behind the Speaker's Chair.

Madam Speaker: All right. Next question.

Q1038, 1041-43, 1046-48/2024

**GHA industrial grade domestic staff and labourers –
Numbers employed; pay for experience and loyalty;
recognition of efforts during pandemic; responsibilities;
industrial action and impact of 10% allowance sought**

Q1039-40, 1044-45/2024

**GHA cleaning –
Number of cleaners employed, hours worked, equipment provided;
frequency of cleaning hospital theatres**

Clerk: Question 1038. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

915

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many domestic staff and labourers make up the GHA's complement of industrial grade employees?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

920

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 1039 to 1048.

Clerk: Question 1039. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

925

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many cleaners does the GHA employ on (1) a full-time contract and (2) a part-time contract; and how many cleaners are on the GHA supply list?

Clerk: Question 1040. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

930

Hon. J Ladislaus: What are the working hours for GHA employed cleaners who are assigned to work at St Bernard's Hospital if they are on (1) a part-time contract and (2) a full-time contract?

Clerk: Question 1041. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

935

Hon. J Ladislaus: Is there a pay scale in place in respect of the GHA's domestic staff and labourers which reflects experience and employee loyalty to the GHA?

Clerk: Question 1042. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

940

Hon. J Ladislaus: Were domestic staff and labourers who were employed by the GHA during the Covid-19 pandemic recognised for their efforts in the wake of the pandemic? If so, in which way have their efforts been recognised?

Clerk: Question 1043. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

945

Hon. J Ladislaus: Please provide details as to the exact responsibilities the GHA's domestic staff and labourers are assigned, to include responsibilities which they may take on themselves to assist other GHA staff.

950

Clerk: Question 1044. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: What equipment are GHA employed cleaners provided with to carry out their responsibilities within the Children's Primary Care Centre, the Primary Care Centre and St Bernard's Hospital.

Clerk: Question 1045. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How often are operating theatres at St Bernard's Hospital cleaned?

Clerk: Question 1046. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: When did the GHA first become aware of the issues being raised by Unite's industrial grade members who are employees of the GHA and who have taken industrial action as from 29th November 2024? Please provide specifics as to the nature of the issues raised.

Clerk: Question 1047. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How have the recent strikes by the GHA's domestic staff and labourers impacted upon the running of St Bernard's Hospital and service users?

Clerk: Question 1048. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: What is the cost to the GHA's budget of agreeing to the 10% allowance increase which Unites industrial grade employees are seeking?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 1038, the GHA currently employs a total of 134 domestics and labourers.

In answer to Question 1040, part-time workers are on a 20-hour contract; full-time workers are on a 37 plus 8 conditioned working week contract. That is 45 hours in total.

In answer to Question 1041, there is no pay scale for this grade. Domestic and labourers are paid at a fixed annual rate of £22,874.

In answer to Question 1042, all GHA staff, including domestics and labourers, were praised and recognised for their efforts during the pandemic. This praise and recognition was both external by the Government specifically and by way of our communities, and internal by management supporting and recognising their valuable contribution to patient safety. This was the way in which all of our public servants were recognised.

In answer to Question 1044, the cleaning equipment provided to domestic cleaners are trolleys with strainers and storage as part of the units. They have heavy-duty mops together with other specific equipment such as microfiber cloths, disinfectant sprays, sanitisers, etc.

In answer to Question 1045, theatres are cleaned daily, in the afternoons, after all procedures have been done. Deep cleans are done on request together with the programmed deep clean roster. Theatre cleanliness is maintained to the highest possible standard at all times.

In answer to Question 1046, these issues now being raised by Unite are longstanding and go back many years. However, the current detailed conversations started in December 2023 and relate to the following issues: (1) additional or outstanding posts, (2) cleaning materials, plant and equipment, (3) uniforms, (4) departmental leadership, (5) shift patterns, (6) night shifts and cover, (7) additional pay claims, (8) bonus allowance and (9) allocation of overtime.

In answer to Questions 1047 and 1048, any strike will have an impact upon the running of a hospital. However, due to the derogations agreed and those staff not on strike, the Hospital remains safe at all times and all clinical activity continued as normal.

The cost to the GHA's budget of agreeing to the 10% allowance to basic pay is £203,432.63 per year. This excludes any consequential increases in costs to the GHA as a result of overtime being paid at a higher rate. This is not affordable and it will not be agreed by the Government. I am surprised that the GSD appears to be supporting this claim, although they appear to be brazenly supporting the claim, which would increase costs, and say that the costs are too high, despite the obvious contradiction.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all GHA staff for ensuring that services continued during the duration of the strike. I would also add that strikes achieve very little and individuals who withdraw their labour are not paid whilst they are on strike, although I do defend the right to strike. We are already talking and will continue to do so, but not while industrial action is on foot.

In answer to Questions 1039 and 1043, I now hand over a schedule with the information requested.

Answer to Questions 1039 and 1043

Breakdown of GHA employed cleaners working at St Bernard's Hospital:

Grade	Full Time	Part Time
Domestic Supervisor	4	
Domestic Supervisor Part Time		0
Catering Assistant — Domestic Part Time		16
Domestic Part Time		10
Domestic Full Time	16	
General Operative — Domestic	33	
General Operative — Domestic Part Time		29

There are currently 18 individuals in the GHA Domestic Supply List.

Madam Speaker: Leaving aside Questions 1039 and 1043, does the hon. Member have any supplementaries on the others? Then I will allow her to consider the figures before coming back.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, moving down to Question 1040, the working hours for a GHA-employed cleaner who is assigned to work at St Bernard's Hospital, I am not sure I had an answer to that one specifically. *(Interjection by Hon. D J Bossino)* Right. Is it the 32? Could the Hon. the Minister then perhaps confirm the actual hours within which the cleaners work? What I mean is when they start and when they finish normally, the working hours.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I think this is determined by way of rota. I do not think it is a fixed time. I am not certain of that answer, though.

Hon. J Ladislaus: So may I ask, then, is there always a cleaner, or more than one cleaner, on shift at St Bernard's Hospital at all times?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I would imagine that there is a cleaner in St Bernard's Hospital at all times.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, I ask this question because it has been raised with me that at times there are not enough cleaners on shift, or perhaps there are no cleaners on shifts. I raise this because I am asked what occurs to something that may need to be cleaned within the Hospital when a cleaner is not there. For example — it is a hospital — someone may come in with a cut and there may be blood on the floor. I ask on that basis.

1040 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Sorry, Madam Speaker, I am just trying to find the information, if I could have two seconds.

We have domestics on rota permanently and we have night-working supervisors who also fulfil that task overnight. I would have to confirm it, but I would imagine that given that there is designated supervisor, they must be supervising the staff that are in the Hospital. The staff would be in the Hospital on shift in order to ensure that any such spills of bodily fluids are able to be cleaned.

1050 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the Hon. the Minister have the number of workers that would be on hand for this for this overnight?

1055 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, there is a certain level of independence that is maintained from the GHA, which the hon. Members opposite require. I am not involved in the rotas of the domestics on a daily basis. If the hon. Member is asking me so, I can take Civil Servants away from tasks at hand and ensure that they are providing these rotas to me daily. However, I would suggest that the rotas of the domestics are left to people who are properly qualified to determine what rotas the domestics require, in the same way that it has always been determined which domestics need to be on duty at every point in time.

1060 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful, Madam Speaker. I am simply asking the question because it is of interest to the public whether there are any on duty, how many there are and whether there are enough within the Hospital. So, I pose the question: does the Hon. Minister have information as to whether there are enough domestic staff on shift overnight, once normal hours have ceased? Normal hours are, I believe, between around 8 or 9 a.m. and 4 in the afternoon, as per the information that I have been provided with.

1065 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it is a hospital; normal working hours do not apply. There is the staff that is required as per clinician and as per GHA requirements. It is the same working rotas that have always been provided, and the rotas are determined in the same way as they have always been determined.

1070 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, if I may ask a supplementary to Question 1041 on whether there is a pay scale in place? I am told there is not. Why is there no pay scale in place? We are talking about some cleaners who have been working there – and I spoke to some – for 15 years-plus versus a cleaner who may have come in just yesterday and has not as much experience, has not as much loyalty to the organisation. So, I ask: why isn't there a pay scale in place to reward that loyalty, the hard work, the commitment?

1080 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, this is across the public service departments. There is a single point in the pay scale across the board, a that is the way it works across any grades within government departments.

1085 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I appreciate that, but I ask because within the Domestics department, the cleaners ... What the Hon. the Minister is homing in on, I imagine, is that within other departments there are EOs and HEOs, but for the cleaners themselves, where is the room and the motivation for working hard to achieve the next pay grade up? There is no room, as we can see here, for movement, so I ask that question again because it is important.

1090 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, the point that is being made is that that is not a question about cleaners in the GHA. This is across many departments. In fact, across all departments across the Government there are, not just in the cleaning grades but in other grades, single points on the scale. The hon. Lady says, 'How are we recognising contribution etc?' Well,

look, we gave the GHA the Freedom of the City. We recognise the work done by the industrial grades, the cleaning grades, the domestics. This is huge and fantastic work, but there is huge and fantastic work in many sectors, and in many sectors there is a single point in the scale. The hon. Lady gets up and says, 'Why don't you add points to the scale and give more money? She says it sitting next to the Hon. Mr Clinton, who says that we are spending too much money. So, what the hon. Lady is encouraging us to do, presumably because she thinks it is popular with Unite and those grades who are making this claim, is to spend more money, add more steps, and the consequence of that is not to do it there, it is to do it in all of the grades across the Government which are a single point in the scale because everyone is important in this. Of course, the Chief Minister is important because they are the Chief Minister, but not more important than the domestic person who cleans in the GHA when there is a spill in the GHA; they are more important in the GHA than I am in the GHA. Everybody in the structure of the public service is equally important, and many of those are on a single point scale. What the hon. Lady is saying is expand them and add more money based on the years that you are there. Well, there is a reason why there is a single point on the scale in some grades: because the obligations do not change. In most areas, the obligations change. In many areas, there is a single point of the scale because the obligations do not change, and people tend to promote out of those scales to other areas where there are points in the scale; some do not, because some want to do the job that they are doing, but it is a single point scale. That is the answer, Madam Speaker. It is not just about the GHA; this is something that can catch fire and cost millions. That is the point.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, I take that point, but then could I ask whether the GHA cleaning staff or domestic labourers were invited to the annual awards ceremony that the GHA holds? Here we have an answer saying that they were recognised after the Covid pandemic; they were recognised internally, they were given praise. The information coming back is that other departments were recognised formally, be it with certificates, be it in a different manner, be it at award ceremonies, and that the GHA cleaning staff were not, in fact, recognised in a similar manner. So, Madam Speaker, could I perhaps ask the question: have they been invited to these awards ceremonies, and in respect of the Covid pandemic were they recognised formally, as other departments have been?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the GHA awards ceremony that the hon. Lady alludes to was an event that was organised by the GHA independently entirely of Government. I have not requested their guest list. Again, if the hon. Lady would like me to get information on the guest list as organised by the Director General of the Hospital in 2022, I believe, I am very happy to get that information for her when she asks the proper question in Parliament.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, if I may move on to Question 1044, the equipment that GHA-employed cleaners are provided with, could the hon. Lady confirm that all the equipment that they are provided with is industrial rather than equipment that would be used in a domestic setting?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, yes, I can confirm that the equipment provided is industrial equipment. I believe that that was one of the claims that was outstanding and has been settled in negotiations with the Unions.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am glad to hear that, Madam Speaker. Could the Hon. the Minister perhaps confirm, therefore, whether trolleys will be widely available to all cleaners now, rather than just a select few trolleys for the entirety of the Hospital?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the information that I was provided and made available to the hon. Lady was that the equipment provided to domestic cleaners generally are

trolleys with strainers. That is the information that I have been provided. I do not believe that it is provided only to a select few.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, I do not know if the Hon. Minister has the information in front of her, and I appreciate it is a very specific question, but are the trolleys that are provided to move around all equipment, or is it simply the case that the trolley is attached to the buckets which cleaners use to mop?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I do not have the information available. If the hon. Lady would like to put to Parliament a specific question on the nature of the trolleys available in the GHA, I would be delighted to answer it next time.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, in respect of Question 1045, the next one down, the Hon. the Minister stated that the operating theatres are cleaned daily in the afternoons and that deep cleans are undertaken on request. Does the Hon. Minister have any information as to how often deep cleans are requested on average?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I do not have information as to how often they are provided but I know that they are provided whenever it is requested that they are specifically provided. I know there is a regular deep clean of let's call it a more normal nature, in which case the theatres are cleaned rigorously. However, if there are any concerns raised by the theatre staff, we have specific fogging machines – I believe they are called; the fogging machine is in the theatre – which are set up and go into every nook and cranny in the theatre. So, there are specific deep cleans that are done as and when they are requested by theatre staff, and theatre staff, as you can imagine, are extremely thorough in the way that they request that the theatres are cleaned, but as and when the theatre staff request that there is a specific need to go further, we have special equipment that is provided specifically to the theatre to defog the theatre. So, there is a specific procedure that goes on in order to deep clean the theatre in a certain way.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, could the Hon. the Minister confirm whether domestic staff are on hand over the course of the weekend to provide such cleaning services if they are requested to do so?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, clearly the hon. Lady is desirous of getting information as regards the rota. If the hon. Lady were to ask specific questions in relation to the rota, I would make that information available across the floor of the House in the next session.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, it is not as to the rota; I simply ask the question ... Put more simply: are the operating theatres cleaned over the course of the weekend by individuals rather than by a fogging machine?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I would imagine that the answer is yes but given the propensity to accuse us of misleading Parliament, I would request that that specific question is put to me and I will answer the specific question next time.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, if I may move on to Question 1046, as to when the GHA first became aware of the issues, I asked the simple question 'Why were these issues allowed?' I quote the Hon. the Minister: 'the longstanding issues go back years'. Why were these issues allowed to fester for so many years, and why, after a claim was introduced last year, did it take the GHA 10 months to deal with the issues raised in any meaningful way?

1195 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the claims, insofar as I can determine, were raised in conversations that the GHA had with Unite. There are conversations which span from December through to July through to ... We cannot say that there is a specific request for this domestic claim in any correspondence. What we can determine is that it was mentioned in meetings with the GHA and Unite. We are currently trying to get to the bottom of exactly that. We have, since the
1200 beginning of November, been in in-depth discussions on this specific issue, because that is when this specific issue came to the forefront, and therefore, from late October, beginning of November, the GHA and Unite have sat and discussed this specific issue and how it can be dealt with in the most responsible way for the taxpayer and keeping the staff of the Hospital happy.

1205 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, is it then the case that there was not a formal claim submitted by Unite members in December 2023?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Our understanding – and I have requested this from Unite as well – is that ... I have not seen, yet, the letter of claim. It may have been submitted. I have not seen that
1210 formal letter of claim.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Minister agree that perhaps mistakes have been made in how the matter has been handled in being left for so long? And perhaps the results would have been different, I venture to comment upon.
1215

Madam Speaker: Well, that is a hypothetical question. I will allow the first part of the question but not the second.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, no, we do not believe the matter has been handled
1220 badly, and we will not conduct industrial relations across the floor of the House.

Q1020/2024
Electricity generation –
Breakdown for period 1st January to 30th November 2024 –
Supplementary questions

Madam Speaker: Before we move on to the Hon. C Sacarello, I would ask the Hon. G Origo whether there are any supplementary questions on Question 1020.

Hon. G Origo: I am grateful, Madam Speaker. May I ask the Hon. Minister if she could provide
1225 some more detail on the column pertaining to the South District power station? I believe, from answers to questions posed last year, that this power station was not operational, so my first question is can she confirm when the station was commissioned and is she able to tell me who is running this power station? I will have a few more supplementaries following that.

1230 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I do not think this is a question that arises from the main question, but the South District power station and its establishment is a matter of public record.

Madam Speaker: Any other questions?
1235

Hon. Chief Minister: Just to refresh his memory, it was part of the deal that I greatly criticised that the GSD did with the MoD and, in doing that deal, eschewed other investment that was going to be into Gibraltar. The hon. Gentleman might recall – although, Madam Speaker, I will give him

1240 the benefit that perhaps he might be too young – the documents that I published on the night of my leader's debate with Sir Peter Caruana on 7th December 2011, which disclosed all of that and he can perhaps go back and look at them.

1245 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I just asked because this power station was not really producing any energy as at 31st December last year, in 2023. So, may I ask the Hon. Minister is she able to say whether this is a Government-owned station producing energy, or is this a service that is contracted out, and therefore, are we in a situation where basically we are purchasing for the energy being produced? Is that the arrangement, or is it a GEA?

1250 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave a few moments ago.

1255 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, very unhelpfully, having asked for the answers to be provided in megawatts, I think I have been given a table with all of the energy outputs in kilowatts, but it is okay; there are a thousand units from one to the other, so I have been able to ascertain percentage points.

1260 Can the Minister confirm whether she was able to double the amount of renewable energy produced, as indicated that she would in answers to Question 29/2024, in January? At the time, the total output of renewable energy in Gibraltar was 1.14%, and the Hon. Minister was quoted as saying, 'This is primed to more than double in the course of this year alone.' Did she achieve this?

1265 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, in several months, yes, this was achieved. Admittedly not in all of them, as the table shows, and I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is able to look at the percentages and determine their meaning. I believe, though, that there is a project that is ongoing which will double this amount throughout the year.

1270 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, having taken the averages and looked at the amount of megawatts produced, I can see that the total average for the year is 1.55%, which is a bit shy of actually doubling it and very shy from the target that we have under the Climate Change Act. Can I ask the Minister, given the statistics that we have today, does she think that we will reach our targets as set out in the Climate Change Act to reduce our emissions and achieve net neutrality in the time envisaged?

1275 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, yes, we believe we will.

Madam Speaker: Any other supplementaries? The Hon. R M Clinton.

1280 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. If we look at the schedule in the answer to Question 1020, I wonder if the Minister could provide some information to the House, because if you look at the electricity generation for the temporary North Mole power station, which by its description must be temporary – and I assume these are the skid generators that, if I recall, were being moved to make way for the battery station – and if we look at the column for the South District power station, which, as my colleague has pointed out, seems to have been almost in mothballs in the past, again I may have faulty recollection but I thought the MoD and OESCO power stations were effectively being decommissioned some years ago. My question is are we going to see the temporary North Mole power station effectively go down to zero and the power that was transmitted by the North Mole power station taken over by the South District power station, as in this column? And are the existing MoD or OESCO – I am not sure which ones are being used – generating sets or is this as a result of the transfer of skid generators from the North Mole site to the South District power station and these being connected up to the grid? I distinctly

1290

remember the Minister for the Environment at the time saying how it would be great that the emissions of the South District are being reduced, but this would seem to suggest that emissions are going to be increased in the South District.

1295 Madam Speaker, I apologise – I have probably rolled three questions into one there, but I would be grateful if the Minister could clarify.

1300 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am very grateful for the opportunity to answer that question because, indeed, the temporary North Mole power station is the skid generators that are there at the moment. The idea of the BESS is that this North Mole power station goes down to zero because the battery-operated system is what is going to kick in, in the instance that there is a fault at one of the six engines of the power station. It is not envisaged at all that this is picked up by the South District power station. The idea is that the BESS and the BESS alone, in a very environmentally friendly manner, will pick up the energy that was previously generated by the temporary North Mole power station if and when required. So, if there is a fault at the North Mole power station, as was discussed in a video that I did a couple of months ago, what is envisaged is that the BESS kicks in, not the temporary North Mole power station generators that currently kick in. So, as soon as the BESS is operational, the table which says 'Temporary North Mole power station' will go down to zero, but that is not going to be picked up by the South District power station, which will remain in situ in case of a contingency being required but will not replace the North Mole power station. It is very important that the BESS will replace the North Mole power station and will have no impact on these figures whatsoever. So, the North Mole power station will go down to zero and the BESS will pick up the slack, which will be *far* more environmentally friendly. That is the idea of the project.

1315 **Several Members:** Hear, hear.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, may I just ask one further question? Yes, I appreciate that, but until the BESS battery system is operational, is it not the case that there will be the operational requirement to have this extra generating capacity, whether at the North Mole power station or the South Mole power station?

1325 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Up until the BESS is in operation, yes, we will require that capacity in order to make sure that there is backup power in place. Once the BESS is operational, then absolutely we will lose the North Mole, we will lose the South District and it will all be picked up by the BESS.

Hon. R M Clinton: I appreciate the Minister –

1330 **Madam Speaker:** Six supplementaries on this one.

Hon. R M Clinton: I know. I am just trying to –

Madam Speaker: And the hon. Member did say 'One last', so I am holding him to his word.

1335 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Yes, Madam Speaker. I did ask about the South District power station – whether there was an existing power plant or is it the case that the skid generators have been transferred to the site of the South District power station? Is it an existing mothballed plant that is being brought back into life, or is it the case that the skid generators have been transferred over and then plugged in?

1340 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to tell the hon. Gentleman across the floor that the skid generators will no longer be required and therefore any costs arising

from the North Mole generators will no longer be required. So, it is not the case that those will be moved to the South District. In the South District there is a plant, which is currently a contingency planning plant, which will not be operational, will only be required in cases of extreme circumstances. I can confirm to this House that the idea is that the temporary North Mole power station is removed in its entirety and is not moved to an alternative location, thereby saving the taxpayer the cost of those skid generators.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1049/2024

**Companies incorporated in Gibraltar –
Breakdown of those trading principally in Gibraltar and those not**

Clerk: Question 1049. The Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Could the Minister kindly provide a breakdown to the best of the Government's knowledge of the statistics for companies incorporated per month in Gibraltar, separating out the companies whose principal trading business takes place in Gibraltar versus those whose principal business takes place abroad? Please provide these for the years 2021-22 to date.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I hand the hon. Gentleman a table showing the number of companies incorporated in Gibraltar since January 2021 to the end of November 2024 that is based on Companies House records.

The Companies Act 2014 does not require that Companies House distinguish between companies whose principal trading business takes place in Gibraltar and those whose primary activities take place abroad. We are, therefore, unable to provide the further information requested.

Answer to Question 1049/2024

Table showing the number of companies incorporated in Gibraltar since January 2021 to end of November 2024 that is based on Companies House records.

Year Month	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	101	81	89	59
February	91	90	85	78
March	138	125	124	85
April	106	86	77	98

May	130	99	76	99
June	116	81	96	95
July	100	67	91	88
August	100	90	71	90
September	101	82	60	69
October	117	73	69	92
November	108	96	94	94
December	108	89	91	-

Madam Speaker: If the hon. Member needs time to look at it, although it is on public record, I will come back to it.

Q1050/2024

**Zero Carbon Footprint Company Ltd –
Loan to North Mole BESS One Ltd**

1370 **Clerk:** Question 1050. The Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government advise whether Zero Carbon Footprint Company Ltd has made or intends to make a loan to, or purchase loan notes issued by, North Mole BESS One Ltd; and, if so, in what amount and on what terms?

1375

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, Zero Carbon Footprint Company Ltd loaned £1,027,154.71, to date, on 20th August 2024 to North Mole BESS One Ltd. Further contract details cannot be disclosed.

1380

Hon. R M Clinton: I am grateful to the Minister. Can she advise the House is that the total extent of the facility that is being advanced? Also, could she provide the House with the terms of the facility, interest rate and duration?

1385

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I can confirm that that is the amount that has been advanced to date, which was advanced, as I stated, on 20th August 2024. I do not have specifics on the details of interest rate and term, but I am happy to provide that if the hon. Member opposite asks the House in the next session.

1390 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Speaker, my question was quite clear. I did ask on what terms. I would have thought the Minister would have that information available. Also, I did not hear in her answer what is the total amount of the facility.

1395 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately I do not have that information available and I will make it available in the next session.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, I am not quite sure how making the information available at the next session will work. Perhaps Madam Speaker can assist me.

1400 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am happy to provide it later on in the session.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1051/2024
GHA insurance cover –
Current limit

Clerk: Question 1051. The Hon. D J Bossino, on behalf of the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

1405 **Hon. D J Bossino:** What is the current GHA insurance cover limit and does it operate on an annual basis in respect of claims arising or made in any given year; and, if not, how does it currently operate?

1410 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the information the hon. Gentleman opposite is asking for is commercial in confidence and as such I am unable to provide this across the floor of this House.

1415 **Hon. D J Bossino:** That is the answer that the Hon. the Minister for Health has provided. I do not make a judgement from this side of the House as to whether that is correct or not; one needs to rely on the veracity of what the hon. Member has just said. Indeed, if that is the case, then it would offend one of the rules of the House if it is information which is commercially sensitive. But is it information that the hon. Member would be willing to provide behind the Speaker's Chair on a confidential basis, at least?

1420

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, this is an issue that cuts across the Government and is about insurance cover for all of the Government. I have absolutely no difficulty sharing the information with hon. Members behind the Speaker's Chair on an undertaking of confidentiality, not otherwise.

1425

Hon. D J Bossino: If we were to proceed down that route, the Hon. the Chief Minister should surely understand that that would be a given, that if information is imparted to us on a confidential basis we would most definitely, as the honourable Members that we are, comply with that request. He should have no doubt about that.

1430

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, it is not that I have any doubt about it, it is that I am making it explicit. The hon. Gentleman should not think that his honourability is being challenged. If that were to be something I intend to do, I would do it in keeping with the Rules of the House and I would put a motion for that purpose. What I am doing is ensuring that the Government continues to comply with its obligations only to share something which is confidential on explicit terms that the confidentiality will be respected.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1052/2024

**GHA Accountability Agreement –
Status and intention to publish**

Clerk: Question 1052. The Hon. D J Bossino, on behalf of the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. D J Bossino: Has the GHA Accountability Agreement been concluded? If not, what is the state of play in relation to the same; and if concluded, will it be published?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the Accountability Agreement is currently being drafted. Once this is completed, I intend to consult the Unions before publishing the document.

Hon. D J Bossino: The Hon. the Minister has indeed provided an answer to the second limb of the question, which is that the agreement, when concluded, will be published in the way I have understood the hon. Member. Is she able to provide any information as to the timeline, as to when it is expected that the agreement will be in a settled form and therefore concluded? The hon. Member says it is currently being drafted, but is she able to say when the end date is going to arrive?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: We would expect that this is no later than the second quarter of next year.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q1053/2024

**Covid public inquiry –
Whether still Government's intention to convene**

Clerk: Question 1053. The Hon. D J Bossino, on behalf of the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. D J Bossino: Does the Government still intend to convene a Covid public inquiry?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the Government is currently considering the draft terms of reference for the Covid inquiry and expects

to be in a position to make an announcement on this in the coming months. Additionally, the Government is currently also considering the most appropriate model to achieve the necessary transparency in the most cost-effective way to the taxpayer.

1475 **Hon. D J Bossino:** May I ask the Hon. Minister what is taxing her mind in terms of the model and, in fact, the terms of reference of the inquiry? What are the issues which are at play? Is that information which he is able ... and, if she is, whether she is prepared to share it across the floor of the House?

1480 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, all of these issues are issues which are currently being advised on.

1485 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Would the hon. Member have some form of idea as to when it is expected that the inquiry will commence? One assumes that the intention of the Government would be that it would be started and hopefully concluded during the course of the lifetime of this Parliament, but can she provide any specifics in relation to that?

1490 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I have said in the answer to my previous question that we are looking to be in a position to make an announcement in the coming months. We are not able to go any further than that at the moment.

Q1034-35/2024
ENT appointments –
Average waiting times to see a specialist –
Supplementary questions

Madam Speaker: Can we now return to Questions 1034 and 1035 for any supplementaries?

1495 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Yes, I am grateful, Madam Speaker. I note that the median wait times provided to see an ENT for an adult are higher than for children. Of course, I can understand that children may need to be seen quicker. However, the adult median waiting times appear rather on the high side. I have raised this question in the context of having been asked by numerous members of the public because they have been waiting for quite a long time to see an ENT. So, I ask the question is there anything which will be put in place in order to deal with the waiting times that people are experiencing?

1500 **Minister for Health Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, in comparison to the waiting times in the NHS, the average waiting time for the first outpatient appointment is usually around 26 weeks to see an ENT consultant in an NHS hospital. But we are not content with comparing ourselves to the NHS. We are not content and our waiting lists are currently significantly lower, less than half of the waiting times in the NHS. However, notwithstanding this, yes, we do intend to go over and above that to try and achieve lower waiting times.

1510 Currently what is in place is that we actually have a complex facial pain managing consultant that comes over every three to four months. This is for ENT complex facial pain patients. This consultant is able to provide guidance to our local consultants in difficult cases. I have already said that our waiting times are less than half the average of the NHS. We are already providing a consultant who provides extra clinics to a complex facial pain consultant, which are not reflected in the waiting times because the clinics are outside those waiting times, but over and above even those two issues, there are two vacancies, one for a consultant ENT surgeon and one for a

1515 consultant audiologist. The ENT surgeon went out in September 2024 and the vacancy for the audiologist went out in December 2024. So, we are actively looking at different ways in order to improve the very much lesser waiting times when compared to the NHS. As I said, we are not content not only to be better than the NHS, but we want to be in a significantly better position, so we are actively doing everything possible in order to reduce those waiting times.

1520

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful. I will not ask in respect to the audiologist because the vacancy has not been out for very long, but in respect of the ENT surgeon vacancy, could the Minister provide an indication as to how many individuals have applied for that role?

1525

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I tend to stay well out of any recruitment process in the GHA, so I do not have that information available.

Q1039 and 1043/2024
GHA cleaners, domestic staff and labourers –
Supplementary questions

Madam Speaker: Any supplementaries on Questions 1039 and 1043? The Hon. J. Ladislaus.

1530 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** In respect of Question 1039, I have been provided with the breakdown of GHA-employed cleaners who are working at St Bernard's Hospital. At the bottom of that table, there are currently 18 individuals on the domestic supply list. Could the Hon. the Minister confirm whether those were the individuals who covered the work that is usually undertaken by those on strike? Was it just those 18 individuals, or were there more individuals covering for those who went on strike?

1535

Minister for Health Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, there were numerous individuals who did not participate in Unite's action. There were several who did not participate because they are not members of Unite. There are several who did not participate because they did not agree with the action. Those supply cleaners may have been amongst the ones that covered whilst the GHA domestics were on strike. However, there were a significant number of staff who did not participate in the strike action.

1540

Hon. J Ladislaus: Does the Hon. the Minister have figures as to the number of staff who did not participate in the strike action?

1545

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Apologies, Madam Speaker, I have the information available; I am just trying to locate it so that I do not give the figures from memory. If you could just give me a couple of minutes, I will locate the information.

Madam Speaker, may I come back to that question later in the session?

1550

Madam Speaker: Would one or either of the hon. Members remind me?
Any other supplementaries on Question 1039?

Hon. J Ladislaus: Not on Question 1039, but I have one on Question 1048, I believe it is.

1555

Madam Speaker: No, Question 1043.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, on the last page of the schedule that has been provided to me, at the very end it says:

On occasions, domestics may help nurses to clean bodily fluids on the wards. This is done out of goodwill and does not fall under their responsibilities.

1560 May I ask the reason for that? Is it because we simply do not have enough nursing staff and they are so overwhelmed that the domestic staff feel the need that to step in and assist when it does not even fall under their responsibilities?

1565 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I have previously said, we are not conducting industrial relations across the floor of the House. The information is available but we will not be conducting industrial relations issues across the House.

Madam Speaker: Did the Hon. Mr Bossino have a supplementary? (**Hon. D J Bossino:** No.) No, all right, then we will move on. I thought the hon. Member had called my attention earlier.

Q1049/2024

**Companies incorporated in Gibraltar –
Breakdown of those trading principally in Gibraltar and those not –
Supplementary questions**

1570 **Madam Speaker:** Any supplementaries on Question 1049? The Hon. C Sacarello.

1575 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, yes. I thank the Hon. Minister for Business for the schedule and her reply. Notwithstanding the limitations of the Companies Act, would there be other sources of information in other registrable departments, such as Employment and Tax, that would be able to provide the distinction between companies that are actually trading in Gibraltar and those without the territory?

1580 **Minister for Health Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** No, Madam Speaker, we moved away from that regime.

1585 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister not agree that from an economic perspective, and certainly in terms of the usefulness of the information available, it would be useful to perhaps amend the Act or look for some other solution around identifying which companies that are being incorporated are contributing to our economy in a larger way? Useful as it is to certain sectors, particularly the service sector, for certain companies to be registered in Gibraltar, notwithstanding that, the greater value attributed to our economy would be for those operating locally, and it would be useful from these statistics, rather than just have them all grouped together, to be able to break them down. Would the Minister consider this approach?

1590 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I think that the hon. Gentleman is trying to lead us into very dangerous ground. Companies that are incorporated in Gibraltar that do business in Gibraltar pay tax in Gibraltar in respect of their earnings in Gibraltar. Companies that are established in Gibraltar that do business elsewhere will have to pay tax wherever it is that they do business, which is what the law requires, and will pay tax in Gibraltar on anything which they remit in Gibraltar. That is the concept of taxation based on remittance, accrual etc. What the hon. Gentleman is asking us to do, in effect, is to move back to the position before 2010 and to say, 'This company does not trade in Gibraltar. It has an exemption certificate that it is doing its business outside of Gibraltar.' That is the old way of doing things. It is what the OECD has been trying to ensure does not happen in other jurisdictions. It is why we were approved by the European Commission for the provisions of our new Income Tax Act in 2010, something that had

1600

been advised long before 2010, and the Government will not be pursuing the route that the hon. Gentleman is suggesting, which is incredibly dangerous at a macroeconomic level for Gibraltar.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

EQUALITY, EMPLOYMENT, CULTURE AND TOURISM

Q1054/2024

Three Kings Cavalcade –

Adjustments for people with supported needs or disabilities

1605 **Clerk:** Questions to the Hon. Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism.
Question 1054. The Hon. D J Bossino, on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

1610 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Could the Government confirm whether reasonable adjustments will be implemented for individuals with supported needs or disabilities at this year's Three Kings Cavalcade?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism.

1615 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, yes.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is the Hon. the Minister who has responsibility for this area able to expand as to what those reasonable adjustments – I see he is already poised with the answer – are?

1620 **Hon. C P Santos:** Last year, the SNDO hosted a safe space outside No. 6 Convent Place. We identified that that was the most convenient place due to exits and for those with sensory issues, so we are looking at hopefully offering that place again for this year.

1625 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Does one gather from that answer that beyond what happened last year there will not be any new initiatives in this area? (*Interjections*)

Madam Speaker: The Hon. Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism.

1630 **Hon. C P Santos:** Well, I have been quite specific to what is happening this year, and we are looking at hopefully adding some seating, which is something we did not offer last year, within that same area.

1635 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Does the Hon. the Minister have information as to the capacity, how many individuals can be accommodated in the facility that he has just referred us to?

1640 **Hon. C P Santos:** I do not have any details as to capacity. It is quite a big area. What we did this year for the Festival of Lights, which we are going to do this year as well in order to be able to cater for everyone who comes, is send out a press release for people who need seating or need something in particular within that area to notify us so that we are ready for everyone who is planning to come. And of course we will have a larger area available so that we are sure that we more or less have an idea of the numbers we are catering for.

Hon. D J Bossino: Finally, is the Minister confident that he will be able to accommodate the demand?

1645 **Hon. C P Santos:** I am very confident, as we have been able to accommodate the demand in all other events we have done in Gibraltar for the past year.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1650 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, this might be a convenient moment for the House now to recess until 3.15 this afternoon.

Madam Speaker: All right, we will recess until 3.15 this afternoon.

The House recessed at 1.10 p.m.