



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.00 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.

Gibraltar, Monday, 24th February 2025

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 3.00 p.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, Monday the 24th of February 2025.

Order of proceedings (i) Oath of Allegiance; (ii) Confirmation of minutes - The Minutes of the Thirteenth meeting of the Fifteenth Parliament, which was held on the 22nd and 24th of January, 2025.

Madam Speaker: May I sign the minutes as correct?

Members: Aye.

Madam Speaker signed the Minutes.

Clerk: (iii) Communications from the Chair; (iv) Petitions; (v) announcements; (vi) papers to be laid. The Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the Board of the Charity Commission Annual Report 2021, the Board of the Charity Commission Annual Report 2022, the Board of the Annual Charity Commission Report 2023, the Board of the Charity Commission Annual Report 2024, and the Income Tax (Allowances, Deductions and Exemptions) (Amendment) Rules 2025.

Madam Speaker: Order to lie.

Clerk: (vii) Reports of Committees; (viii) Answers to Oral Questions.

Questions for Oral Answer

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, CIVIL CONTINGENCIES AND SPORT

Q125/2025 Emergency call-outs – Monthly figures

Clerk: Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.
Question 125, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Minister provide statistics as to the monthly emergency call-outs received by the GFRS over the course of the past 12 months, broken down by type of call-out?

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 monthly emergency call-out received by the GFRS over the last 12 months is as follows: 2024, January 99, February 76, March 73, April 81, May 90, June 81, July 84, August 81, September 66, October 76, November 60, December 71; 2025, January 65 and February 11. Madam Speaker, the type of emergency call will vary, but we are informed that the majority are lift rescues.

Others include road collisions, fire, flooding, entry into locked premises and assistance to Gibraltar Ambulance Service. Madam Speaker, unfortunately this information, along with a more detailed breakdown, has not been uploaded onto the GFRS website since 2020 due to issues with the website's maintenance provider. The GFRS is now working on a new system and information will be uploaded very shortly.

I am happy to provide the hon. Member with a breakdown for the type of call once I have it available.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful. We have just heard that there are issues with the provider of the website services. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps clarify what sort of issues have been encountered in that regard and why, of course, they have not been resolved in the past five years?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, I do not have the exact information. I do know that the GFRS is working with a new database provider in the hope that they can get everything up to date and all statistics onto the website.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful. Could the Hon. Minister clarify whether the provider was an external provider?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, I do not have the information.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Just one last question in respect to the original question. Does the Hon. Minister have any information as to whether the GFRS have recently, or in the past six months, submitted any business case requests in respect to further resources, particularly human resources?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, the GFRS is currently working on a study, so I have not had the results yet.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Just on the previous supplementary, can I just ask for clarification? The hon. Member says he does not have information as to who the provider is, or he does not know who the external provider is? Just for clarification, if it is the former, is the Government the provider of the database?

The GFRS database would not be handled by the Government Service?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, as far as I am aware it is an external provider, but I do not know who they are.

Q126/2025
Public toilets –
Out of order dates

Clerk: Question 126, the Hon E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Madam Speaker, during which dates in the last 12 months have the toilets for public use at Westview Park been out of order?

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, the toilets at Westview Park were out of order during the following days in the last 12 months, the reason for each occasion being vandalism. 15th October 2024, between 12th and 15th November 2024, 20th December 2024 and 20th January 2025.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Is there CCTV around the area? If there have been repeated examples of vandalism, is there CCTV to monitor the area? If not, will the Minister perhaps consider whether it would be appropriate to install something like that?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, I am not sure whether there is or not, but if there isn't, I agree that it would be a good idea to install it.

Q127/2025
GSLA facilities –
Fees paid by users

Clerk: Question 127, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide a detailed breakdown in respect of all fees paid by users of any facilities falling under the auspices of the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority during the current financial year, indicating the purpose of their usage?

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, the breakdown of fees received by the GSLA from users is as follows: Fitness classes room hire, £300; Hire of football pitches at the Basehead Complex for private coaching schools, £1,130;

Rent collected for kitchen hire at the Europa Sports Complex, £8,000; Europa Sports Complex gym membership fees, £72,145.23; Hire of swimming pool facilities, £789; and Hire of sports for private events, £10,976.34.

Hon. E J Reyes: Madam Speaker, in respect of the last item, the £10,976 of the hire, the hire of which premises, because I know my question was sort of a generic of facilities falling under the Sports and Leisure Authority, but in his answers, the Minister was able to pinpoint that the kitchen facilities, for example, were Europa Sports Centre. This hiring of premises is in respect of which premises?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, on the 23rd and 28th of December 2024, it was the Bayside Sports Complex recreational area. On the 23rd of December 2024 and 2nd of January 2025, it was for the hire of the Europa Sports Complex Hall. 10th of September 2024, it was a National Day event at Bayside Sports Complex recreational area. June 2024 was the hire of the Lathbury pool facilities.

Hon. E J Reyes: Madam Speaker, is the Minister aware, in the hiring of these premises for these events and so on, is a user required to take out a separate entertainment licence or is it covered perhaps by a GSLA entertainment licence which they can then sort of sublet to others?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, they apply for a separate licence.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q128/2025
Ball-stop nets –
Outstanding problems

Clerk: Question 128, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government update this House in respect of the outstanding problems in providing a permanent solution to the ball-stop nets at Europa Sports grounds?

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, as the Hon. member is aware, we recently went through the planning process in order to extend the seating capacity at the Europa Sports Complex. Madam Speaker, the current extension is scheduled to commence mid-March, early April and should be completed by mid-June. This development, along with the new lighting and other improvements represents what we refer to as Phase 1 of developing the premises to the full potential.

Madam Speaker, we are hopeful and we are currently working on, what we refer to as Phase 2 and if it does become a reality, it will do away with the need for the ball stop nets.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My understanding had been that the refurbishment and upgrading of the seating areas and so on were towards the west and the southern end of the

sports fields, whereby these ball-stop nets are actually on the eastern side. The idea was to stop the balls interfering with the children's play park and so on.

Given that they are at different locations, how does the Minister envisage that a solution will be found, where in a previous Parliament his predecessor gave us the impression that it was just a question of finalising the net system, that the infrastructure is there, but was somehow or other not quite putting up with the weather, I think it was.

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, as I just said, the current works being carried out is Phase 1. We have very, exciting plans for what will be Phase 2 of the project, and that would mean certain changes which would do away with the need for the ball-stop nets.

Hon. E J Reyes: I am sorry if he has answered before, Madam Speaker, but the Minister refers to Phase 1 and Phase 2. I think the ball-stop nets, hopefully, a solution will be found in Phase 2. Does he have a timescale and estimated dates when that phase is happening because I know this issue, from my notes, I have been asking these types of questions for well over two years now?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I do not have any dates. There are many different entities that encompass Phase 2, and we still have to get everything together.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

EMPLOYMENT, EQUALITY, CULTURE AND TOURISM

Q129/2025

Parental bereavement –

New provisions

Q130/2025

Parental leave –

Shared equally amongst parents

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

Clerk: Question 129, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Could the Government state what provisions it intends to introduce for parental bereavement leave and when it expects these to be implemented?

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

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 130.

Clerk: Question 130, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Could the Government state how much longer it expects to take before it is in a position to move legislation that allows parental leave to be shared more equally between parents?

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

Hon. C P Santos: Madam Speaker, there are many different intricacies surrounding parental leave. We have been through an initial consultation phase with different departments and organisations and are now considering all the viable options that would benefit both employees and businesses in Gibraltar. At this juncture, a specific timeframe cannot be provided, and parental bereavement leave is just one of the complex factors that is being considered within the legislation as a whole.

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, I am grateful for that answer. In terms of changes to parental bereavement leave and announcements made by the Government in 2020, could the Hon. Minister confirm whether these changes were ever given effect in legislation or relevant regulations?

Hon. C P Santos: I would need specific notice of this answer. I am aware, though, that the change in what was announced in 2020 was a policy decision within the Civil Service. I notice it changed to two weeks. That was mentioned in the press release. I am not sure if it was changed in the legislation, but it is something that we are looking at within the new parental leave legislation, both in the Employment Act and in the parental leave.

Hon. A Sanchez: I am grateful, Madam Speaker. By way of clarification, the changes in relation to the announcements made by the Government in 2020 were changes that were made in relation to the public sector, but were not changes that were given any effect in legislation that had any effects or changes that were made in relation to the private sector. Is this correct?

Hon. C P Santos: I can confirm that these changes were made within the public sector. I would need to go back and check whether any changes have been added into the legislation for the private sector.

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, in February 2023, a motion was brought to this House by our former colleague, Mr Elliot Phillips, specifically in relation to bereavement leave, and specifically the legal right for paid leave for parents who are grieving the loss of pregnancy before 24 weeks. I note the motion was amended, and during the course of the debate there was a mention of the need for consultation of the Bill possibly having to appear as a Command Paper. Would the Hon. Minister be able to provide an update as to the progress of this consultation and when we can expect to see this command paper, if indeed it is still the direction of travel of the Government?

Hon. C P Santos: At the moment, parental bereavement leave is part of one of the many different areas within the parental leave legislation that we are looking at. With regards to the actual command paper. I would need to have further information on this and see where we are at, but I am looking at parental leave legislation as a whole, where parental bereavement leave is actually a part of this. I will look for the specifics of what the hon. Member is asking for, but it is something that she can rest assured is already being considered within the legislation as a whole.

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the Hon. Minister's explanation, but would he not agree that certainly given that the announcements in relation to this were made in 2020 and then it was further mentioned in 2023, that the scope of this was going to be broadened to include those parents grieving the loss of pregnancy before 24 weeks? Indeed, at the time of hearing this, it was personally very welcome news having experienced a traumatic loss of a child in pregnancy before 24 weeks as a woman. Wouldn't the Minister agree that there is a certain expectation from members of the public and a certain need for progress in this regard to be made faster than it is currently being made?

Hon. C P Santos: Madam Speaker, as I have already mentioned, this is part of a bigger picture, so we can look at things and compartmentalise the legislation and different areas of the legislation, but as part of the bigger picture, this is something that we obviously agree with because we have already implemented it within policy for the Public Service. So opening it up in legislation to the private sector needs to be looked at and consulted with, but it is obviously the way that we are looking to travel. It is very difficult when we are looking at legislation as a whole that will affect parental leave for both parents and shared parental leave to compartmentalise different sections as opposed to looking at all of it as a whole and hopefully bring the legislation in one whole piece.

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, the Hon. Minister, in answer to the first question, said that he was consulting departments and I think the Minister said organisations. May I ask him to be a bit more specific and specify who in fact the Minister is consulting?

Hon. C P Santos: In the first instance, we have consulted with, this was mentioned last July I think in Parliament, with the GFSB, the Chamber of Commerce, we have also been involved with the DSS as well as the Ministry of Equality, the Ministry of Employment as well, because this would affect the employment legislation. I finally received the consultation feedback from the Chamber of Commerce and the GFSB. All of whom have given me their feedback but would like further consultation and as well bearing in mind for them the treaty that is about to happen, this is feedback that they have given to me with pensions and maternity leave and benefits. That is where we are at in our consultation at the moment.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is the Hon. the Minister suggesting that by way of pressing him further in terms of a timeline that we are unlikely to have legislation or anything close to legislation in place until a treaty in relation to Brexit is finalised? Is that the Government's position in relation to this?

Hon. C P Santos: No, that is not the Government's position at all. What we are saying is that because we are consulting, their feedback is to consult further and for them to bear in mind the fact that a treaty has not been reached yet. This is their feedback. We are moving ahead with all the different areas of the legislation. We will consult with them but this is not a legislation that is dependent on the treaty.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is the Hon. the Minister, if I can dig slightly further, able to state, in broad terms at least, he may not have the information in front of him, the two private organisations and it is exclusive to these two, as I understand it from his answer, is the GFSB and the Chamber of Commerce. Can he at least give us a summary of what it is that they have raised as part of the consultation process, which has provoked the answer that he has given in relation to the treaty and the negotiations? We are bemused on this side of the House.

Hon. C P Santos: I do not feel this is anything to be bemused about. It is not my job to summarise what someone has given me as part of the consultation paper. I understand that, as the hon. Member has mentioned from his sedentary position, that he needs to answer questions, and I am here to answer.

There is absolutely no problem on the answer that is asked. Any question that is asked, I will answer as intricately as I possibly can. I am not going to summarise what another organisation has told me. This is an internal consultation. We need to get feedback from the private sector, because we need to change a legislation that is not an easy fix, and there are options that would benefit employees, that could in turn cripple businesses and that is not what we need to do with this legislation.

We need to make sure that this works for employer and employee. So that is why this has become a very extensive consultation, a very extensive, intricate process, in order for us to be able to make the correct choices for both employers and employees.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q131/2025
Youth Clubs –
Usage

Clerk: Question 131, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can the Government provide data on how many young people were using youth clubs in 2024, broken down by age and gender?

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

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, the youth club statistics for 2024 are divided into three age ranges: Seven to 11 year olds, male 114, female 97. Age range 12 to 15 years old, male 112, female 88, other nine; Age range 16 to 30 years old, male 42, female 44, other six.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister, given the data provided across the floor of the House, it seems that there is a much bigger uptake with respect to males than females in terms of attendance in youth clubs. Is there a reason that young males seem to prefer or subscribe to youth clubs over the females and whether the Minister is doing anything to address this?

Hon. C P Santos: Madam Speaker, the total of males is 268, females 229. I do not feel that is a huge disparity and I do not think this is something that causes any alarm for me to have to do any extra work to attract more females or whether males are finding different issues. This is a leisure provision, it is informal education and this is not a huge disparity in the numbers for me to even contemplate having to worry about it.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q132/2025
GSLA facilities –
Fees paid by users

Clerk: Question 132, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, the number of air arrivals from the UK scheduled flights has dropped by roughly 10% from 2023 to 2024, according to recent Government data. In light of this significant drop, what are the Minister's plans to better market Gibraltar to our UK tourist visitors?

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

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, air arrivals from the UK encompass various markets, including tourism, business travel across all

corporate sectors and visitors using Gibraltar as an entry point to nearby regions of southern Spain. The scheduled flights from the UK to Gibraltar and the volume of UK tourist visitors do not necessarily correlate and should be considered separately. A reduction in flight frequencies does not automatically translate to a decrease in tourist numbers.

Gibraltar is still considered a viable destination, as shown by a recent agreement with a partner airline who will be adding an extra flight during the summer season and a whole new flight to Birmingham as from June 2025. Marketing efforts in the UK remain very strong, with our continued participation in trade shows, MICE events and travel industry gatherings. All of which you are aware of, as I am continually questioned on our participation of these in the House.

Collaborations with industry partners, TV advertising, digital campaigns, social media and traditional print marketing in newspapers and trade publications further reinforce Gibraltar's presence in the market.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, whilst I appreciate that the dwindling numbers of people coming to Gibraltar by way of flights may not represent actual tourists and there may be some who come by way of business, it is a hard reality that there is a drop in the number of people coming to Gibraltar. Can I ask the Hon. Minister whether he has a strategy which he is deploying in order to improve the number of visitors from the UK?

I put it in this context. A few years ago we did very well in marketing Gibraltar and had a strategy which encapsulated a Britain in the Sun programme and did very well to market Gibraltar. That boom seems to have fizzled out. Given this fizzling out, is it the Minister's position that we are still marketing towards UK visitors as Gibraltar in the Sun or are we doing much more than just that?

Hon. C P Santos: Madam Speaker, I can only but say please you need to check your numbers and you need to check what is going out there with regards to Gibraltar because visitor numbers in Gibraltar are not dwindling. We are seeing a rise in daytime cruise ship passengers. We are seeing a rise in entry into the Upper Rock Nature Reserve. All these are figures that are already published.

As I already mentioned, people coming to flights are not exclusively tourists. There may be people who, maybe the dwindling numbers are not tourists, are people who are using Gibraltar to cross over the border.

Maybe it is people are not taking as many business trips and are choosing to do meetings via Zoom. Obviously I have absolutely no worry in Gibraltar's progress, especially seeing as BA on Friday published their own report where Gibraltar is in the top five of the rising stars with a 17% increase on searches and bookings. So it is something that neither myself nor EasyJet who has invested into extra flights to Gibraltar or BA are worried about with regards to airline travel.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, may I press the Hon. Minister, can you confirm whether there is a strategy being deployed in order to market ourselves to the UK visitors? (**Hon. C P Santos:** Yes.) Madam Speaker, if I may, I am grateful to the Hon. Minister confirming or bringing up the BA travel report which I think he gave an interview on over this weekend and with respect, I am making reference to that report. It did say, as the Hon. Minister rightly said, that there is a 17% rise in searches for travel destination packages to Gibraltar but I have the statistics here with me and despite there being a 17% increase in searches, the hotel occupancy in Gibraltar in 2024 was down. Upper Rock visits compared to our best years were down. Airline visits are down. The number of cruise visits compared to our best year, 2019, are still down. Can I ask the Hon. Minister, where is the success story here?

Hon. C P Santos: I do not know where you are getting the statistics from and I would like to see your sources. The Upper Rock Nature Reserve visits are not down at all.

Even in our best years, we are 300 people. 300,000 visits over from... I think it was 2019. We are up to nearly... 1,400,000 visitors in the Upper Rock. There is one hotel less. Therefore, we have less rooms to fill. Occupancy in the last year... The 17% in January is, for this year's bookings.

I do not know where we are getting these statistics because, obviously, the ones that I get into my office look very positive but we can discuss at a later time. I do not know where you're getting your statistics from especially the ones from the Upper Rock Nature Reserve are very visible. The ones with cruise liners coming into Gibraltar were already in a record-breaking year with pre-bookings for next year already breaking our own record. I am not quite sure where he is getting the statistics from or how he is twisting them around to make them feel like they are down but this is maybe something to discuss. Maybe our sources are different.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, with respect to the Hon. Minister, I make reference to the number of cruise call visits in Gibraltar and I take the last five years. In 2019, we had 197 cruise calls in Gibraltar. 2022, we had five. 2021, we had 44. 2023, we had 163. In 2024, we had 185. So, what the Minister would like to compare to the previous year, which with all due respect, we might say on this side of the House was not a great year with respect to our best years. We believe on this House that there is still much progress and a way to go.

The data, as far as we are concerned, do not show a vast improvement. Therefore, I respectfully ask the Hon. Minister what he is doing by way of a strategy to improve the numbers of people coming to Gibraltar. Is he saying with a straight face to the business community in Gibraltar that he has done the best that he can because we have 17% increases in searches when the business community here in Gibraltar want more visits, more occupancy, more bookings, and more people spending money in Gibraltar?

Hon. C P Santos: Well, using cruise data from 2021, when there was a world shutdown on cruising, I do not want to be offensive, yes, but I consider it a little bit ridiculous. We had 2019, then 2020 shutdown, there was a short rise, and this is not exclusive to Gibraltar. We had clearly the trends that were going up.

This year, 2025, we seem to have left out of his statistics, of the hon. Member's statistics, that we are on 252, which is higher than we have had in our highest numbers, which were within the GSLP time in Government. Let us not forget that. This is an uphill trend, and I can, with a straight face, tell the business community, who I work with very closely, I meet them very closely, to discuss our strategies.

They have seen our tourism strategy, and I keep on mentioning, as I said here, we have TV advertising, digital campaigns, we have a social media team, we go to conferences, events, we are going to niche market events, we are seeing a rise in everything that we work on like diving is one of the niche markets... we are seeing numbers in weddings rise, we are seeing numbers rise and what I find very bizarre, and very strange, is that someone can stand on the other side of the House with the same straight face they want from me, and tell me that tourism is on its way down. I do not know where we're getting the figures, because we are working very closely with the business community, in order to give them the best products that Gibraltar can offer, and that is why numbers are rising.

Do we have a strategy? Yes! I get questioned about it all the time. Whenever I go somewhere I get questioned about cost and what I could do better. I am going everywhere, the team is going everywhere, we are investing every inch of our energy to get those numbers to go up, so we cannot be selective on the numbers that are convenient to us. I will give you the numbers that are existing, and the ones that are there.

I cannot afford to pick and choose the numbers that work for me, in the same way that the hon. Member opposite chooses the numbers that are convenient for his questions.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, and if I may tell the Hon. Minister that the statistics I get are the ones published on the Government website but taking that to one side, may I just refer back to the

British travel trends report which was mentioned by the Hon. Minister, one of the points which was addressed and I have the report here with me, that many of the tourists who seek a travel destination look for travel experience activities and fine dining experiences. I think he mentioned one of the things that we are trying to improve here is diving, for instance. Have we learnt anything from this report with respect to the areas with respect to activities and fine dining experiences?

Hon. C P Santos: The report was published last week, so I have already read it clearly and worked with the team on what our strategies are moving forward to what the trends are. That is why we go to these conferences and that is why we go to these meetings. For us we have noticed that adventure tourism is something that is obviously a trend that people, there are a lot of independent travellers now as well, so we are looking at how we can focus on independent travel... That is why we have a TV campaign in the UK, that is why we have a radio campaign because we know that the independent traveller is the number that is rising quickest.

I am working with the Catering Association to see how we can offer more gastronomical tours and I am working with the industry and I am telling them this is what we need as a product and we are seeing how we can work together in order for them to give me a product and for us to market it.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you very much Madam Speaker and good afternoon to you. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what the Government's strategy is in regards to cruise calls in specific and the impacts that the addition of Westview Park reclamation will have considering the possibility that the extension jetty would have to be removed and possibly move further down. Will there be an impact on the ability for cruise liners to berth on the inside?

Hon. C P Santos: The movement where the extension jetty is going to go is not something that has anything to do with me but in the initial concept designs it would not affect cruise liner docking in the inside area as far as we are considering.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I just want to very quickly confirm the fact that the extension jetty is not within your remit but nevertheless the impact it would have on the cruise liners where it to be moved across is. Can the Government state, perhaps one of his fellow Ministers could assist in saying, will there be an impact on that inside berth for the cruise liners?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I do not know where the hon. Gentleman is getting the faintest notion that this could have any effect

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q133/2025
Morocco air links –
Proposals

Clerk: Question 133, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can the Government disclose what proposals it has received, if any, for air links to be set up with Morocco?

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

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, we are still in discussions with regards to air links to Morocco and these discussions are commercial in nature.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Hon. D J Bossino: if I may...

Madam Speaker: If any hon. Member wants to ask a question please get my attention otherwise, I have to sit here looking around seeing whether there is anyone who wants to ask a question. So yes, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Thank you. Is the Hon. Minister saying that when he mentions in the second part of his answer that they are commercial in nature. They are bound to be commercial in nature but is he saying that that is what is preventing him from giving us any updates in relation to whether proposals have been received? Is he unable to provide that answer and answer the question that my hon. Friend has posed in this House?

Hon C P Santos: I have already said that we are in discussions so I would take it that the answer is yes.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is he able to say, and if he is able to say can he say, how many airlines, is the Hon. Minister in discussions with?

(Hon. C P Santos: No.) Is the Hon. Minister able to state the destinations within the Kingdom of Morocco that these airlinks are likely to engender links between Gibraltar and those particular airports?

Hon. C P Santos: No.

Hon. D J Bossino: Why are all his answers in the negative? Is it purely because he is relying on the commercial nature of these discussions? Is that it or is there something else?

Hon. C P Santos: It is because we have nothing finalised so I would just be talking about a hypothetical eventuality. It would not be a case of giving you any facts other than I am discussing with different airlines about air links to Morocco and many other places. Nothing is finalised, therefore, I would be giving you an answer that is not based on facts.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is he able to provide at least this particular fact? Is the Hon. Minister able to state when he will be able to make an announcement in relation to these air links?

Hon. C P Santos: Not at this time.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q134/2025

**CLIA destination showcase –
Business generated/expected to generate**

Clerk: Question 134, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, what business has the Minister generated for Gibraltar or expects to generate from having hosted the CLIA destination showcase providing details of destinations and operators where possible?

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

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) event took place in September 2024 offering a valuable opportunity to promote Gibraltar as a destination to UK based travel agents. These agents primarily though not exclusively specialise in selling cruise packages. Our aim is to attract more cruise ships and therefore more cruise passengers that will benefit local businesses including hotels, restaurants, tour operators and retail shops.

Hosting such a high profile event raises Gibraltar's visibility as a destination within the global cruise industry as can be seen by the rising cruise calls expected in 2025 to reach 252 which is a record number and a 37% increase on 2024. We are also seeing pre-booking figures translating to a double digit growth in 2026 versus 2025. In addition, although the question is asking us to provide details of destinations, the CLIA destination showcase as its name implies was to showcase Gibraltar as a destination therefore no other destinations were showcased. The tour operators that participated are as follows: The Travel Nook UK; iTravel by Lorraine; Travel Zoo; Boatree Travel; Arabia Inc; New Hope Travel; Cruise Mummy; Stewart Travel; Destination Direct Travel; Sajan Travel; Travel Low Deal Limited; Hayes Travel; Intelli Travel; Frangipani Holidays; Jamaica Cruising; Cruise Pass by Gold Meadow; Mail Metro Media; Cruise Trade News; World of Cruising; Islands Travel Trade Network ITTN; and Freelance Journalists

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker grateful to the Minister for his answer and with respect whilst I note that the question posed details of destinations and operators was talking about the destination to Gibraltar and as he rightly mentioned the destination showcase was a UK based showcase but it still encapsulated agents which had a much wider remit than the UK Can I ask with respect to the 252 cruise calls he projects for 2025 are these projections or are they bookings that we have made for Gibraltar to cruise call for next year?

Hon. C P Santos: These are bookings that you can find in the Gibraltar Port website at the moment confirmed bookings we could get some extra ones from cruise ships that have to detour and come to Gibraltar maybe some may have to cancel due to weather or something but these are the ones that are booked for 2025.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is the Hon. Minister able to state whether this resulted in the incurring of a cost to the Gibraltar Government, the holding of this conference and, if so, can he say how much?

Hon. C P Santos: Yes, any conference that we attend, any conference that we participate we will incur a cost. The cost for this was £22,725 which helps support bringing over 60 people to Gibraltar for this conference

Hon. D J Bossino: I was going to ask the Hon. Minister the precise number because I know that he did say he gave us the groups and the companies that did come and then his last category was freelance journalists is he able to provide a precise number he says over 60 is he able to provide a precise number of delegates that came to Gibraltar for this particular conference.

Hon. C P Santos: At the moment I am not able to I know it was around 60 to 63 but I do not know the exact number but I can find out and let the hon. Member know without a problem.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful. Is the Hon. Minister also able to state what has come from this particular venture and in particular in relation to the freelance journalists has it produced the goods in terms of articles written about Gibraltar and that type of thing does he have a tangible positive effect which has come from this particular venture.

Hon. C P Santos: This was a few months ago so it is very difficult to see when it comes to bookings because usually cruise bookings are well in advance so the tangible proof for me is the fact that we are getting more interest as part of the strategy that we keep being asked about is a whole package of getting passengers and cruise liners and more interest in Gibraltar as a destination so for us it is very difficult to pinpoint oh this one event brought me 10 cruise passengers and this brought me five more cruise ships we have a year long campaign that includes advertising includes different events conferences so the trend from the numbers that we are getting in bookings is that whatever we are doing seems to be working

Hon. D J Bossino: I fully appreciate that and he has not reinvented the wheel this is being done by his predecessors indeed of his Government and previous Governments and there is a two year time lag with these things but is he able to state whether it has specifically, I asked the Hon. Minister specifically, whether it has produced any articles though he mentioned that there were freelance journalists but I do not think he has answered if the answer is no the answer is no. Has it produced any press interest since this happened did he say it was September 2024 I think.

Hon. C P Santos: We have had interest from MailOnMetro group. We have three different journalists that are coming this year to Gibraltar. I think before the summer the three of them will be here by the end of June we will have had three visits from 3 of the different publications from MailOnMetro media.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is he able to state whether it is the Government's intention to have a repeat of this presumably I am assuming perhaps wrongly that this is done in September but is there an intention to have a repeat of this type of thing?

Hon. C P Santos: We look at all different conferences so we will not have a repeat of this one in particular because they like changing destinations so that different destinations are promoted within the circle but we have another one that we just announced about two weeks ago which is the ATO conference which will work similarly and is also this time working with independent travel agents so we will be able to have a different focus for that group of travel agents and hopefully work on a strategy for independent travellers and more leisure travel.

Hon. D J Bossino: This does raise an important point in relation to the strategy that he was answering to my learned hon. Friend in respect of the previous answer that the Minister gave. Is the focus exclusively in relation to the UK this was specifically UK focused markets or other geographical destinations from which he would want to attract cruise lines?

Hon. C P Santos: CLIA is the agency. The cruise liners are not exclusively from the UK. They work with international cruise companies.

We will attract the cruise companies that come to the Mediterranean. We go to Miami and we go to, for example, the head office of the American companies, but all these companies have offices all over the UK as well and Europe, and we cannot forget that for a lot of these markets, not necessarily the cruise liner market, our main feeder market are the UK and across the border in Spain, so that is where a lot of our focus goes with regards to getting people here easier and closer, but with regards to cruise companies, we are reliant on the cruise companies that do come over to Gibraltar and sometimes, or among the Mediterranean, and sometimes the Head Office could be in the UK if it is a British company or it could be in the US with a representation in the UK, which is easy access for us.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q135-6/2025
NVQ Courses –
Details; Qualifications obtained

Clerk: Question 135, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide details of all NVQ courses currently being undertaken by trainees at Gibraltar Training Centre, indicating estimated completion dates and qualifications expected to be obtained?

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

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 136.

Clerk: Question 136, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide details of all NVQ qualifications obtained by trainees, indicating levels obtained and completion dates from September 2024 to date?

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

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, the NVQ courses currently being undertaken at the Gibraltar Training Centre with estimated completion dates and qualifications expected to be obtained are as follows: EAL, Performing Engineering Operations, NVQ Level 2 Electrical, estimated completion date is June 2025; EAL, Performing Engineering Operations, NVQ Level 2 Mechanical, estimated completion date June 2025; City and Guilds Plumbing, NVQ Level 2 Diploma in Plumbing, estimated completion dates are August 2025 and June 2026 for two different cohorts; City and Guilds, NVQ Level 2 Diploma in Building Maintenance Operations, estimated completion dates are September 2025 and June 2026 for two different cohorts; From September 2024 to date, the details of NVQ qualifications obtained by trainees with levels obtained and completion dates are EAL; NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Engineering Maintenance, Mechanical Pathway, three apprentices achieved in October 2024; City and Guilds, NVQ Level 2 Diploma in Plumbing, one apprentice achieved in September 2024; and the City and Guilds Level 1 Extended Certificate in Construction Skills, 22 apprentices achieved September 2024.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you Madam Speaker. In the list the Minister has kindly provided, other than plumbing, which is a single doubt as a particular individual trade, the next one with expected completion dates are September 2025 and also I think it was June 2026 on building and so on, maintenance work and so on. What trades as such does that cover?

Hon. C P Santos: Madam Speaker, the Building Maintenance Operations, the Level 2 Diploma, covers bricklaying, painting, carpentry, plastering. I think those are the four that they learn as a combination for maintenance.

Hon. E J Reyes: Analysing the statistics, there is no mention of any student either undertaking or having completed any Level 3 qualifications. Have these ceased to be offered at the training centre?

Hon. C P Santos: There is and there is a mention of it in the second part of the answer, where the Level 3 Diploma in Engineering Maintenance, Mechanical Pathways had three apprentices achieve the Level 3 in October 2024. We need to make sure that we go through the different levels before they get to Level 3, but it is offered.

Hon. E J Reyes: Yes, I am careful of that because the Electrical and Mechanical require a Level 3 to be classified as a qualified craftsman. However, in the more traditional, let us call it the Building or Construction trades, those Level 2 offers you or provides you with the qualified craftsman status. Are any students or any trainees undertaking a Level 3 in that respect, for example the plumbing as one of them?

Hon. C P Santos: Not at the moment, but I would need to check whether the Level 3 in plumbing is actually a requirement that is necessary. I know for Mechanical and Electrical, especially for Mechanical, but for Electrical, there are job pathways just with a Level 2. You can choose to continue to the Level 3, but I would need to check on that for plumbing.

Hon. E J Reyes: Yes, I am grateful Minister is going to check. I can tell you about the qualified craftsman status is achieved with a Level 2 in these sorts of crafts trades. The Level 3 is not a requirement.

It is a desirable qualification, especially for those who work in the industry and hope to make it to, for example, a site foreman level or whatever. It is highly desirable to have a Level 3, which is why I asked the question. It is not just investment in preparing a craftsman for today, but thinking ahead, you need the qualification and you obviously need the experience on the field. Can the Minister confirm that should a trainee wish to proceed to a Level 3 in plumbing, for example, that the capability and the resources are there within the training centre?

Hon. C P Santos: Yes, I am aware that the capability and the resources are there for a Level 3, as it is proved by the three apprentices that have taken this on. It is something that, of course, we need to discuss with the apprentices themselves and see. A lot of them, especially the mechanical and electrical, most of them want to get straight into work from the time I have spent with them in the past 15 months. Yes, the resources are there for the Level 3.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Can I just ask the Hon. Minister, at the beginning of his original answer, I think he mentioned a couple of cohorts. He did it a couple of times, which I assume he means groups of students. Can he tell us how many students we are talking about?

Hon. C P Santos: How many students we are talking per cohort? There is a subdivision of what the trades do, so I would need to add it up but I think we have, in the latest cohort, we started with 44 or 46, and then we have got 22 currently.

Some of them have gone into work and some of them did not pass the course. I do not know the exact numbers, I need to check but I think we have about eight from the past cohort that that is still to complete their Level 2.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. For me to understand it, when he says around 44, then it goes to 22, that is because people drop out or they do not successfully go through the different levels? Is that what he is talking about?

When, for example, he said initially around 44 and then to 22, did he mean that 22 passed Level 1 or Level 2? I am not sure what he meant, if he could clarify.

Hon. C P Santos: Please do not take the 44 as gospel. I will get the exact number. I do not want to be accused of getting the incorrect answer in. Parliament but I know it is in the 40s. I know that there are 22 currently. A lot of them completed the Level 1.

Some of them chose to stay on. Some of them went into other employment or they wanted to start work immediately. Some of them did not pass the course, so some of them may want to retake the Level 1. Currently, that is why the numbers are changing.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. Presumably, these are courses that get done over a number of years, not just one year. That is correct as well, yes?

Hon. C P Santos: It depends on the level. Level 1 takes a shorter period of time. There are three months of tuition and then they go for a few months into placement.

Level 2 takes a longer period of time because they go into placement for a longer period of time and they go back and they have to do their portfolios. So yes, it depends on the level, it takes a period of time.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: So if I was interested, for example, on understanding the uptake at the training centre, I assume from what the Hon. Minister has said in answer to my supplementary that he might not have the statistics of the kind of uptake there has been over a number of years and I would need to ask a fresh question at another session of the House. Is that right?

Hon. C P Santos: Yes, I do not have the numbers on me right now. I need notice of that question. I can only guess and then it would not be an exact number and I do not think it would be fair for myself or for yourself.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

JUSTICE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Q137/2025
Domestic offences –
Breakdown

Clerk: Questions to the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.
Question 137, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Could Government provide a breakdown of domestic related offences committed, detected, reported, identified or classified as such by specific offence under the Crimes Act or any other relevant or subsidiary legislation for the years 2021 to present date?

Clerk: Answer the Hon the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): I now hand over a schedule with the information requested.

Madam Speaker: Right, we move on to the next question and then we will revert to this for supplementaries.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 137

A Breakdown of domestic-related offences committed, detected, reported, identified, or classified as such, by specific offence under the Crimes Act or any other relevant or subsidiary legislation, for years 2021 to the present date.

(01 Jan 2021 – 16 Feb 2025)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Abandoning animals contrary to Section 6 Animals Act	0	1	0	0	0
Abduction of a Child by Parent, etc. contrary to Section 184 of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	1	0
Affray contrary to Section 57 of Crimes Act 2011	6	3	0	1	0
Arson contrary to Section 355 of Crimes Act 2011	1	3	0	0	0
Assault by Penetration contrary to Section 214 of Crimes Act 2011	1	2	0	0	0
Actual Bodily Harm: Racially Aggravated contrary to Section 176 & 113 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	1	0	0
Affray contrary to Section 57 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	3	0	0
Arson contrary to Section 355 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	1	0	0
Assault by Penetration contrary to Section 214 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	1	0	0
Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm contrary to Section 176 of Crimes Act 2011	26	35	30	25	5
Assault of a Child under 13yrs by Penetration contrary to Section 218 of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	0	0
Attempting to Choke, etc. with Intent to Facilitate Indictable Offence contrary to Section 168 of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	0	0
Attempting to Pervert the Course of Justice contrary to Common Law	1	0	0	0	0
Being Intoxicated while in Charge of a Child contrary to Section 561 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	1	0	0
Blackmail contrary to Section 414 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	0	1	1
Burglary (attempted) contrary to Section 399 & 22 of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	0	0
Burglary contrary to Section 399 of Crimes Act 2011	0	2	5	3	0
Carrying Offensive Weapon in a Public Place contrary to Section 131 of Crimes Act 2011	1	2	1	1	0
Causing a Person to Engage in Sexual Activity without Consent contrary to Section 216 of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	0	0
Causing Harassment, Alarm or Distress contrary to Section 89 of Crimes Act 2011	8	2	1	0	0
Causing, Encouraging or Assisting Child Prostitution or Pornography contrary to Section 263 of Crimes Act 2011	1	0	0	0	0
Causing, Encouraging or Assisting a Child under 13yrs to engage in Sexual Activity contrary to Section 220 of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	0	0
Common Assault contrary to Section 175 of Crimes Act 2011	120	150	127	123	11
Concealing Offences contrary to Section 49(1) of Crimes Act 2011				1	0
Controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship, contrary to Section 3(1) of the Domestic Abuse Act 2023.	0	0	11	18	2
Cruelty to Animals contrary to Section 5 of Animals Act	0	0	0	1	0
Cruelty to Young Persons contrary to Section 172 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	0	1	1
Destroying or Damaging Property: Value over £500 contrary to Section 354(1) of Crimes Act 2011	4	4	2	3	0
Destroying or Damaging Property: Value under £500 (attempted) contrary to Section 354(1) & 22 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	1	0	0
Destroying or Damaging Property: Value under £500 contrary to Section 354(1) of Crimes Act 2011	14	17	26	13	2
Disclosing, or threatening to disclose, private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress, contrary to Section 97B(1) of the Crimes Act 2011.	0	0	2	3	1

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 137

Disorderly or Indecent Conduct while Intoxicated contrary to Section 559 of Crimes Act 2011	1	1	2	1	0
False Imprisonment contrary to Section 189(2) of Crimes Act 2011	2	1	10	4	0
Fear or Provocation of Violence contrary to Section 58 of Crimes Act 2011	0	2	6	1	0
Fraud by False Representation contrary to Section 415 & 416 of Crimes Act 2011	1	0	2	2	0
Grievous Bodily Harm / Wounding with Intent contrary to Section 166 of Crimes Act 2011	3	4	6	1	0
Harassing Conduct contrary to Section 92 of Crimes Act 2011	14	22	18	17	3
Harassment of a person in a dwelling contrary to Section 97A (1) Crimes Act 2011	0	0	0	2	0
Improper use of Public Electronic Communications Network contrary to Section 97 of Crimes Act 2011	34	20	24	25	2
Intentional Harassment Alarm or Distress Contrary to Section 88. (1) (a) of the Crimes Act 2011	33	22	22	22	4
Intentional Harassment Alarm or Distress Contrary to Section 88. (1) (b) of the Crimes Act 2011	1	0	2	0	0
Interfering with Vehicles contrary to Section 410 of Crimes Act 2011	1	0	0	0	0
Intimidation, etc. of Witnesses, Jurors and Others contrary to Section 478 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	3	1	0
Kidnapping (attempted) contrary to Section 189(1) & 22 of Crimes Act 2011	1	0	0	3	0
Making Disturbances contrary to Section 82 of Crimes Act 2011	5	3	2	1	0
Murder (attempted) contrary to Section 149 & 22 of Crimes Act 2011			1	1	0
Non-Gibraltarian found in Gibraltar without a valid permit or certificate. Contrary to Section 12(1) and 62(A) of the Immigration Asylum and Refugee Act.	0	1	0	0	0
Possessing Firearm with Intent to Injure contrary to Section 23 of Firearms Act	0	0	0	1	0
Possession of a Controlled Class B Drug contrary to Section 506(2) of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	0	0
Possession of Article with Blade or Point in a Public Place contrary to Section 128 of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	1	0
Putting People in fear of Violence contrary to Section 94 of Crimes Act 2011	0	4	1	1	0
Rape (attempted) contrary to Section 213 & 22 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	1	1	0
Rape contrary to Section 213 of Crimes Act 2011	5	4	5	7	1
Rape of a Child under 13yrs contrary to Section 217 of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	0	0
Resisting or Obstructing Police contrary to Section 177(2) of Crimes Act 2011	1	5	1	1	0
Robbery contrary to Section 398 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	1	0	0
Sending letters, etc with intent to cause Distress / Anxiety contrary to Section 96 of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	0	0
Sexual Activity with a Child Family Member contrary to Section 236 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	1	0	0
Sexual Activity with a Child under the age of Sixteen contrary to Section 221(1) of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	0	1	0
Sexual Assault contrary to Section 215 of Crimes Act 2011	1	2	3	3	0
Stalking involving Fear of Violence or Serious Alarm or Distress contrary to Section 94A of the Crimes Act 2011.	0	0	4	1	0
Stalking. Contrary to Section 92A (1) Crimes Act 2011.	5	6	16	15	0
Strangulation, contrary to Section 167A(1)(a) of the Crimes Act 2011.	0	0	5	10	1
Suffocation, contrary to Section 167A(1)(b) of the Crimes Act 2011.	0	0	1	0	0
Taking a Conveyance without Authority contrary to Section 408 of	2	3	1	0	0

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 137

Crimes Act 2011					
Theft: Value over £500 contrary to Section 391 & 397 of Crimes Act 2011	0	3	5	3	1
Theft: Value under £500 contrary to Section 391 & 397 of Crimes Act 2011	1	5	9	10	1
Threats to Destroy or Damage Property contrary to Section 356 of Crimes Act 2011	1	3	2	0	0
Threats to Kill contrary to Section 157 of Crimes Act 2011	6	6	9	11	4
Throwing Missiles to the Damage / Danger of any Person contrary to Section 556(1)(b) of Crimes Act 2011	1	2	0	1	0
Trespassing on a Designated Site contrary to Section 545 of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	0	0	1
Unauthorised Access to Computer Material contrary to Section 362 of Crimes Act 2011	1	0	0	2	0
Unlawful Obtaining/Disclosure of Personal Data contrary to section 175 of the Data Protection Act 2004	0	0	0	0	1
Voyeurism contrary to Section 293 of Crimes Act 2011	2	0	0	1	0
Wasteful Employment of Police contrary to Section 49(3) of Crimes Act 2011	0	0	2	0	0
Wounding / Grievous Bodily Harm contrary to Section 167 of Crimes Act 2011	0	1	1	1	0

Q138/2025
Domestic Abuse Act 2023 –
Remaining provisions

Clerk: Question 138, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Could the Government state when it expects the remaining provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act 2023 to come into force?

Clerk: Answer of the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, I am informed that the RGP is actively looking at provisions required and liaising with other departments to ensure that all mechanisms are in place to fully implement the remaining provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act 2023.

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, I am grateful for that answer. Would the Hon. Minister be able to elaborate a bit further as to perhaps the resources or the provisions that are lacking or that are needed or that need to be put in place for the remaining parts of the legislation to come into force and perhaps could you be a bit more specific as to the timeframe?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I cannot be more specific on the timing because I do not have that information available. What I have said is that the RGP is liaising with relevant departments. The most relevant department undoubtedly is the Ministry for Housing.

I do, however, have some supplementary information as to what the legal issues are concerning the reason as to why this has to be handled with care and I am told and I am reading it out from the supplementary information available to me that the remaining provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act 2023 that needs to be commenced are the new provisions to create Domestic Abuse Protection Notices. These can be issued by senior police officers in urgent circumstances for a limited time where the perpetrator of domestic abuse could be made to leave the premises, in other words a flat which is currently vacant.

Hon. N Feetham: The court could move with the spouse or partner, and the person against whom the notice is made would then appear before the court, who would either issue a order or dismiss the notice. The other comments provisions of the Act also include the equivalent court orders which not only follow the issuing of notices but are also available in other court proceedings. There is no issue of constitutionality as to these orders as they are judicial in nature.

The GLO have advised that before the notices come into force and for them to be constitutional, i.e. those notices that relate to persons being asked to leave the premises, that there should be available an alternative place of residence for the alleged perpetrator for such time as the notice is in force and until it is a court order. Once it becomes a court order, it would be for the person to make their own arrangements.

Hon. A Sanchez: I am grateful for that answer Madam Speaker. In terms of the answer that the Hon. Minister has provided, would he be able to elaborate then on what measures in relation to housing and possible solutions the Government is looking into?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, that is a question which is more properly answered by my colleague, the Minister for Housing, so if the hon. Member opposite would choose to table a question in relation to that, I am sure it will be picked up by my colleague.

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that, but given that the Hon. Minister has said that the professionals that are involved with this matter are consulting with the housing authorities to find solutions, to find a way to be able to implement these, I am sure he must have some information in relation to this matter and the possible solutions that are being explored. Perhaps he would be able to share this across the floor, given the importance of the matter.

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Lady to my previous answer.

Madam Speaker: If the Hon. D J Bossino then I will come to the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am happy to do so.

Madam Speaker: No, no, the Hon. D J Bossino, go ahead.

Hon. D J Bossino: I did not see you, so I was focussing on the chair, making sure that I got it. It follows on from what my hon. Friend has just posed by way of a second and supplementary question. Can he at least say, can the Hon. Minister at least say this, is it that the implementation of the remaining provisions of this particular Act, is it the case that the implementation is being delayed by, in effect, the requirement to have the housing resources in place to cater for those individuals who are removed from the premises that they live in, in order to respond to the issue of the notice and to be able to provide the practical housing resources in order to be able to effect the eviction notice? Is that the only issue which is preventing the implementation of the remaining provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act?

Hon. N Feetham: The Hon Speaker, I understand that an MOU is being discussed and agreed between the relevant parties.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am afraid that does not suffice, and I do not think with the greatest respect to the Minister that he has answered the question. I have asked very specifically whether it is a question in effect of housing resources which is what is preventing the full implementation and the taking effect of this Act. The Hon. Minister answers on the basis of an MOU between relevant parties. That is a non-answer with the greatest respect to him.

Hon. N Feetham: I have said previously that if notice of a question is tabled, then the Hon. Minister with responsibility for housing can address the matter more fully. Therefore, I refer the hon. Member to my previous answer.

Hon. D J Bossino: The Hon. Minister is the Minister responsible for justice. The Hon. Minister was assigned this question by my hon. Friend, Mrs Sanchez. The question was raised specifically about the implementation of the remaining provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act.

He then preys in aid the consultation which has to happen with the relevant departments, in this case the Housing Department. All I am asking the Hon. Minister to say and confirm is that I, as Minister for Justice, am unable to implement the remaining provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act because I simply do not have the housing stock available to house the people that I evict as a result of the implementation of the notices.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, the hon. Mrs Atrish Sanchez has not assigned any question to the Hon. Minister. I have, because I am the one who decides which Minister answers. So the hon. Gentleman's remarks were wrong, first, in that respect, and second, because the question relates to the Domestic Abuse Act.

The supplementary has been specifically about Housing. So Madam Speaker, I would say that the Hon. Minister for Justice, who is assigned that portfolio by me and not by anybody else, is rightly pointing the hon. Gentleman to suggest that his supplementary might be better as a question on the Order Paper to the Minister for Housing rather than as a supplementary to the Minister for Justice. I hope that he understands that that is the best way for him to get the answer to his question, which may not necessarily be the answer that he has suggested rhetorically at the end of his question is the answer he believes he would get.

Hon. D J Bossino: Madam Speaker, I have absolutely no quarrel with the way the questions are assigned and the Hon. Chief Minister is wrong to assume that that is what I was assuming on this side of the House. I have absolutely no quarrel with a specific question being asked of the Hon. Minister for Housing but the reality is that this supplementary question is absolutely relevant and it arises from the answer that the Hon. Minister gave, and I will try once again.

Is it the case that he is telling us, as the Minister responsible for justice, who was assigned this question for answer, is it the case that the position is that the Domestic Abuse Act provisions, which are still unimplemented, is as a result of the lack of resources which have to be provided by housing? I think that that is what the Hon. Minister was saying, but he is not willing to provide an answer. In addition, may I also ask him this, which other relevant departments is the Hon. Minister referring to?

He says other relevant departments, then he says the most relevant departments is Housing. Which other departments is the Hon. Minister referring to?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, no to the first question, and I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer we gave a few moments ago.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. J Ladislaus had a question.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, my understanding is that, as it stands, when there is a crime committed and a person is brought before a court, a lot of the time bail conditions are imposed. We have just heard the Hon. Minister say to this House that part of the reason why these clauses have not been commenced yet is because we are awaiting accommodation, because otherwise it would make these notices unconstitutional.

What I ask the Hon. Minister to clarify is what difference is there between these clauses and bail conditions that are normally set by court.

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I do not have that information available to me.

Madam Speaker: Yes, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister be able to perhaps provide information to the House as to whether the announcement by the Government a few months ago, weeks ago, in relation to the half-way house, the bridge house that is being considered, whether it is going to be used as a possible solution to this?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I again refer the hon. Member to the previous answer. If she tables that question to my colleague the Minister with responsibility for Housing, I am sure that she will make that information available to her.

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, I am grateful for your answer, but we are genuinely trying to be constructive here. We have asked the Hon. Minister a question in relation to the Domestic Abuse Act, and in his reply he has stated that the relevant professionals are in consultation with the Housing Department because of the issues that they are experiencing. In this consultation, I am sure that as a Minister with responsibility for Justice, he must have information in relation to the possible solutions. If he does not want to share the information, that is another matter.

Madam Speaker: The question is... Finish the question...

Hon. A Sanchez: ...Does he not want to give information in relation to this. is that his position?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, the position remains as I set out a few moments ago. There is a lot happening in the world. There are issues that matter greatly to people who suffer from domestic abuse.

For us to be in this House making light and laughing about these issues, when all we have asked is that hon. Members put formal notice of a question to the Minister for Housing, if what they want is an answer in relation to the Ministry for Housing, is really quite remarkable and, frankly, from the point of view of the Government, quite unedifying.

Madam Speaker: We have had 10 supplementaries. Next question.

Q139-41/2025

**Discrimination offences or hate crimes –
By a person's: race; religion; sexual orientation**

Clerk: Question 139, the Hon J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many persons have been charged with offences protecting persons against discrimination or hate crimes by way of a person's race in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021, (iii) 2022, (iv) 2023, (v) 2024, (vi) 2025 to date?

Clerk: Answer of the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 140 and 141.

Clerk: Question 140, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many persons have been charged with offences protecting persons against discrimination or hate crimes by way of a person's religion in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021, (iii) 2022, (iv) 2023, (v) 2024, (vi) 2025 to date?

Clerk: Question 141, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many persons have been charged with offences protecting persons against discrimination or hate crimes by way of a person's sexual orientation in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021, (iii) 2022, (iv) 2023, (v) 2024, (vi) 2025 to date?

Clerk: Answer of the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, the number of persons charged with offences committed during incidents where discrimination or hate was identified relating to a person's race in each calendar year since 2020 is as follows: 2020, 1; 2021, 5; 2022, 2; 2023, 6; 2024, 1; 2025, 1.

The number of persons charged with offences committed during incidents where discrimination or hate was identified relating to a person's religion in each calendar year since 2020 is as follows: 2020, 2; 2021, 0; 2022, 1; 2023, 0; 2024, 0; and 2025, 0.

The number of persons charged with offences committed during incidents where discrimination or hate was identified relating to a person's sexual orientation in each calendar year since 2020 is as follows: 2020, 1; 2021, none; 2022, 4; 2023, none; 2024, none; and 2025 to date, none.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q142/2025
RGP –
Designated LGBTQ+ liaison officer

Clerk: Question 142, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, does the RGP still have a designated LGBTQ+ liaison officer? If not, since when has this been the case?

Clerk: Answer of the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, yes, the RGP still has a designated LGBTQ+ liaison officer. The role is currently held by the Police Sergeant of the RGP's Community Policing Unit.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, just to correct myself, that in fact should read LGBTQIA+ plus, but I'm referring back to 2020, which is when this role was established in the RGP, which is why I have not mentioned IA+, which have since then been added to this acronym, as I understand it. So, Madam Speaker, my question...

Madam Speaker: The original question was posed as LGBTQ+.

Hon. J Ladislaus: The reason for that is because I was referring back to when the role was established within the RGP, which was 2020.

And since then, the acronym has added IA + to that acronym. So now it would be correct to say LGBTQIA+. (**Hon. N Feetham:** Is there a question for me?) Yes, there is a question.

We have heard that the role is now held by the Community Sergeant. Is that different to when it was first established in 2020, when it was held by a police constable?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I do not have that information available to me. If you table notice of the question, then I will provide an answer.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Perhaps the Minister has this information. Has the role been, should we say, added to the responsibilities of another officer who already has existing roles of his own and responsibilities, or her own?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Member to my previous answer.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q143/2025
RGP Drug Squad Officers–
Redeployment

Clerk: Question 143, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Given the redeployment of the RGP's Drug Squad Officers in 2023-24, due to competing operational priorities and demand levels in other sectors of policing, what is being done to

provide the RGP with the resources to tackle drug crime more effectively than they were able to last year?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, as this Parliament is aware, the decision to redeploy the drug squad officers has been an operational decision by the Commissioner of Police. However, this does not mean that the RGP is not tackling drug crime. Madam Speaker, the Commissioner of Police has emphasised that dealing with drug crime continues to be a priority for the RGP.

This is stated in the RGP's annual policing plan, with the Operations Division having assumed this responsibility. This means that response teams, which are 24/7 uniformed officers together with the Marine Section, continue to be the frontline in tackling drugs. Notwithstanding this, the RGP is not the only law enforcement agency engaged with tackling crime linked to drugs.

Agencies such as HM Customs have an important role to play. HM Customs operates multiple reliefs, which provide 24-hour coverage at the Four Corners Station for non-commercial movement of persons and goods across the frontier, the airport for passengers of private aircraft, commercial vessels and families at the port, and land patrols throughout Gibraltar. Customs also has a 24-hour presence at sea, which patrols British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, coastlines and marinas.

In addition, the organisation has an operations unit that works closely with the RGP. This involves officers from the flexible anti-smuggling team and the drug detection dogs with their respective handlers. In addition, this Government is supporting the RGP to recruit 10 Command and Dispatch Police Support Officers and 5 Detention Police Support Officers.

I am informed that this will lead to the release of 15 police officers to frontline policing in the next four months. This commitment will allow the Commissioner of Police to redeploy his officers where he operationally thinks the risks are high. Furthermore, I am informed that the RGP are currently recruiting police constables, a process which is underway and further demonstrates this Government's commitment to resourcing the RGP.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, may I refer the Hon. Minister to the latest Policing Report. I quote from that Policing Report where it states:

The past year has seen the RGP Drug Squad Officers redeployed due to competing operational priorities and demand levels in other sectors of policing.

Which is what the Hon. Minister has said, but it goes on:

This has had a major impact of our effectiveness in this area of policing. We continue to target drug suppliers on a reactive intelligence based approach.

Then it goes on:

Drug misuse. The 161 drug misuse offences recorded in the past year is a 21% reduction on the year before. Though we would like to say this is due to a decrease in drug use, this is not likely to be the true reflection of the local drug market and more as a result of the reduction in the resources available to tackle this issue.

This reduction in resources is due to the need to redeploy assets to meet other policing priorities.

Can the Hon. Minister confirm that it is because the RGP simply did not have the resources available to it in order to tackle drugs and that is the reason why they were forced to redeploy officers. Could the Hon. Minister clarify that position?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, not in our view because the RGP has more resources that they have ever had before.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker is it the Hon. Ministers position therefore that things have not changed around the world because if we the more officers than we have before, could the Hon. Minister agree that perhaps that is due to changing policing demands around the world?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, we have had previous questions in this House in relation to this in the past and the reality is that policing is an operational matter for the Commissioner of Police. I had a discussion with him last week although he was not well and he reassured me that he has enough resources available to him including the additional resources that the Police are recruiting, to deal with the demands of policing in Gibraltar.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, is it the case therefore that the RGP have not submitted any, should we call them business cases, for further resources in the past 12 months? Is that the case? Is that what the Hon. Minister is saying?

Hon. N Feetham: Not in relation to this specific matter, Madam Speaker.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Does the Hon. Minister agree that this specific matter is impacted by resourcing in other areas because officers have to be redeployed and therefore it is a resource issue.

Hon. N Feetham: It is a resource issue like every other resource within the RGP. When officers leave clearly there is a gap created. What the Government has done is given commitments to the RGP to ensure that resourcing is at the point where the Police can discharge their overall responsibility to the public.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. C Sacarello had a question? The Hon. Leader of the Opposition?

Hon Dr. K Azopardi: Given that the conclusions or the observations made in the report that my hon. Colleague asked earlier, which are quite serious, in the sense that it is saying that the reduction in crimes noted in this area is not because there has been a reduction of crime, but rather because of resources issues, and given that obviously the operational matters for the Police but financial resources are for the Government, will the Minister discuss the matter once again with the Commissioner of Police, in relation to specifically, the comments that have been made in that particular report, as to whether it needs, therefore, a reassessment of the Government's position on the allocation of financial resources to the Police.

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, this is a matter of constant discussion between the Government and indeed the Commissioner specially now with the next budget round.

Hon Dr. K Azopardi: Can I just ask in his original answer, the hon. Member talked about 10, he called, command and dispatch officers, something like that, and then there was another 5 individuals which would lead to the redeployment of 15 Police officers. Can I ask him, when he called them, I think correctly, command and dispatch officers, presumably he means these are civilian posts, administrative posts to support the Police in a particular area which will redeploy Police officers. So it is not an increase in Police officers but a redeployment of Police officers. When will that happen?

Hon. N Feetham: The recruitment is underway so I would expect for that to happen shortly.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. C Sacarello has a question?

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you Madam Speaker. Drugs can sadly have a devastating impact on individuals and their families. It is common knowledge. Can the Hon. Minister please offer some clarity and reassurance to the House that of those 15 officers that had to be redeployed at least a fair proportion of those will be designated drug squad officers because notwithstanding the great effort the other agencies are putting into preventing the ingress of drugs into Gibraltar, we do nonetheless need feet on the ground to tackle this problem.

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, when I have discussions with the Commissioner of Police on certain matters and I recommend to the Commissioner in the terms that the Hon. Member has put it to me, I am reminded that the Police is operationally independent from the Government. One has to be careful.

Is it my preference that the police should put resources into this area? Personally, yes. I agree with the hon. Member but I cannot give a direction to the Police Commissioner.

Policing is a matter for the Commissioner and the operational independence of the police is paramount.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q144/2025
Criminal trials –
Support to jurors

Clerk: Question 144, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: What support is available to jurors at the conclusion of a criminal trial during which they may have listened to and had to consider harrowing and traumatic evidence?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Hon. N Feetham: Upon request, jurors are provided with counselling support by the GHA.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Is that support or the offer of that support, are jurors made aware of that prior to commencing jury service?

Hon. N Feetham: I do not have that information available to me. I wish I could say yes but if I did I would be misleading the House.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q145/2025

Criminal Trials –

Support to victims of sexual abuse and witnesses

Clerk: Question 145, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: What support is on offer to victims of sexual abuse and witnesses before, during and after a criminal trial has concluded?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, a range of specialised support services are available to victims of sexual abuse, including witnesses, ensuring they receive the necessary assistance before, during and after a criminal trial. These services are delivered through the Gibraltar Health Authority and the Care Agency. Furthermore, prior to and during criminal proceedings, there are special measures that can be applied to support victims and witnesses.

Victims and witnesses can access tailored support services during, before and after criminal trials. The GHA and the Care Agency work closely with the RGP to ensure that those affected are signposted to appropriate services as early as possible. This can include access to mental health support. Victims of sexual abuse have access to support as required. If immediate assistance is needed, the Mental Health Crisis Team in St Bernadette's Hospital will assess and support the victim before and during the initial stages. If long-term support or trauma management is required, this will follow a multidisciplinary team support that may include psychology, psychiatry, nursing, etc.

Sexual health services victims are normally referred to the sexual health clinic by forensic medical examiners or by self-referral. Once referred, a comprehensive consultation with risk assessments is provided. This includes sexual health tests in the necessary timeframes, as well as follow-up care such as vaccinations, starting or continuing HIV post-exposure treatment, emergency and ongoing contraception, and referrals to specialists if needed, such as counselling.

Therapeutic support. The Care Agency Therapeutic Team provides specialist trauma-informed therapy for victims and their families, ensuring emotional and psychological support is in place. The team works alongside social workers on any open case pertinent to all clients who have been abused, including sexual abuse. Victims and families are offered both systemic and individual work from a trauma-informed perspective.

Under the Crimes Act, special measures are available during criminal proceedings to assist vulnerable victims and witnesses in giving their best evidence. I am informed by the RGP that, to date, anyone who has requested these measures has received them. These include screening witnesses from defendant, evidence by live link, evidence given in private, removal of wigs and gowns, video record evidence in chief, video record cross-examination or re-examination, examination of witness through intermediary, aids to communication.

Support services remain available to victims and witnesses beyond the conclusion of criminal proceedings. Those requiring ongoing therapeutic intervention can continue to receive specialist counselling and psychological support from the GHA and the Care Agency. By ensuring a multi-agency approach, victims and witnesses receive continuous support at every stage, from the initial report through to the aftermath of a trial, helping them navigate the legal process and receive the support required to rebuild their lives.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful. One question... The support services that victims and their families continue to receive post the trial process, is there a limit or is that indefinite support?

Hon. N Feetham: I do not have that information available. If the hon. Member wishes to give notice of that question, I will seek the information for her.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q146/2025

Sex offenders –

Resources to assist in monitoring offenders in the community

Clerk: Question 146, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Given the rise in recent years in the number of sex offenders residing within Gibraltar, have MAPPA designated risk managers submitted a business case in the past two years for further resources to assist in monitoring offenders in the community?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Hon. N Feetham: I have consulted with the Commissioner of Police who oversees MAPPA. The Commissioner has confirmed that no such business case or formal request has been made by the DRMs during this period. Furthermore, after a thorough evaluation, the Commissioner has determined that the current resources are adequate for the effective monitoring of offenders within our community.

It is important to note that these are operational decisions for the Commissioner. The hon. Member's question references an increase in the number of sex offenders residing in Gibraltar. While there have been fluctuations in the number of registered sex offenders over the past years, namely 43 in 2023, 41 in 2024 and 38 in 2025, these variations are influenced by multiple factors.

These include enhanced detection capabilities of the RGP, leading to more local convictions as well as individuals relocating to or visiting Gibraltar who have prior convictions. It is important to understand that the number of registered sex offenders can therefore vary at any given time, including because persons may no longer be in Gibraltar or on the list and with offenders also detained in His Majesty's Prison following prosecution or conviction. In a previous Parliamentary session last year, I highlighted the continuous efforts and training undertaken by MAPPA agencies to enhance their capabilities in managing offenders.

Building upon these initiatives, I am pleased to inform this House that a new dedicated Public Protection Unit facility has been established at Unit 99 New Harbours. This facility is now ready for occupation and will serve as the central hub for the RGP's Public Protection Unit. This development exemplifies the Government's commitment to supporting the RGP and enhancing our public protection infrastructure.

In summary, the current resources bolstered by improved facilities are deemed sufficient and effective by the Commissioner of Police and this is reflected in the excellent work undertaken by the RGP's Public Protection Unit. With the inauguration of the new Public Protection Unit facility, the RGP will actively engage in community outreach initiatives to raise awareness by the public about the existing structures and processes designed to safeguard our community.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker I do not know whether the Hon. Minister will have this information here, now but... How many offenders are designated to each of these MAPPA risk managers? It is precisely because numbers fluctuate, and they can fluctuate quite quickly, that I am concerned. There have been a number of high-profile cases recently in the press, cases have commenced recently as well, and cases have just concluded also within this area.

I ask how many are designated to each of those managers?

Hon. N Feetham: I do not have that information available to me, but the hon. Member has referred to cases that are coming before the courts and indeed cases that have resulted in convictions. I did read the public statements of the hon. Member made last week, including the Gibraltar Chronicle and the RGP. We have got to be careful that we do not misinform the people of Gibraltar on factual information.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Could the Hon. Minister perhaps clarify what is meant by misinformation? I am unaware as to where I have misinformed the public.

Hon. N Feetham: Yes indeed, I will answer this question. In a Chronicle article, the hon. Member opposite referred to SARA's law. She said very publicly in that article, and I have got the article here and I am quite happy to quote from the article, and she repeated it also on GBC that Gibraltar was in need to implement SARA's law in Gibraltar, and indeed she referred to the implementation of legislation.

I referred the hon. Member to the answer that I gave in this House last year, I believe it was in September, when I said that Gibraltar has an equivalent process that results in the same outcome as her reference to SARA's law. She also referred to legislation, Madam Speaker, but SARA's law is not legislation in the UK. It is the implementation of processes, Madam Speaker, and there are relevant processes in Gibraltar.

Therefore, I would caution the hon. Member opposite that when she makes public statements that she actually ascertains what the facts are. I have got all the relevant excerpts here, the Gibraltar Chronicle, the GBC interview, and indeed a press release issued by the Party opposite, all of which were factually incorrect in material terms, Madam Speaker.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, my article, and I do refer the Hon. Minister to the article, in my article I quote, and as we do, and as I did on GBC as well, I quoted, and in fact I quoted verbatim from Hansard, the answer that I had been given by the Hon. Minister. Now, my suggestion was that we implement a scheme that was more formal than what we currently have in place, because the Hon. Minister had explained that the scheme was very much like SARA's law in the UK, but that we then went on to say that we did not need a scheme like SARA's law. So which is it, Madam Speaker?

If the Hon. Minister could perhaps clarify what is meant by that, because that is precisely what I was referring to, and if one looks back at Hansard, one can see that exchange back in September.

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I will quote from the article. The article is full of inconsistencies. On the one hand, the hon. Member opposite says one thing, and then later on in the article she says something completely different.

I am referring to the references in the article that I quote, where she talks about information being made available to stakeholders in Gibraltar. She says, and [*inaudible*] entitlement to access whatsoever to information which could play a crucial role in safeguarding children and the most vulnerable which is the current position here in Gibraltar. Madam Speaker, that is factually incorrect. Then, in her GBC interview, and I can do a forensic examination of this, Madam Speaker, perhaps we will bring a motion to this House to demonstrate how factually incorrect were the statements of the hon. Member made to the media last week.

In her GBC interview, and I am just reading here two of the parts, and there are other inconsistencies, she refers to the potential introduction of SARA's law, and we do not have a parallel of that in Gibraltar. Madam Speaker, that is what she says. I am quoting, and then in the press release, Madam Speaker, in the press release she says, and I am quoting from the press release of the Party

opposite, Madam Speaker, there is a reference here, that says the Government replied, in other words, that I replied in this House that no such legislation should be introduced in Gibraltar.

What I did say, Madam Speaker, and I got a copy of Hansard here, was that the processes that we have in place in Gibraltar are processes that mirror SARA's law. In fact, last week, over the holiday period, I sought advice again from relevant stakeholders, and I am assured by the Commissioner of Police that the processes that are in place as far as he is concerned, and as far as the Police are concerned, are appropriate and adequate. We also sought advice from an external consultant who made the same point.

All I would suggest, Madam Speaker, is that the hon. Members opposite have to be very careful not to inflame public opinion in Gibraltar, because this is a very sensitive subject, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, we are certainly not trying to inflame public opinion. The hon. Member does not need to worry about that. When my hon. Colleague speaks about sex offenders and sex offenders lists, it is because not only is she concerned and members on this side are concerned, but it reflects public concern on this issue, as he will be aware.

Can I ask him something more specific? He has clearly come to this House to at least give the impression that he is well aware of the processes. So can I ask him, I do not know if he gave it in his original answer, but in so far as processes are concerned, because of the oscillating nature of the amount of sex offenders who might be residing in Gibraltar and so on, when someone who is on a foreign sex offenders list comes to live in Gibraltar, is there some kind of protocol or regulations by which the RGP would be informed of that arrival of a person?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, if the hon. member tables a question, I will provide the information so that we ensure that there is no misunderstanding. But let me say this, the hon. Leader of the Opposition does not seem to listen to GBC, because there was an interview two weeks ago by one of the officers, a female officer of the RGP, that addressed these very same points and she took the interviewer through what the processes were in relation to the monitoring of any sexual offenders that visited Gibraltar. Obviously he does not listen to GBC and therefore on this occasion I will refer him to that interview, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I am grateful that he refers me to that interview, but does he not agree that if I did not listen to that interview because I missed it, he who listened to the interview cannot even recall what it said?

Hon. N Feetham: No, Madam Speaker, not at all. I refer him to the interview precisely because she gives very detailed information that obviously the hon. Leader of the Opposition is not even aware of.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, if there was an answer, then surely he can answer my question, which is what is the process when a foreign offender on a foreign sex offenders list comes to live in Gibraltar? What is it then, if he is aware of it? Tell the House!

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, he is well aware of what the rules of the House are... That information is publicly available information.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q147/2025
Overtime –
Outstanding payments

Clerk: Question 147, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Can the Hon. Minister with responsibility for Postal Services confirm if there are any outstanding payments to be made to employees for the overtime work carried out in December 2024? Can the Minister please explain the reason behind the delay, if any, and when they will be paid?

Clerk: Answer the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, overtime payments in Government have always been paid in two-month arrears and therefore all overtime carried out in December 2024 would have been paid in February 2025.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I would just like to thank the Minister for clarification on the policy, in which case it seems to be failing for some constituents. I will, with his leave, pass all their details on to him, perhaps for his help.

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, was that a question? Sorry, apologies. Sorry, apologies, what was the question? Sorry.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, the question I asked was that there are some workers who have been failed by this policy, they have not yet been paid their overtime for work in December 2024, and would the Hon. Minister assist in ensuring that this is addressed?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, this is my responsibility as Minister for Public Finances. Nobody has been failed by anything. Everybody is paid in this way, two months in arrears. So I cannot imagine that the hon. Gentleman's question has any logic to it whatsoever.

Madam Speaker: All right, before we move on to the next question, I am just coming back to Question 137. Does the Hon. A Sanchez or any other hon. Member have any supplementary questions on Question 137? No? Anybody else? Next question.

Q148/2025
Sex offenders –
Resources to assist in monitoring offenders in the community

Clerk: Question 148, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: The Hon. Minister Feetham recently announced a projected record £160 million revenue in corporate tax envisaged to be collected this year. Can the Minister please confirm what percentage of this growth is attributable to the Government's recent budget measure to increase the corporate tax rate from 12.5% to 15%?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, I recently announced that the estimated company tax yield for the financial year 2024-2025 would be at least £160 million. I am informed by the Tax Office that this growth is not attributable to the Government's recent budget measures to increase the corporate tax rate from 12.5% to 15%.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, how is that possible that none of this increases due to the increase in 2.5%?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, it is because it is the way that the tax rules operate. So, I will give you the technical explanation if you want. This is the explanation that has been given to me by the Tax Office.

I do have, I think, a strong tax background but some of these technical aspects are not matters which I can restate without reading the supplementary information because they do relate to year of assessments and accounting periods.

So, payments within this period are not within the scope of this increased corporate income tax rate given that this legislation was not yet effective for the basis periods concerned.

The earliest tax payments in 2024-2025 for the month of April 2024 related to the 31st of July 2023 basis period. So, therefore, it predates the legislation enacted. The latest tax payments for 2024-2025 for the month of March 2025 related to the 30th of June 2024 basis period.

So, it predates the introduction of the enactment. The advance payment due by the 30th of September 2024 related to the 2023 basis period. Again, predating the introduction of the legislation.

The advance payment due by the 28th of February 2025 relates to 2023 and pre-July 2024 basis periods. For all those reasons, Madam Speaker, the answer is as I have communicated to the hon. Member opposite.

Madam Speaker: Next Question.

Q149/2025
Taxable profits –
Total amounts generated

Clerk: Question 149, the Hon C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Can the Hon. Minister confirm the total amount of taxable profits generated by corporates for the years 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25, the latter being the projected figure upon which the figure of £160 million was generated. Please break these figures down into two categories. Small businesses with a turnover of less than £10.2 million and all other businesses with a turnover of over £10.2 million.

Clerk: Answer the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, the hon. Member refers to the “total level of taxable profits”, not the total tax revenues. However, I provide both figures in case that is what he intended to ask. As the hon. Member will know, taxable profits and actual tax revenues are not the same.

Tax revenue by financial year turn-over less than £10.2 million. For the 2022-23 financial year, the tax revenue was £57.6 million. For the financial year 2023-24, the total tax revenue was £69.6 million. For the financial year 2024-25, the tax revenue was £44.5 million. Turnover more than £10.2 million. For the financial year 2022-23, the total tax revenue was £101.8 million. For the financial year 2023-

24, the tax revenue was £76.6 million. For the financial year 2024-25, the total tax revenue was £97 million. Now, if we turn to taxable profits by financial year, the turnover was less than £10.2 million, which is the question that the hon. Member asked. For the financial year 2022-23, taxable profits were £400.2 million. For the financial year 2023-24, the taxable profits were £559.1 million. For the financial year 2024-25, taxable profits were £702 million. The turnover than £10.2 million. For the financial year 2022-23, taxable profits were £1758 million. For the financial year 2023-24, taxable profits were £2,513 million. For the financial year 2024-25, taxable profits were £2,067 million.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q150/2025
Income Tax –
PAYE levels

Clerk: Question 150, the Hon C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: The Hon. Minister Feetham recently declared income tax has gone down. Will the Minister acknowledge that, in reality, PAYE levels have only been lowered back to where they once were, as a direct result of having been raised in the first place by this Government by 2% in 2022, as a temporary COVID recovery measure?

Clerk: Answer the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Hon. N Feetham: The hon. Member wrongly attributes to me the statement that income tax has gone down. If he intends to suggest that the overall income tax, i.e. PAYE revenue, has decreased, this is simply not the case. The year-to-date personal income tax yield for the financial year 2024-25, covering the period 1 April 2024 to today, stands at £220.2 million, compared to £213 million for the year 2023-24. This demonstrates that, despite the reduction in tax rates, revenue has actually increased. The hon. Member refers to the COVID-related uplift introduced in 2022, but tax rates, like all fiscal measures, fluctuate over time, depending on economic conditions and policy decisions. What matters is the outcome.

The Government has successfully reduced personal tax, i.e. PAYE rates, while delivering higher revenue. This is no small achievement, considering that when we announced this reduction in the last Budget, we estimated this to be worth £17 million. This Government has ensured that we can reduce PAYE tax rates while maintaining and even improving revenue collection.

That is the real point here. Additionally, I would remind the hon. Gentleman that the COVID debt was acquired with the full support of his party at the time. Whilst we may all agree tomorrow, we must surely all agree that it must be paid back.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker I thank, first of all, the Hon. Minister for his reply and his pointers but I am afraid he has misinterpreted the question. I am surprised he cannot remember his own radio interview only a few weeks back in which he made the statement saying that income tax has gone down. I am surprised that he did not glean from the question that I was referring to, because it was in the public domain, made by himself. Nonetheless, perhaps I will give him a chance to correct the statement and answer the question properly.

I would just like to add additionally to that that the PAYE in fact has actually gone up for people in real terms, given that under the GIBS, the Gross Income Based System, the tax bands, particularly at the lower end where it is most keenly felt, have remained pretty constant for this Government's tenure, dating back to 2011. Would the Minister not agree that this in effect is an increase in tax due

to fiscal drag on those that need it most, where the cost of living is keenly felt and will he and his Government not agree to do something about it by helping working people take home more in their pocket?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, first of all, I did not misunderstand the question. I did not misunderstand the question by the hon. Member. He did refer in his question to me having said and declared that income tax has gone down.

You could interpret a statement of that nature to mean that I have suggested that income tax collection has gone down. Therefore, by reference to that particular statement, Madam Speaker, I made it a point of putting before this House factual information which shows that despite the statement that the hon. Member has made in this House, income tax collections have gone up. I then acknowledge the fact that I did say in the interview that the tax rate had gone down.

He is referring to the income tax having gone down but I also said in my answer, Madam Speaker, that tax rates go up and tax rates go down. Therefore, is he trying to level criticism of the Government because the Government decides to reduce tax rates?

Let me remind this House, Madam Speaker, if I can, because if he is going to give a lesson to those of us on this side of the House as to what we should do in terms of tax policy, perhaps I ought to remind the hon. Member that the rates of tax were reduced significantly by those who were here on this side of the House in previous administrations since 2011, and I have got the information here, Madam Speaker, the Government has since 2012 systematically reduced personal income tax rates for the lower-paying in our economy.

The rates have dropped as follows under the allowance-based system, Madam Speaker. The highest rate of tax from 40% to 39%. The mid-range rate of tax from 30% to 17%. The lowest rate of tax from 17% to 14%.

Madam Speaker, if we are going to get lessons in tax history, can I remind this House that this Government removed the 5% rate under the gross income tax system for the ultra-wealthy that was in place prior to 2011. I know that the hon. Member from a sedentary position say that is brilliant. Thank you very much for acknowledging the fact that the work that was done by my predecessors on this side of the House is brilliant.

Equally, Madam Speaker, instead of chastising us for actually saying publicly that we expect record tax receipts, and indeed that at the same time as we expect record corporate tax receipts, and as of today we also have increased personal tax collections in comparison to last year, perhaps he ought to congratulate us instead of asking a question as to why I said in a GBC interview that we have reduced tax rates by 2% and that is something that we ought to acknowledge, the very reverse thing to what I have actually stated here today, Madam Speaker, and it is he that clearly didn't understand the interview and comes up with questions which are totally irrelevant and from a historical perspective factually incorrect.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for that and also point out that I find it hugely ironic that only a few questions ago in my hon. Friend's Question 146, one of the replies of the Minister to this supplementary was, be factual with the information given, perhaps he should take heed of his own advice in these radio interviews and perhaps tell the last bit of the sentence which was, we have lowered it to where it was a few years back. I would like to ask again the question because this question was not answered, there were facts given on the allowance-based system but not on the GIBS, the gross income-based system, where the stats state, just for factual correctness and completeness, for incomes up to £25,000 per annum, the first band has been £10,000 since 2009-2010.

In other words, not their administration. The second band was £16,000 which was increased to £17,000 in 2011 and since then none have been increased under the GIBS. So the question I reiterate

is, will the Government not look at addressing this problem on fiscal drag for those that most keenly feel it, that salaries under £25,000 and raise those tax bands?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, it is an entirely new question. That is not a supplementary question based on the original question and therefore I think it is more appropriate either that you give notice of the question and you table a question in the terms that has been articulated by the hon. Member or you wait for the Budget debate and we all have a debate around tax policy. Let me say this, Madam Speaker, there is no animosity in anything that I have said. Please take it whether to the hon. Member opposite or indeed to the hon. Member with responsibility for Justice.

In two weeks' time we are off to that Parliamentary Conference and I hope that we will be able to have dinner together and we can have a discussion on fiscal policy. I would love that very much indeed,

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q151/2025
Income tax –
Amount collected

Q152/2025
Company tax –
Amount collected

Clerk: Question 151, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: I am jealous, Madam Speaker. Sorry. Madam Speaker, can the Government advise the amount of income tax collected in the following month being January 2025?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 152.

Clerk: Question 152, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government advise the amount of company tax collected in the following month being January 2025?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, as we are now in the final quarter of the year the Government will wait until the end of the quarter to provide the figures in order to ensure they are reliable.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, the Government had no such problem providing the numbers last year and they have no such concern as to reliability. Does the Minister have any other reason as to why the Government is no longer willing to provide this information across the floor of the House? In fact, the Minister may perhaps inadvertently not realise he has already given me those numbers in respect of corporate tax. **(Hon. N Feetham: Personal Tax.)** No corporate tax in his answer to question

149 when you gave the numbers to date. All I have to do is take the difference and that will give me the amount for the month of January. So, Madam Speaker, I will ask the Minister again.

Can he please give us the information as requested, as the Government has provided us in the past?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, as the Government has said in the past, these numbers are not reliable until the end of the year. We are already starting the budgetary process. I am already having meetings with different Ministers and different Departments.

Numbers fluctuate, in particular in numbers in relation to revenue. They are booked at a particular rate. They sometimes go up and down.

We are in the last quarter, so for all of those reasons, Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer that my hon. Colleague has given. That is the Government's position. We are going to finalise the accounts for the year in less than 35 days.

There we will be able to give more reliable figures, which will be final.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, given that we on this side of the House have quite happily accepted the caveat, as these numbers have always been provided across the floor before, that they may be unreliable. I am willing to accept that, Madam Speaker. I am not asking for the actual exact final numbers.

What I am asking is for an indication. The Government has been quite happy to provide this in the past, Madam Speaker. Now suddenly they decide, well, no, we are not going to give it to you because it is the last quarter of the year.

Well, why the last quarter of the year? Why not the last half of the year? Why not the first quarter of the year?

Madam Speaker, I really do not understand why the Government suddenly has adopted this policy of not providing information. Is there anything more that the Government can provide other than I will refer you to my previous answer?

Hon. Chief Minister: No, Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. He is right to say that we should not take this attitude just in relation to the last quarter of the year. The figures are unreliable. They can lead to an impression being created as to revenue, which is then not going to be made out accurately. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I will accept the hon. Gentleman's point and will no longer be providing these figures at all.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, the Chief Minister has managed to completely distort what I said. I said we were willing to accept the numbers with the caveat that they might be unreliable. We are not asking for the final numbers.

I am not inviting him not to give them to us. In fact, the practise has been over the last year and in fact up to the last session of Parliament, the last month, that the Government was willing to provide these numbers. I really do not see why suddenly the Government has decided to adopt a policy of not giving us this information.

I mean, rather than laughing with his colleague, perhaps he could provide some serious answer to this Parliament, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Chief Minister: Really, Madam Speaker, I have given the Parliament a serious answer about the reliability of figures, about the Government not wanting to provide figures which cannot be relied upon, and for that reason, Madam Speaker, accepting the hon. Gentleman's point that it is not necessarily right to say that we will not give them in the last quarter because they are not reliable, we should take the same view in relation to the full period of the year. We provide the figures, we provide the figures when they are reconciled and reliable, and we shall do exactly that, Madam Speaker.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, I put the Chief Minister on notice that I intend to continue filing these questions, and I continue to come to this House and tell us that he will not give us the numbers.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I will put the hon. Gentleman on notice that I shall give the hon. Gentleman exactly the same answer, that the Government is intent in the public having the information when it is reliable, not when it is unreliable, that the Government publishes more figures than have ever been published before, that these figures will be published as they were published in the past, Madam Speaker, which is when they are reliable, that the Government will therefore ensure that all of the information provided to this House is information which is entirely reliable and can be referred to in the future by hon. Members as being figures which have been given on the basis of them being final figures, and not give what is in effect a management account on the day-to-day or month-to-month accounts of the Government as to revenue. The hon. Gentleman may wish to have more information, but unfortunately the people of Gibraltar have decided, on the three or four occasions when he has asked them to make him a Minister, where he would have access to all that information, that they prefer that we should have access to it, not him, and therefore however many times he files the questions, which will only be, Madam Speaker, not as often as he likes, but as often as you like that he should be able to do so, he is on notice that we shall continue to give him this answer.

Hon. R M Clinton: Well, Madam Speaker, that was a great party political broadcast. Can I ask the Chief Minister then, since he is such a keen fan now of the accuracy of the numbers, will he give an undertaking, not to me, Madam Speaker, but to this House, that when the Budget Book or the Estimates Book is prepared with the accurate and final numbers, that he will then provide a schedule in that Estimates Book with the numbers I have been asking for by month, in the same format for income tax, corporate tax and import duty, by way of an additional schedule to the Estimates Book, since he is such a fan of accuracy and transparency, and he has given so many numbers to everybody, he is the most transparent Government on this planet.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman might wish to ask me for undertakings or promises or whatever he wishes. The Government will continue to provide the Budget Book in the manner that it is advised by the professionals that advise it, and not by the hon. Gentleman from the basis of his supplementaries across the floor of the House. We are very confident that the figures that we provide are the most open and transparent that have ever been provided.

Hon. Members just need to go back and look at the Estimates Book that they used to publish until 2011-12, and compare it to the Estimates Book that we publish now, and see that there is more information, more readily available there than ever before, not least the fact that the Estimates Book is now published online. When I give my Budget speech, I actually refer Members opposite, and those who may be listening or watching, to the relevant page of the Budget Book that is online that they can go to. Madam Speaker, I would be delighted to take the advice of those who are paid to give me advice as to whether there should be any changes in format in the way that we publish the figures that we bring to this House, but I am not going to take advice from him, and I am not going to make policy on the hoof.

Q153/2025
Property, Digital Assets, etc –
Possible legislation

Clerk: Question 153, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, is the Government considering possible legislation along the lines of the Property, Digital Assets, etc. rather, currently being considered by the UK Parliament?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, HM Government of Gibraltar is monitoring the progress of the UK's Property Digital Assets Bill, which is currently under consideration in the UK Parliament. The Bill is currently at the report stage in the House of Lords, with several amendments pending. Once the UK Parliamentary process has been completed, HM Government of Gibraltar will assess how best to adapt any relevant aspects of the final UK legislation to Gibraltar's legislative framework.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, before I put my supplementary, it was remiss of me when I stood up before to address the hon. Member not to congratulate him to be seated in the seat of the heir apparent today. I hope he does not get too sad when he goes back out of the chair of the heir apparent.

I welcome the fact that the Government are considering this matter and monitoring it, but can I perhaps suggest that the Government do a bit more than just monitor the progress of this Bill for the UK Parliament, because the Bill itself, the hon. Member I suppose will have seen it, is very short. It is a Bill that simply recognises, the courts in England have already recognised crypto assets, digital assets, as being capable of being considered property for the purposes of injunctive relief and so on, but the Bill simply enshrines into English law a similar provision and the recommendations that were made to the UK Parliament by a commission that was set up for this purpose not only says that it wishes to align English law with developments in the United States and Singapore and in Dubai, but part of the impetus is so that England remains competitive as a jurisdiction and with his hat as financial services, I am sure he would wish Gibraltar to be competitive, because in the past his department has wished us to remain at the forefront of DLT Digital Asset Development. So can I ask him to do perhaps a bit more than monitor and consult the industry on legislation in this area.

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I detect a bit of political hurt on the part of the hon. Member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, simply because I pointed out earlier on that he doesn't seem to listen to pertinent GBC reports when he puts a question before this House. He stands up and he prefaces the question by saying that I ought to be careful about where I sit. Whatever, Madam Speaker, you have got to have thicker skin than that, Madam Speaker.

The hon. Member opposite refers to Gibraltar needing to be competitive and at the cutting edge of the crypto global landscape, and indeed he also has made the point or said that the Government needs to consult. Well, Madam Speaker, I am very happy to report to this House, that there is a sub-committee of the industry and the regulator, and indeed my officials are also represented in the sub-committee, where we are looking at all aspects in relation to digital technology in Gibraltar and the regulatory framework of that. This Bill is actively being considered by that sub-committee, Madam Speaker.

I am sure that the hon. Member will be pleased to learn that.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I am indeed pleased, Madam Speaker, and I am not hurt at all, by the way, by whatever comment he passed before, because I was genuinely congratulating him about where he sits. I am not really that bothered about where he sits, but clearly he is bothered, because the first opportunity that he has seen the air appearance chair to be vacant, he has rushed over to sit next to the Chief Minister. Can you tell us who is on this sub-committee advising the Ministry?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, if the Hon. Leader of the Opposition tables a question in Parliament, I will endeavour to provide that information. Madam Speaker, if I had sat at that end of the seating here, on this side of the House, he would have stood up and accused me that there was a conspiracy between me and the Chief Minister. Indeed, it is a reflection of a divide, ideological or otherwise, between the Chief Minister and myself, which is certainly not the case.

Therefore, I made it a point of sitting here precisely, because we are a collegiate Government, and therefore I sit next to the Chief Minister. Indeed, I would have sat next to any of my colleagues here today, had there been these spaces here, and it is not the first time that I do so. Clearly, he is, of course, feeling hurt by the observation that I made before, in answer to a previous question, Madam Speaker.

Q154/2025

European Commission –

Removal from list of EU high-risk third countries with strategic deficiencies

Clerk: Question 154, the Hon Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, can the Government update the House on any recent discussions with the European Commission to ensure that Gibraltar is removed from the EU's list of high-risk third countries with strategic deficiencies as regards anti-money laundering, the EU's so-called grey list of finance centres? Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, last month, on the 15th and 16th of January, I was in Brussels to engage with the EU institutions on the question of Gibraltar's continued presence on the EU list of so-called high-risk third countries and jurisdictions with strategic deficiencies in their anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regime. I visited Brussels at the very first opportunity, following the formation of a new College of EU Commissioners on the 1st of December 2024. The timing of the visit, only a month after the appointment of new decision-makers in Brussels, reflects the importance that the Government attaches to this issue, a sentiment which I deeply share, not least given the excellent work being carried out by Gibraltarian officials and law enforcement agencies in propelling Gibraltar to the vanguard on the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism. Whilst in Brussels, I met the Director General of the European Commission's Directorate General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, Mr John Berrigan. Mr Berrigan, the most senior official in the DG, is one of Brussels' most respected experts in his field, having risen through the ranks to the top post in a career with the European Commission spanning close to 40 years.

Given the weight of Mr Berrigan's opinion, not only was I satisfied with the fact that our meeting had been very constructive, I was also especially pleased to have received only recently, on the 17th of February, an exceptionally positive letter from him with his perspective on our meeting. In this letter, Mr Berrigan underlines that the Commission is, I quote, "well aware of Gibraltar's efforts in further strengthening its AML-CFT regime beyond its FATF action plan". Progress which Mr Berrigan, on behalf of the Commission, I quote, "acknowledges".

Mr Berrigan also reminded me that it was the European Commission itself which, after having been satisfied from a technical, forensic, expert perspective that Gibraltar does not meet the criteria to remain on this list, had proposed the formal removal of Gibraltar from this list along with other jurisdictions. This was the proposal the Commission delegated at, which the hon. Member will recall, did not enter into effect given the European Parliament's exercise of its veto right, a right it exercised chiefly for political reasons and because of concerns it had with respect to other jurisdictions on the list for removal. Was no doubt the hon. Member would agree that we should commend ourselves for having done the work necessary to allow the European Commission to once again hold Gibraltar in high esteem.

To me, this is not enough. We will not rest, we will not remove a foot from the pedal until Gibraltar is legally removed from the EU list with our reputation justly restored. For this reason, I took great reassurance from the fact that Mr Berrigan, during our meeting, also confirmed that the Commission intended to come forward with a new proposal to update the EU list as soon as possible.

This commitment was repeated in writing in his letter to me. This will be the next stage in this process. In other words, we now need to wait for the Commission to come forward with a new decision which we have been told is in the works.

Whilst in Brussels and given the new Commission decision, when it comes, will equally need to be approved by the European Parliament. I also took the opportunity to meet various influential MEPs who gave useful insight into the background leading to the Parliament's objection to the entry into force of the last decision adopted by the Commission. The MEPs I spoke to were eager to discuss with the Commission an approach which would ensure that a new Delegated Act would be supported by the Parliament and they were keen to hear about Gibraltar's efforts in the AML-CFT space both before coming off the FATF grey list and what is just as important to me since coming off that list.

This is all that I can share with this House at this moment in time. Our officials working in Gibraltar House in Brussels will continue to keep me updated with developments which I will share with the hon. Member as necessary. All in all, Madam Speaker, more so after my visit to Brussels, I am hopeful that this issue will soon be resolved.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker the hon. Member knows that he has our support in that process. We appreciate the delicacy of the work that needs to be done in that regard. I have a couple of questions. Before I do that, I am glad that he is sitting where he is apparently to deal with the speculation that there should be any rift between him and the Chief Minister and certainly from this side of the House I can tell him that sitting there absolutely does deal with that speculation decisively, I am sure.

Can I ask him, he got a letter on the 7th of February from the European Commission from Mr John Berrigan who is a senior official in the DG as he has pointed out to us. He has quoted some things from it and I appreciate that he has given the House what he might think he can give but not others. Is it possible for the Minister to share with me, with the Members on this House, a copy of that letter on a confidential basis?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, we would be delighted to share a copy of this letter with the hon. Member opposite on a confidential basis.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I am grateful. He talks about a process that will lead to another vote in the European Parliament which of course last time was complex, hopefully this time will be less so and he knows the Government has our support in getting us off that list and it will require a new Commission decision which will then be put presumably to the European Parliament for a vote. Does he have any visibility on the kind of timescales that we are looking at because we share the view clearly that until that happens the work is not done.

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, we do not have visibility on the actual timing because of course we are not in control of that timing. What I can tell the hon. Member is that according to the information that we have and we continue to be in touch with the Commission in relation to this, the Commission is actively engaged with the European Parliament and indeed institutions within the European Parliament in order to be able to ensure that when the Delegated Act comes before Parliament that it receives the support of Parliamentarians.

Adjournment

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, sometimes when people talk about heirs apparent I am presumptive when looking across the floor of the House one wonders whether they might not be looking more closely towards themselves because in doing so they might find that where they see rifts opposite them in fact it might be actually the moat in their own eye that they are reflecting and that might be a convenient thing for them to reflect on in the adjournment I now propose between now and 10am on Thursday.

Madam Speaker: All right, I now propose the question which is that this House to now adjourn to 10am on Thursday. I now put the question which is that this House to now adjourn to 10am on Thursday. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Passed.

This House will now adjourn to 10am on Thursday.

The House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 10.02 a.m. – 1.45 p.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 27th February 2025

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 10.02 a.m.

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

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

Questions for Oral Answer

INWARD INVESTMENT AND THE GIBRALTAR SAVINGS BANK

Q265/2025 Laguna Youth Club – Development

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Thursday 27th of February 2025. Answers to Oral Questions continued.

Questions to the Hon. Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank.
5 Question 265, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, does the Government have an update on the development of the new Laguna Youth Club?

10 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank.

Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank (Hon. Sir J J Bossano): Madam Speaker, I am informed that planning permission was granted on the 15th of January 2025. The design team is currently working on refining the technical drawings to ensure they meet all regulatory standards before submitting them to building control approval. Once the building control approval is obtained the project then will be ready to move forward to the next stage which is a tendering process and the construction phase.

20 **Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

Hon. D J Bossino: If I may, sorry.

Madam Speaker: In the speed that the hon. Member rises to ask a supplementary or?

25 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I was looking at my hon. Friend here and just to judge whether he was going to ask a supplementary and in that nanosecond.

Madam Speaker: My estimation of time is obviously different to the hon. Member's. It was a little more than a nanosecond but I will allow the hon. Member to ask a supplementary.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am very grateful to Madam Speaker. Can I ask this question of the Hon. Minister? When he says I am informed, is that because this is not a Government led project but a project led under the National Economic Plan? If that is the case, may I ask him which company is... I am making an assumption. I am premising my question and this is the question.

35

Madam Speaker: I have not interrupted the hon. Member so get to the question and let us...

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, yes, absolutely... The Chief Minister thinks he is the Speaker and everything else.

40

Madam Speaker: Is there a question?

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, there absolutely is a question Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister for Economic Development which company is responsible for this project?

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Hon. Sir J J Bossano: I do not understand what he means about which company is responsible for the project. The project is being funded, if that is what he means, by the company that is doing the Laguna building which was the company that would have funded it had it been in the same place. So the only responsibility is the funding.

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The requirements are being provided by the people who are going to be using the thing. The only thing that has happened with this is the location. The location originally meant that the use of the ground floor limited the possibility of the property in Laguna being delivered at a price consistent with its objectives.

55

Therefore that is why it never took off because it was impossible to finance. The fact that at a later stage the people in the youth club were able to find an alternative it meant it released the space that would have been occupied but that the commitment on the cost continues to be there so it will be at no cost to the Government or the youth club.

60

Hon. D J Bossino: Is the Hon. Minister able to answer the question that I posed which is which company is responsible for this development? From my understanding and I think the Hon. Minister has alluded to it in his reply, the youth club was going to form part of the same project that was going to be the pensioners flat by Laguna which was as I understand it from recollection going to be sponsored by one of the companies which form part of the national economic plan, one of the charities. Therefore, this is what I'm driving at.

65

The specific question is, is the Hon. Minister able to answer the question as to which company is now responsible for the construction of the Laguna Youth Club?

70

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: I have already answered the question that he started with but not the last answer because he says responsible for the construction. I do not know who will be responsible for the construction because as I have told him there is a lot of stages still before they go to tender and I am not able to know how many people will tender and I am not able to know who will be selected. Other than that the only thing that has changed is the location.

75

The responsibility for the finance is at the present location from the same source that it was originally going to be when it was at the Laguna. That is the answer.

Madam Speaker: Yes, the Hon. Mr Origo.

Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you Madam Speaker, if I may ask...

80

Madam Speaker: I thought I had called the Hon. G Origo. I'll come to the Hon. Mr Clinton after that, go on.

Hon. G Origo: Apologies Madam Speaker, I was just happy to give way but on this occasion I am happy to take the supplementary. May I ask the Hon. Minister in answer to the question when this was posed last year the Hon. Minister Santos, I believe, gave an answer that a meeting was held on the 8th of February in which plans were being discussed and finalising drafts before review. It is now 12 months on since these plans were being finalised and reviewed. Can I ask the Hon. Minister what the reasons for this delay have been?

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: Madam Speaker, the only information I can provide to the hon. Member is the information that I get when I ask what he is asking me. The answer that I have given him is the answer I have been provided with by the people in the youth section.

Hon. G Origo: Can I ask the Hon. Minister and perhaps he may take some advice from the Hon. Minister Santos who I believe this is his shadow portfolio. When the construction of the Laguna Youth Club is taking place; do we have any plans or alternatives for the youth members who are using these youth clubs on a frequent basis? Do we have some alternative? Are they going to be allowed to attend other youth clubs or what is the idea there?

Hon. D J Bossino: Madam Speaker, young people can attend any youth club. They do not need to be going to the one within their catchment. So you can go to any youth club around any area of Gibraltar but because it is a two phased approach they will be able to be using one of the areas within the youth club and once that is completed then they will be able to use the other area. As I said, they can go to the one in Line Wall Road or they can go to any of the youth clubs around Gibraltar.

Madam Speaker: Does the Hon. R M Clinton have a question?

Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you Madam Speaker. My apologies for before. If I may ask the Minister. He mentioned that there has been an alternative site identified for the youth club. Can you enlighten the House as to where that location is and how has the developer acquired this site?

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: Well, I think the location is in the Glacis area and the previous one was in the ground floor of the building at the Laguna car park and the change of location is that the location is one that was already in use and the facilities are going to be an expansion of something that was already there.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q266/2025
Abstract of Statistics –
Policy change

Clerk: Question 266, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Will the Government consider changing its policy on not publishing the Abstract of Statistics which was last released in 2016?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank.

Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank (Hon. Sir J J Bossano): Madam Speaker, there is no such policy.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I thank the Hon. Minister for his reply. In which case would he be able to elucidate on that and inform the House as to if it is the Government's intention to produce it at some point in the future being such a useful document as it is?

135

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: The production was discontinued by the department. I do not know when the Act of 2016 was actually put together because they were given a lot of additional work when they were tasked with putting up information online that previously was not there. The resources that they had, and still have because that hasn't changed, they claimed that they would not be able to deliver what was needed in terms of putting things online unless they stopped producing the abstract which in fact is not anything that contains new information. It just contains the information that is in other places all in one place. They said they could not deliver those things and that since the priority was to get current information online, they discontinued it. They did not discontinue it because there was a policy decision that it should not be done.

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145

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, would the Government consider redressing the issue given that at the end of the day, as the Hon. Minister said, the information is already there. It is just simply a question of collating and putting it together in one document. Technology and the use of it would save a lot of time and it facilitates everyone else's searches.

150

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: I will ask the department to revisit the position.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

155

**Q267/2025
General Sinking Fund –
Balance as at 1 January 2025**

**Q268/2025
Public debt –
Figures as at 1 January 2025**

Clerk: Question 267, the Hon. R M Clinton

160 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Can the Government advise the balance on the General Sinking Fund on the following date being: 1 January 2025?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank.

165 **Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank (Hon. Sir J J Bossano):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question with Question 268.

Clerk: Question 268, the Hon. R M Clinton

170 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Can the Government please provide the total gross debt, aggregate debt after application of the Sinking Fund to gross debt, cash reserves and net debt figures for public debt for the following dates being: 1 January 2025?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank.

175

Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank (Hon. Sir J J Bossano): Madam Speaker, the gross public debt, aggregate debt after the application of the Sinking Fund to gross debt, cash reserves and net debt figures were on 1 January 2025: Gross public debt, 872.7 million pounds; Aggregate debt, 854; Cash reserves, 61.4; Net debt, 792.6. The balance of the General Sinking Fund on the requested date continues to be the same as previously stated.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

**Q269/2025
2022 Census –
Publication**

Clerk: Question 269, the Hon. D J Bossino on behalf of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. D J Bossino: What are the latest expectations on the publication of the 2022 Census?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank.

Minister for Inward Investment and the Gibraltar Savings Bank (Hon. Sir J J Bossano): Madam Speaker, the latest expectation for the publication of the 2022 Census is April.

Hon. D J Bossino: In order to ensure that there is absolute accuracy and there is no misunderstanding, I would ask the Hon. Minister to confirm that we are talking about April 2025.

Hon. Sir J J Bossano: This year.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

HEALTH, CARE AND BUSINESS

**Q191/2025
Lifecome Care Gibraltar Ltd –
Standard of services**

Clerk: Questions to the Hon. Minister for Health, Care and Business. Question 191, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Is the Government still satisfied with the standard of services provided by Lifecome Care Gibraltar limited in relation to home support and domiciliary care, under the current contract with the Government?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, no ma'am. HMGOG is not satisfied with the standard of services provided by LifeCome Care Gibraltar, limited.

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister care to elaborate as to why and the reasons as to why the Government is not satisfied with the standards of care being provided?

220 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, because we have a contract in place with the entity involved, we are now able to determine exactly what standards we expect from that agency. We have been receiving complaints and the matter is now under consideration.

225 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, with respect to the Minister, she has not really specifically answered the question. She has a contract in place, she has been receiving or they have been receiving complaints. In relation to why they are not satisfied with the standard of service, can she perhaps elaborate as to the reasons why, in what way is perhaps the subcontractor not meeting the obligations, in what way is the standard of service not being met, the nature of the complaints, can she perhaps elaborate and give a bit more detail into this?

230 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I have said, we have a contract in place with LifeCome Care Gibraltar, limited. We are able to take them through the provisions of the contract, which we think are not up to standard. We have therefore written to them on the 10th of February, setting out exactly where we think that they are not up to standard and informing them that we expect them to meet the criteria that we set out in the contract. The matter is therefore currently under review legally and I'm therefore not able to comment any further on this.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

240

Q192/2025
Suicides –
Yearly figures

Clerk: Question 192, the Hon. A Sanchez.

245 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide the number of suicides recorded for the following years broken down by gender: 2022; 2023; 2024; 2025 (up to the present date)?

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

250 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the number of suicides recorded are as follows. Year 2022, there was one male. Year 2023, there was one male. Year 2024, there was one male. These figures may be subject to change as there are a number of deaths for which the coronary investigations are still ongoing and therefore inquests in respect to these have not been held.

255 **Hon. A Sanchez:** By way of clarification, Madam Speaker, there are no suicides recorded for females. Is this correct?

260 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, yes, as of the date of the question there are no female recorded deaths. That's correct. There are no female recorded suicides.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

265

Q193/2025
Ocean Views –
Alcohol detox patients

Clerk: Question 193, the Hon. A Sanchez.

270 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Has the Minister received concerns regarding the current practise of sending alcohol detox patients to Ocean Views? If so, could the Minister confirm whether any changes to this practise is being considered?

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

275 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, no, ma'am. I have received no such concerns.

Hon. A Sanchez: Grateful Madam Speaker for that, answer. We continue to receive concerns from professionals about the setting being used for the use of alcohol detoxification. I put it again to
280 the Minister, have no concerns been expressed by any professionals in regards to this, Is it not an area of concern for anyone involved in this field?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the professionals have line managers. The line managers have division leads. The division leads have medical director. The medical director has a director
285 general. I would suggest to any professionals that are expressing concerns to the Opposition that it is probably more useful to express their concerns up the chain and express their concerns professionally within their professional setting rather than to the Opposition. However, as I have said, I have not received any such concerns.

290 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q194/2025
ERS Residential Sites–
Maintenance programme

295 **Clerk:** Question 194, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Could the Government outline the current maintenance programme in place for the ERS residential sites?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the GHA's maintenance team carry out rounds on a daily basis in order to assess any immediate minor works that are required. Urgent repairs are addressed by the 24-hour on-call maintenance service. Fire
305 drill assessments ensure compliance with fire safety regulations.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q195/2025
ERS model of care –
Number of individuals assessed

310 **Clerk:** Question 195, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Can the Government provide the most up-to-date figure on the number of individuals who have been assessed under the ERS model of care for bed suitability across all ERS sites and are currently waiting to access ERS Residential Facilities?

315

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, as of 14 February 2025, the following individuals have been assessed under the ERS model of care for bed suitability across all ERS sites and are currently awaiting access to residential facilities under the ERS. Nine long-stay patients with Gibraltar Health Authority and five applicants from the community.

320

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, grateful for that answer. Is the Hon. Minister stating that there is a total waiting list of individuals that are waiting to be given places within all of the ERS sites, including Mount Alvernia residential facility, Hillside and all of these facilities?

325

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: No, Madam Speaker, I'm answering the question that was posed.

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, the question that was posed was specifically worded in relation to a question that I submitted in March 2024, where I asked for the waiting list numbers in relation to Mount Alvernia and the answer provided by the Minister was that these lists are prepared under the assessment carried out by the ERS model of care for bed suitability across all of the ERS sites. When posing this question, I specifically made sure that the wording was posed in relation to the answer that she gave back in March. Perhaps she can give me the total waiting list of the people waiting to access these sites.

330

335

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the question is requesting the most up-to-date figure on the number of individuals who have been assessed under the ERS model of care for bed suitability. That is not a question on the waiting list for Mount Alvernia. They are two separate questions.

340

If the hon. Member needs to have a specific answer to a specific question, she should really address the question specifically. The figures that I have given, the hon. Lady, relate to the number of individuals who have been assessed under the ERS model of care for bed suitability across all of the ERS sites exactly as her question has stated.

345

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, does she have the information about the waiting list for Mount Alvernia? Because I asked it in March 2024 and the answer that she gave me said that the figures were, or the wording was in a different way. Does she have the waiting list numbers for Mount Alvernia?

350

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the questions that the hon. Lady asked me in March 2024 was answered in March 2024. Today, I have answered specifically the question that she has posed. I do not want to give any further information of which I am not 100% certain, as otherwise I am accused by the Opposition of misleading Parliament.

355

Therefore, if the hon. Lady wishes to have information on waiting lists in Mount Alvernia, I would suggest that the question that she poses to me addresses waiting lists in Mount Alvernia.

I would suggest that rather than muttering under her breath, she actually poses a question that she means to answer.

360 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q196-197/2025

ERS –

Number of posts created; Number of titles/grades renamed; Adjustments in remuneration

365 **Clerk:** Question 196, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: With regard to the ERS, as of 1 April 2023 to present date, could the Government provide the following information: The number of new posts created; The number of titles or grades that have been renamed: How many of these changes involved adjustments in remuneration detailing former salary and current salary; Which of these positions went through an open recruitment process with published adverts and interviews; Which of these positions did not go through such a process?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I'll answer this question together with Question 197.

380 **Clerk:** Question 197, the Hon. A. Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Could the Government state the vacancies that existed within the ERS on each of (a) 1 April 2022, (b) 1 April 2023, (c) 1 April 2024, and (d) 1 February 2025 and provide information confirming: Whether any vacancies remain unfilled; If filled, when these vacancies were subsequently filled; Which vacancies went through an open recruitment process involving publication of advert and interview and which did not?

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

390 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 196, as of 1 April 2023 to present date, three new posts have been created within the ERS and these are as follows. Divisional Clinical Lead for ERS, the post currently included in the 2024-2025 ERS approved establishment as Nursing Coordinator has been renamed to Divisional Clinical Lead ERS and was advertised internally within the GHA and ERS in January. Interviews are now being scheduled.

395 The Nursing Coordinator basic salary scale was £63,193 to £80,064.

The Divisional Clinical Lead ERS Basic Salary Scale is £57,259 to £70,680. The decrease in salary is due to the change in the role from Nursing Coordinator to Divisional Clinical Lead ERS. The salary of the Divisional Clinical Lead is in line with those in the GHA.

400 The ERS Administration and Facilities Manager, this post is currently included in the 2024-2025 ERS approved establishment as a GDC Grade 4 post, was advertised internally within the public service in January. Interviews are now being scheduled. The salary scale for this post remains unchanged.

There is also the Dementia Coordinator which was advertised in May 2023. The GHA announced a five-year National Dementia Strategy.

405 As part of the initiative and in order to achieve its vision, the GHA appointed one of the ERS Deputy Nursing Coordinators to the newly established role of Dementia Coordinator to lead on the implementation of the strategy. The salary scale for this post remains unchanged.

In answer to Question 197, the following vacancies existed within the ERS on the 1st of April 2022, 2023 and 2024. Catering Manager, Domestic Deputy Nursing Coordinator, Enrolled Nurse, Registered General Nurse, Nursing Assistant, Personal Secretary, Senior Cook and Technical Instructor. Of these, a Registered General Nurse was subsequently filled.

410 The following vacancies existed within the ERS on the 1st of February 2025. Catering Manager, ERS Admin and Facilities Manager, Divisional Clinical Lead ERS, Domestic, Deputy Nursing Coordinator, Enrolled Nurses, GHA Clerk, Nursing Assistant, Senior Cook and Technical Instructor PTO. Of these, the Catering Manager vacancy was advertised internally and filled on the 22nd of February 2025. Madam Speaker, the ERS Admin and Facilities Manager and the Divisional Clinical Lead ERS vacancies have been advertised internally and they are in the recruitment process.

420 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q198-199/2025
Care Agency –
Vacancies

Clerk: Question 198. The Hon. A Sanchez.

425 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state the vacancies that existed within the Care Agency on each of (a) 1st of April 2022, (b) 1st of April 2023, (c) 1st of April 2024 and (d) 1st of February 2025 and provide information confirming: Whether any vacancies remained unfilled; If filled when these vacancies were subsequently filled; Which vacancies went through an open recruitment process involving publication of advert and interview and which did not?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I'll answer this question together with Question 199.

435 **Clerk:** Question 199, the Hon. A Sanchez

440 **Hon. A Sanchez:** With regard to the Care Agency, as of the 1st of April 2023 to present date, could the Government provide the following information: The number of new posts created; The number of titles or grades that have been renamed; How many of these have involved adjustments in remuneration detailing former salary and current salary; Which of these positions went through an open recruitment process with published adverts and interviews; Which of these positions did not go through such a process?

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

450 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, in relation to Question 198, I now hand over a schedule with the information requested. In answer to Question 199, Madam Speaker, 27 new posts have been created. There has been no change in the nomenclature or adjustments in the remuneration of any titles or grades within the Care Agency.

In respect to the recently created administrative officer posts, we are currently going through an open recruitment process where we have published adverts and interviews are imminent. We have not yet commenced the recruitment process for the remaining posts.

455

Madam Speaker: I will take supplementaries in relation to Question 199 and I'll give the hon. Member some time to consider the schedule and take supplementaries for Question 198 a little later. So anything for Question 199? We will move on and revert to Question 198 as well.

460

ANSWER TO QUESTION 199

ANSWER TO QUESTION 198

The number of vacancies within the Care Agency for the specified years were as follows:

April 2022

Senior Executive Officer
Executive Officer
Training Co-Ordinator
Personal Secretary
Heads of Service
Team Manager
Senior Social Worker
Counsellor
Social Worker
Assistant Social Worker
Manager
Charge Nurse
Registered General Nurse
Manager
Senior Care Workers
Teacher (25 hours)
Handyman Driver

The following posts that were filled were;

Head of Adult Services	-	January 23
Manager St Bernadette's	-	February 23
Counsellor	-	February 23

April 2023

Executive Officer
Training Coordinator
Personal Secretary
Head of Service
Team Manager

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 199

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 198

Senior Social Worker
Social Worker
Assistant Social Worker
Counsellor
Deputy Manager- Disabilities
Charge Nurse
Registered General Nurse
Care Leader
Registered Nurse - St B
Enrolled Nurse
Senior Care Worker
Care Worker
Teacher
Care Worker
Registered General Nurse
Handyman Driver

The following posts that were filled were;

EO's x 2 posts - August 23

April 2024

Executive Officer
Training Coordinator
Personal Secretary
Administrative Officer
Head of Service
Team Manager
Senior Social Worker
Social Worker
Assistant Social Worker
Newly Qualified Social Worker

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 199

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 198

Counsellor
Deputy Manager- Disabilities
Charge Nurse
Registered General Nurse
Care Leader
Registered Nurse
Enrolled Nurse
Care Worker
Senior Care Worker
Care Worker
Teacher
Registered General Nurse
Hybrid Labourer
Hygienist
Caretaker

The following posts that were filled were;

Counsellor	-	April 24
RGN St Bernadette's	-	May 24
Caretaker	-	September 24

February 2025

Executive Officer
Training Coordinator
Personal Secretary
Administrative Officer
Head of Service
Team Manager

Cont...

475

480

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 199

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 198

Counselling Psychologist

Senior Social Worker

Social Worker

Assistant Social Worker

Newly Qualified Social Worker

Counsellor

Deputy Manager- Disabilities

Charge Nurse

Registered General Nurse

Care Leader

Social Care Worker

Enrolled Nurse

Care Worker

Residential Home Manager

Senior Care Worker

Care Worker

Teacher

Care Worker

Registered General Nurse

Hybrid Labourer

Domestic

All vacancies went through an internal recruitment process, including interviews; however, no external advertisement was published.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 198

The number of vacancies within the Care Agency for the specified years were as follows:

April 2022

Senior Executive Officer
Executive Officer
Training Co-Ordinator
Personal Secretary
Heads of Service
Team Manager
Senior Social Worker
Counsellor
Social Worker
Assistant Social Worker
Manager
Charge Nurse
Registered General Nurse
Manager
Senior Care Workers
Teacher (25 hours)
Handyman Driver

The following posts that were filled were;

Head of Adult Services	-	January 23
Manager St Bernadette's	-	February 23
Counsellor	-	February 23

April 2023

Executive Officer
Training Coordinator
Personal Secretary
Head of Service
Team Manager

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 199

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 198

Senior Social Worker
Social Worker
Assistant Social Worker
Counsellor
Deputy Manager- Disabilities
Charge Nurse
Registered General Nurse
Care Leader
Registered Nurse - St B
Enrolled Nurse
Senior Care Worker
Care Worker
Teacher
Care Worker
Registered General Nurse
Handyman Driver

The following posts that were filled were;

EO's x 2 posts - August 23

April 2024

Executive Officer
Training Coordinator
Personal Secretary
Administrative Officer
Head of Service
Team Manager
Senior Social Worker
Social Worker
Assistant Social Worker
Newly Qualified Social Worker

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 199

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 198

Counsellor
Deputy Manager- Disabilities
Charge Nurse
Registered General Nurse
Care Leader
Registered Nurse
Enrolled Nurse
Care Worker
Senior Care Worker
Care Worker
Teacher
Registered General Nurse
Hybrid Labourer
Hygienist
Caretaker

The following posts that were filled were;

Counsellor	-	April 24
RGN St Bernadette's	-	May 24
Caretaker	-	September 24

February 2025

Executive Officer
Training Coordinator
Personal Secretary
Administrative Officer
Head of Service
Team Manager

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 199

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 198

Counselling Pyschologist

Senior Social Worker

Social Worker

Assistant Social Worker

Newly Qualified Social Worker

Counsellor

Deputy Manager- Disabilities

Charge Nurse

Registered General Nurse

Care Leader

Social Care Worker

Enrolled Nurse

Care Worker

Residential Home Manager

Senior Care Worker

Care Worker

Teacher

Care Worker

Registered General Nurse

Hybrid Labourer

Domestic

All vacancies went through an internal recruitment process, including interviews; however, no external advertisement was published.

Q200-201/2025

Care Agency –

Fostering Adoption Team current complement; Adoption rate

Clerk: Question 200, the Hon. A Sanchez.

510 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide the current complement of fostering adoption team in the Care Agency broken down by specific posts? Additionally, could the Government clarify whether any posts are currently vacant or affected by long term absence or sick leave?

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

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Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I'll answer this question together with Question 201.

Clerk: Question 201, the Hon. A Sanchez.

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Hon. A Sanchez: Could the Government provide the figures for the number of young persons from the Care Agency residential care who in the years 2023 and 2024 have: Been fostered; Been adopted; Returned to their biological parents; Moved into a permanent home; Registered in their name?

525

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 200, the fostering and adoption team is currently staffed by a team manager and two supervising social workers. Until June 2024, there was one team manager and one social worker. Additionally, within the fostering team, there are no employees on long term absence or sick leave.

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In 2023, 16 children were fostered. Of these, one was subsequently adopted. A further three young persons were adopted. No young persons were returned to their biological parents or moved into a permanent home as they were not of age to move into independent living.

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In 2024, five children were fostered. Of these, one was adopted, one returned home to their biological parents and two returned to residential care. Of the remaining, none moved into permanent home as they were not of age to move into independent living.

540 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q202/2025

Paediatric physiotherapists –

Current complement; Vacant posts; Posts affected by long term sick leave or other absences; Contract types

Clerk: Question 202, the Hon. A. Sanchez.

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Hon. A Sanchez: In relation to the current complement of paediatric physiotherapists within the GHA, could the Government provide clarification on the following: The total complement as of the current date; The number of vacant posts within the complement; The number of posts affected by long term sick leave or other extended absences; The type of contracts held for these positions (e.g. locum or other)?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, there is no complement of paediatric physiotherapists within the GHA.

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Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, could the Hon. Minister elaborate a bit further on this? I suppose she has a complement of physiotherapists. Is there one that is responsible for the children's service?

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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, because I have the answer and because it is a subject close to both our hearts, I will answer the question, but I would suggest that in future the question is more specific and actually addresses the point. All the information on the complement is actually public information which is available in the statistics book. Whilst there is no specific paediatric physiotherapist, this is included as part of the overall physiotherapist, SEN1 and SEN2 complement, two physiotherapists which are assigned to paediatrics.

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Q203-4 & 218-9/2025

Diabetes –

DESMOND course; Specialist Nurses; Support and information; Procurement of HbA1c analyzers

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Clerk: Question 203, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Could the Government provide the following information: Whether it has ever offered the DESMOND course to individuals diagnosed with diabetes; If so, when and why these courses were discontinued; Whether it intends to start offering these courses again?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. 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 Questions 204, 218 and 219.

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Clerk: Question 204, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. A Sanchez: Could the Government state how many diabetes specialist nurses are currently employed by the GHA?

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Clerk: Question 218, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: When a person is newly diagnosed with diabetes, what support and/or information are offered immediately thereafter?

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Clerk: Question 219, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Have the GHA purchased, or are there plans to purchase, HbA1c analyzers to assist in the monitoring and management of diabetes in adults?

595

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker yes ma'am, the GHA previously offered the DESMOND course to individuals diagnosed with diabetes. This ceased approximately 3 years ago on the retirement of 1 of the diabetic nurse specialists who was a qualified DESMOND instructor. We are actively looking to incorporate a DESMOND course or equivalent into our diabetes programme as soon as we are able to do so.

In relation to Question 204, Madam Speaker, the information requested is publically available.

Madam Speaker, with reference to Question 218, individuals newly diagnosed with diabetes through their GP, through a general practitioner, are referred to the diabetes team for assessment and monitoring of advanced diabetes related complications. Additionally, patients are referred to a dietician for nutritional counselling and dietary management. Upon referral to the diabetes team, patients receive ongoing support including annual reviews and ADRC assessments. If any concerns arise or abnormalities are detected, the diabetes team collaborates closely with GPs to ensure appropriate management and follow-up. All type 1 diabetes patients receive follow-up care in secondary care under the supervision of an Endocrinologist. Patients with type 1 diabetes who utilise the internal medical devices for glucose monitoring receive enhanced support to optimise insulin management and dosage adjustments.

To facilitate appointment scheduling and patient support, a dedicated mobile contact number for diabetic patients is available.

Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 219, the GHA currently has a HbA1c analyser to meet current and future demands. As such, there are no plans to purchase any more analysers.

Hon. A Sanchez: Madam Speaker, grateful for that answer. In relation to Question 203 and the DESMOND course, the Hon. Minister states that they are looking to introduce these courses again. Has there been an application to obtain the licence in order to deliver this course and, if so, what is the progress on this?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, that is quite a specific question, I am not aware of whether there is a case for otherwise. I would suggest that specific question is put to me for the next session and I will happily answer it then.

Madam Speaker: Is the Hon. D J Bossino on Question 203? Or generally, then I will come back to the Hon. J Ladislaus afterwards.

Hon. A Sanchez: Yes?

Hon. D J Bossino: So, in answer to my hon. Friend's question, which was the Hon. Minister said was very specific in nature, the Hon. Minister did say at the tail end of her answer that in terms of starting to offer these courses again in respect of that specific question that she said, as soon as we are able to do so. So, what is preventing the ability to recommence this particular service?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the GHA has tried on numerous occasions to recruit diabetes nurse specialists. As the hon. Members are aware, there is a significant difficulty in recruiting diabetes nurse specialists in Gibraltar. It is for this reason that we have not been able to find a diabetes nurse specialist who has the necessary qualifications to run the DESMOND programme that we have been unable to offer that service.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is the Hon. Minister able to provide an update as to whether any progress that can press her further that is being made in relation to the recruitment and appointment of this particular speciality in the nursing field?

650 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as the hon. Member may have noticed, in the complement, which is one of the specific questions that was addressed by the hon. Lady, in the complement there are four diabetes nurse specialists actually contained in the complement. Out of these, there are only two actually employed by the GHA because we cannot recruit the other two. The latest advert was put out in November 2024 for a vacancy for a diabetes nurse specialist and again, we struggle to recruit someone with the necessary skill set, so we're looking at alternatives in order to fill those vacancies.

660 **Hon. D J Bossino:** What if I may ask is the cause of the struggle? Is this an area which is not particularly attractive to people in the UK? I'm assuming the recruitment is going to likely come from the UK and if that assumption is incorrect, I would invite the Hon. Minister in her reply to correct it. Assuming it is in the UK, is it simply that there is a dearth of specialisation in that area in the UK in potential applicants?

665 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I'm not sure what the actual issue is. What I am certain of is that there have been numerous instances in which the vacancies have been advertised in Gibraltar and in the UK. As the hon. Member may or may not be aware, we are now able to recruit directly from the NHS through the NHS scheme and we are advertising this position frequently but we are unable to recruit for whatever reason that may be.

670 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Could I suggest to the Hon. Minister that enquiries are made as to what the cause is and I would invite her in her response by way of a question, is whether maybe the package which is being offered by the Gibraltar Government, or in this case the GHA, is not attractive enough. For example, given that the Minister is unaware as to what the cause of the struggle is in filling this particular role, could it be that the salary package is simply not attractive enough, for example?

675 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I'm sure that the hon. Member reads the papers frequently, and I'm sure that the hon. Member is aware that there is a global shortage of nurses, and there is a global shortage of specialised nurses in particular. We are told that the package is attractive and we have no issues of any of that nature. It is just that there is a global shortage of clinical staff.

Madam Speaker: Yes, the Hon. J Ladislus.

685 **Hon. J Ladislus:** It is following on from these questions and then thereafter if I could ask... Madam Speaker, I believe I have had an exchange with the Hon. Minister on this specific point before in the past. The issue that I raised, and I ask now, has it been considered whether there can be incentives put in place in order to motivate people within the GHA to train as diabetic nurses because I make the point that when a nurse moves out of a ward in order to take up a specialist role, what happens is they lose allowances in moving across. So, in essence, it is not a step up, it is a step down a lot of the time when they lose monetary gain doing so. Has a package, perhaps
690 been looked into to which could alleviate that and perhaps motivate people to take up training in this area.

695 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker we did indeed have this discussion before and the discussion that we had I believe led to the fact that actually there are packages in place and in order to put upward mobility within the GHA, it is always encouraged that people do specialise, that people do take on these courses. The staff at the GHA are looking at all possible options in order to fill the speciality and as someone with a diabetic mother, I assure you that I'm very much on this case and try to get the service working as best as possible.

Madam Speaker: Any questions on Questions 218, 219?

Hon. J Ladislaus: In respect of Question 218, we have heard that there are ongoing annual reviews. Is that often enough? Can the Hon. Minister clarify whether there should be more regular reviews or we are actually achieving the suggested reviews for individuals who suffer from diabetes? I do have information that it is a large percentage of our population who do have diabetes, circa around 4,000 people.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker that information, again, is publicly available on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment website. You can get a specific figure as to the exact number of individuals in Gibraltar that have diabetes and it is about the 3,600 marks. That is indeed correct. The annual figure is because it is an overview.

Remember that there are two types of diabetes. There is type 1 and type 2. The distinction that was made in my answer is that type 1 diabetes patients receive follow-up care by the endocrinologist, which we employed eight months ago. The endocrinologist will take care of the cohort of type 1 diabetes patients and the diabetes team within the PCC will take care of all the type 2 patients. The majority of patients that need an annual review will be reviewed annually. If they feel that for whatever need they need to be reviewed further, they will be. This includes referrals to ophthalmology, for example, or to the podiatrist. Whatever it is that the diabetes nurses feel is necessary, they will be reviewed and updated on whatever basis the nurses feel is needed.

Hon. J Ladislaus: As to Question 219, again, the information which we have is that the analyser, which the GHA currently has, is in fact used for child patients. That this is actually a much better and less invasive way of testing continuously. The information we have is that the analysers are not particularly pricey to come by so I ask the Hon. Minister whether perhaps they would reconsider as to whether to purchase a further analyser, particularly for adult patients.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the issue with the analyser isn't the HPAC-1 analyser itself. It's the staff that is required to run the analyser. The analysis are run twice weekly and I do not believe it is just children that are reviewed with the HPAC. The analyser reflects blood sugar levels over a period of two to three months. And this is what we're told is required. I do not have the information in front of me, but I do not believe it is just children patients that are reviewed with the analyser.

Hon. D J Bossino: Further to that response that the Hon. Minister has provided to my hon. Friend, Mrs. Ladislaus, is that the reason why there are no current plans to purchase a new analyser? Is it because it would require the recruitment of further staff to operate it? Is that what is creating the obstacle?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: No, Madam Speaker, that is not what I said. What I said is that the analyser is able to analyse more patients if it felt that it was needed. It is the staff that is needed to run the analyser. The ability is there for the analyser to run, however many tests is needed for the analyser to run. It is not that we do not have the staff to run the second analyser. It is that we have an analyser and the staff is running that analyser. Again, I refer back to my previous answer where I specifically stated that we are trying to actively recruit two more diabetes specialist nurses and it is not possible to recruit them.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q205, 262-4/2025

Western Anchorage –

Departing procedure without a pilot; Legislative changes arising from OS 35 LNG Atom collision; Compulsory pilotage; Cost of salvage

Clerk: Question 205, the Hon. G Origo.

755 **Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm whether there is a formal procedure to follow for vessels without a pilot embarked departing from the Western Anchorage?

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

760 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I'll answer this question together with Questions 262 to 264.

Clerk: Question 262, the Hon. D J Bossino on behalf of the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

765 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Does the Government intend legislative changes arising from the investigation report into the OS 35 LNG atom collision?

Clerk: Question 263, the Hon. D J Bossino on behalf of the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

770 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Will the Government be considering making pilotage compulsory for departure from the Western Anchorage?

Clerk: Question 264, the Hon. D J Bossino on behalf of the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

775 **Hon. D J Bossino:** What is the cost to date of the salvage and oil pollution measures taken in relation to the collision between the OS 35 and the LNG Adam?

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

780 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, in relation to Question 205, at present, all vessels departed from the Western Anchorage do so without a pilot on board, unless they have chosen to take up the optional pilotage service. There is a myriad of procedures as reflected in the quality manual and consequent ISO manuals, which guide the Gibraltar Port Authority procedures but I am not quite sure what is meant by a formal procedure.
785 Assuming that this refers to established management procedures for vessels departing, there are a number of relevant procedures in place at present, which are followed by the GPA staff.

In relation to Questions 262 and 263, HMGOG is considering the report and all its recommendations. Once detailed analysis is conducted, and depending on which recommendations are taken on board, there may be a need to make changes in current legislation.
790 However, at this stage, it would be premature to confirm whether legislative changes are required.

In answer to Question 264, Madam Speaker, the salvage operation was undertaken by contractors appointed by the vessel's insurers. The costs of the salvage operation have not been disclosed to HMGOG, but they have been borne directly and completely by the insurer. The cost of oil pollution measures, which HMGOG are claiming from the insurers and the owners, is £8.035 million, as presented to the Supreme Court in Gibraltar. The case is still ongoing.
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Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if it may assist the Hon. Minister, my question with regards to formal procedures was derived from the OS35 report, and if I may briefly take her to one of the pages of that report, particularly page 37.

800 **Madam Speaker:** Is this in relation to Question 205?

Hon. G Origo: At page 37 of the report, it deals with safety recommendations, and one of which reads as follows. The Gibraltar Port VTS is recommended to formalise the procedure for advising departing vessels with no pilot embarked of the recommended route for departing the Western Anchorage. It continues, the Gibraltar pilots are recommended to formalise the information provided to masters for departing the Western Anchorage on arrival. Such would indicate, Madam Speaker, that no formalised process is in place or readily available. Would the Hon. Minister not agree that as a matter of safety for the individuals who are on board and as a matter of safety from an environmental perspective, as was the case in this instance, that such formalised procedures should be finalised and publicly made available as recommended by the report?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member opposite for reading to me the OS35 report and its conclusions. I hope that he read the rest of the report as well. In the report, it actually says Gibraltar pilots are recommended to provide masters on arrival and on their websites with information of the option to take a pilot from Anchorage to sea and formalise the information provided to masters for departing the Western Anchorage on arrival.

Alternatively, the Gibraltar Port Authority is recommended to consider introducing compulsory pilotage for vessels departing the Western Anchorage. Now, the alternative is what is currently being considered. If the hon. Member listened to my answer to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition's questions, we said that we were considering, let me go back to my answer to say exactly what I said. The HMGOG is considering the report and all of its recommendations and the recommendations are either to provide information on the outgoing journey for masters to have pilots on board. On the inward journey, it is already compulsory. This is about whether the pilots are compulsory when the vessel departs the port of Gibraltar.

The question here is, do we consider introducing compulsory pilotage for vessels departing the Western Anchorage? The answer to that question was provided in relation to Questions 262 and 263, where we said that we are considering the report and the conclusion helpfully read out by the hon. Member. Therefore, once we do that, we will confirm whether legislative changes are required or otherwise.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, and if I may just assist the Hon. Member, the question I pose concerns vessels who are departing from the Western Anchorage without a pilot embarked. I know that she rather helpfully comments on how the recommendations on whether to enforce the necessary pilotage is being considered. My question specifically relates to the instances where these vessels are not piloted. In the instances where these vessels are not piloted, is the Government considering and will it formalise the process for how they should be departing from the Western Anchorage? The question is quite simple.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the answer is even simpler. Let me read it out once again. HMGOG is considering the report and all of its recommendations. Once a detailed analysis is conducted, and depending on which recommendations are taken on board, they may need to make changes to current legislation. However, at this stage, it would be premature to confirm whether legislative changes are required. I would extend that to practises as well as legislative changes.

Madam Speaker: Any supplementaries on Question 262 going forward?

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, Questions 262 and 263, which were bunched together by the Hon. the Minister. The progress in relation to the lessons that we would no doubt have learnt as a result of this collision is in effect being delayed on the basis that the report is being considered. Indeed, the response by the Minister is that taking any legislative or any other measures would be premature

at this stage. Therefore, can I ask the Hon. Minister to provide us with an indication as to when we will reach a conclusion in terms of considering the report and its recommendations?

855 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, we do not have a date yet.

Hon. D J Bossino: In relation to Question 264, whilst I appreciate that the Minister did not provide an answer to the salvage costs because they are not disclosed to the Government, I think it was the reply, and not relevant to us in the sense that it does not result in a cost to the Government, 860 so it does not impact on the Government's exchequer or the exchequer. The oil pollution measures, however, have resulted in a cost and she said that it was being recovered in the course of presumably admiralty proceedings, which have arisen as a result of the collision. And she gave a figure, which was £8.035 million. Is the Hon. Minister able to provide a breakdown of this figure?

865 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, to be perfectly clear on what I said, because I want there to be absolutely no misrepresentation of what was said, what I said is that the costs of the salvage operation have not been disclosed to HMGOG. So it is not that HMGOG is not disclosing it, it is that HMGOG do not know it because it is not relevant because it was picked up by the salvage operation. They have been borne entirely and completely by the insurer. The cost... no, no, 870 because it was spun slightly so that it would seem like Government was not disclosing it. The intention is not that Government is not disclosing it. The intention, to be abundantly clear, is that the costs have not been disclosed to Government. I want to be entirely clear because then things can be spun out of context. The cost of the oil pollution measures is 8.035 million and that is a gross figure, Madam Speaker. The expectation is that this will be reduced somewhat because 875 there may be adjustments in the invoicing rates, but I do not have a breakdown of that figure. Apologies.

Hon. D J Bossino: There was absolutely no intention on my part to spin anything of what the Hon. Minister said. I thought I was accurately reflecting what she had said in relation to that and in fact 880 I was offering an olive branch in the sense that I was saying that it didn't result in an expenditure to the exchequer, so therefore I understand why we do not need to pursue that line of questioning in this House, but in relation to the breakdown of the 8.35 million figure, is it the case that the Hon. Minister doesn't have that information with her now, but it is information which she would have available to her and as a result of a further question the Hon. Minister would be able to 885 provide that information to this House?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, so as not to be accused of misleading Parliament, I have to say that I do not know whether it is information that we have, so perhaps if the hon. Member were to pose that question for the next session of Parliament, I will be able to make enquiries as 890 to whether it is a figure that we have and we can provide the breakdown.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for that response, but is she able also to say whether, does she have information as to the number of entities and companies that the Government would have had to contract in order to carry out this oil pollution removal exercise? 895 Would that information be available to the Hon. Minister who has responsibility for this particular area?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, given that the matter is currently involved in Admiralty proceedings, I would expect that that is information that is available, but that is a very detailed question that is being posed by the hon. Member and if he wants that level of detail, I would 900 advise the hon. Member to put a specific question in Parliament and we will provide that level of detail if it is available, which I expect it is because there are proceedings in Court at the moment.

Hon. D J Bossino: Also to clarify to the Hon. Minister by way of a further question, presumably if that question were filed at the next session, which would be expected in March, it won't be in any way hampered in the response as a result of the extant proceedings before the Supreme Court. What I'm driving at is information which the Minister would be able to respond to irrespective and out with the Admiralty proceedings currently before the Supreme Court.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, that is a hypothetical question. Until I've seen the question, I do not know what the nature of the question is exactly and, if that question were received, I would have to take advice.

Hon. D J Bossino: This is not hypothetical. The question is very specific, which is, what is the Hon. Minister able to provide a breakdown of the 8.035 million figure? It is not hypothetical. The answer we have had is yes. And the very specific, non-hypothetical question I have asked is, will the response to that be hampered next month as a result of the proceedings before the Supreme Court?

Madam Speaker: To be fair, the question needs to be put in order to be able to answer rather than would it be possible. So I suggest the hon. Member puts the question.

Hon. D J Bossino: The question, it is not mine, it is the Hon. Leader of the Opposition's, but the question that I raised by way of supplementary, Madam Speaker, was, is the Hon. Minister able to provide a breakdown? Does she have that information with her? The answer was not with me, but I can provide information once you file the question. The answer was in the affirmative. I will respond to the hon. Member's question. All I am asking is, will that be hampered in any way as a result of the proceedings before the Supreme Court?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the question is hypothetical and in any event, we would have to take advice once the question were received.

Madam Speaker: Before we move on to the next question, I am going to come back to Question 198, which was a question from the Hon. A. Sanchez. Are there any supplementaries? No? Next question.

Q206/2025
GHA legislation –
Duty of candour

Clerk: Question 206, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Similar to the UK's organisational Duty of Candour, has the Government considered the introduction of a Duty of Candour into our legislation for the GHA, which would place a direct obligation upon the GHA to be open and honest with service users and their families when something goes wrong that appears to have caused or could lead to moderate harm or worse in the future?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the Duty of Candour already exists in the clinical governance framework within the GHA. It involves the investigation of an incident to identify any gaps in the service and the learning needs to prevent

recurrence. This would proceed with the disclosure of errors of it or incidents that could have caused harm, offering an apology and acknowledging the impact on patients. Further support to the affected patients and their family would follow.

The Duty of Candour is also part of the GMC good medicine medical practice. It requires doctors to be open and honest with patients when things go wrong, providing explanations, offering apologies and taking steps to prevent future harm. This promotes transparency, accountability and patient safety, encouraging a culture of learning and trust in healthcare. Therefore, although not in legislation, the GHA will always act according to the principle of the Duty of Candour.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps let the public know where it is that one can find the clinical governance framework which has been referred to?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Of course, Madam Speaker. There is a document which is called the management of incidents, clinical and non-clinical from the GHA. The document is available within the GHA framework. I actually do not have confirmation that this is on the GHA's intranet site. It's a procedural document and the most up-to-date version is on the GHA's intranet.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I'm grateful, Madam Speaker, but if the document is available only on the intranet, and I beg the Minister's pardon here, but is it the case that it is available on the intranet? The latest version is on the intranet, but there is a version which is accessible to the public. Is that correct?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, this is a document which is about professionals within the GHA. The Duty of Candour is exactly the same duty of candour as is contained within the GMC's professional guidance. The Duty of Candour is contained within the management of incidents, clinical and non-clinical policy document, but it is a reference to a standard which exists throughout the medical profession. The doctors and nurses within the GHA, already within their own professional grades will have their own reference to the GMC guides.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I'm grateful, Madam Speaker, but the point here is that the UK Government introduced a duty of candour into legislation in the UK in November 2014. That duty of candour was in fact rolled out and extended to all other health and social care providers who were registered with the Care Quality Commission, including care homes, from April 2015. The question I ask now, therefore, is that the case in Gibraltar? Has it been extended to ERS also?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the ERS falls within the GHA therefore, of course, it applies to ERS.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, I was aware that the GMC has this duty of candour, but given that the UK has seen fit to legislate for it, and that puts it at a far higher position, would the Government commit to looking into legislating in regard to a duty of candour in Gibraltar?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, this is the first time that this issue has been raised with me. Given that we are looking at other procedures to make the GHA more open, accessible and transparent, there is no reason why we shouldn't also consider something like this.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q207-8/2025
GHA premises/vicinity –
Staff smoking policy

Clerk: Question 207, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1005 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the GHA have a policy as to staff smoking on GHA premises? If so, can the Government outline that policy?

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

1010 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 208.

Clerk: Question 208, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1015 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the GHA have a policy as to staff smoking in the vicinity of GHA premises? If so, can the Government outline that policy?

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

1020 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, in answer to Questions 207 and 208, yes ma'am. In 2014 the GHA introduced a policy that established all GHA premises as no smoking areas and designated smoking areas are specifically in the appendix to this policy. The policy applies to all persons regardless of whether they are staff, patients or visitors. Additionally, Madam Speaker, in 2018, HMGOG passed a new law for smoking prohibition in the vicinity of GHA grounds and thereafter in 2020 passed further legislation to include the area
1025 opposite St Bernard's Hospital known as Harbour Views Road.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, may I ask, does the policy also apply to employees who are travelling in GHA vehicles?

1030 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am unclear on what the definition of premises pursuant to the policy is.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, does the policy also extend to employees wearing a GHA badge or uniform at any time or representing the GHA who may be off premises?
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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: No, Madam Speaker, smoking includes no smoking in areas designated where unable to control people in their daily lives.

1040 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for that answer but is the Hon. Minister aware that in the UK various trusts have actually implemented exactly that, that if an employee of the NHS is actually wearing a badge or uniform at any time or representing the NHS off premises, then they are not to be seen smoking. Is that something that the Hon. Minister is aware of and would consider rolling out into the GHA?

1045 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it is not something that is under active consideration.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, does this policy also apply to e-cigarettes or to vapes?

1050 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, vaping is prohibited within the GHA premises. I am unclear on whether it extends to the regulations related to smoking and I am unclear on what the

definition of smoking is. I would not wish to mislead Parliament so I am not certain whether you're able to vape in the regulated areas pursuant to the smoking prohibition, smoking on GHA ground regulations.

1055 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, in terms of vicinity, we have heard that that includes the area just opposite the St Bernard's Hospital. Who is, may I ask, responsible for ensuring that employees in particular are complying fully with that policy? Because it is the case that often when one passes by the hospital, unfortunately there are individuals smoking there and some are wearing uniform. So who is responsible for policing that, so to speak?

1060

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the Environmental Agency is responsible for policing it and they have actually visited the area intermittently as part of an awareness campaign to educate people about the risks of smoking and the legal prohibition of smoking on Harbour Views Road. However, we have a Director of Public Health who is very actively involved in the smoking cessation clinics. The Director of Public Health actually chaired a meeting in November because she wishes to enforce those regulations in different ways.

1065

You will have seen that there are no smoking signs which have been put up in the vicinity of the wall that the hon. Lady referred to and this has actually made a marked difference. Further to that, what we are actually doing is that we are working with the Ministry for the Environment and the Department of the Environment to turn the area into a children's garden area because it is looked out onto from Rainbow Ward. We are actually actively engaging in landscaping plans so that each and every primary school is allocated a specific area to look after. The landscaping will mean that it is difficult for people to sit on the hospital side of the wall to smoke. What we are looking to do is that we're looking to introduce, we have got the legislation, so the stick is already there.

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There is a penalty of £1,000 for people that are smoking in the area. The Environmental Agency is the Agency that enforces it. But if we can look at alternative ways to enforce it, we will be doing that and what we are doing, what we are trying to do is to look at different ways of making sure that the area does not encourage people to smoke there.

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Hon. J Ladislaus: Do the GHA's employment terms and conditions, contracts and general communications contain clauses, Madam Speaker, as to these smoking prohibitions and relating to the policy of the GHA?

1085

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, we would expect the employees comply with the policy and we would expect the employees comply with the law. So I am unsure of whether the specific terms of the contract refer to smoking prohibitions, but given that it is policy and given that it is law, I would expect the employees to abide by GHA policy and to apply by regulations which would travel the world to everybody.

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Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q209/2025

GHA –

Whistleblowing policies

Clerk: Question 209, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1095

Hon. J Ladislaus: Does the GHA have whistleblowing policies in place and, if so, can the Hon. Minister provide copies of those policies?

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

1100 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the GHA has implemented a speak up policy designed to foster a culture where employees feel empowered to voice concerns within the organisation. The policy ensures that all matters raised are appropriately captured, reviewed and addressed in a structured and transparent manner. Additionally, the whistleblowing policy published by the Department of Personnel Development
1105 in November 2024 applies across the entire Public Service, including the GHA. This policy reinforces the commitment to accountability and integrity within the organisation. I now hand over a copy of both policies for reference.

Madam Speaker: Is the Hon. Minister in a position to ask supplementary based on the substantive
1110 answer or does she wish to look at the policies? We will come back to Question 209.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

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His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar

His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar: Whistleblowing Policy

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**HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR: WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY
(the "Policy")**

1. Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1. His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is committed to serving the people of Gibraltar with integrity, openness, accountability, and transparency and equally expects that all Public Servants will maintain high standards of conduct and service to the community.
- 1.2. This Policy aims to foster a culture of openness, transparency, and accountability in the workplace by safeguarding Whistleblowers and encouraging the making of Disclosures. This Policy also aims to ensure that Whistleblowers are protected from retaliation and/or detrimental treatment by HMGoG and/or the different levels of management in the Public Service.
- 1.3. The purpose of this Policy is to:
 - (i) encourage Public Servants to make Disclosures as soon as possible in the full knowledge that their suspected genuine Whistleblowing Concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate and that, subject to paragraph 7.5, their confidentiality will be respected;
 - (ii) provide Public Servants with guidance as to how to make Disclosures; and
 - (iii) reassure Public Servants that they should be able to make Disclosures without fear of reprisals even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 1.4. The aim of this Policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating, and remedying any Whistleblowing Concerns in the workplace. In most cases, a Public Servant should not find it necessary to alert any external person.
- 1.5. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for Public Servants to make Disclosures to an external body, such as a regulator. HMGoG strongly encourages Public Servants to seek advice from their Line Manager or the Department of Personnel and Development before making a Disclosure to an external individual or entity.

2. Definitions and interpretation

- 2.1. In this Policy, the following definitions apply:

"Department" means the Department of Personnel and Development of HMGoG;

"Disclosure" means a protected disclosure as defined in section 45A(1) of the Employment Act relating to a suspected genuine Whistleblowing Concern set out in paragraph 5.1;

"General Orders" means HMGGoG's General Orders;

"HMGGoG" means His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, its departments, agencies, authorities, and companies;

"Line Manager" means a Public Servant's immediate supervisor;

"Public Servant" includes an employee, worker, or officer of HMGGoG;

"the Act" means the Employment Act;

"Whistleblower" means a Public Servant who makes a Disclosure;

"Whistleblowing Concern" means one or more of the concerns set out in paragraph 5.1 that when disclosed in accordance with this Policy is protected under the Employment Act; and

"Whistleblowing Officer" means a person employed by HMGGoG and designated to deal with Disclosures.

- 2.2. In this Policy, a reference to a particular law is a reference to it as it is in force from time to time taking account of any amendment, extension, or re-enactment and includes any subordinate legislation for the time being in force made under it.
- 2.3. The headings in this Policy are inserted for convenience only and do not affect its interpretation.
- 2.4. In this Policy, a reference to one gender includes a reference to all genders, and, except where the context otherwise requires, words denoting the singular include the plural and *vice versa*.
- 2.5. This Policy does not form part of a Public Servant's contract of employment or other contract to provide services to HMGGoG. HMGGoG may amend this Policy at any time without consultation.
- 2.6. In this Policy, 'raising/disclosing a suspected genuine Whistleblowing Concern' or 'making/reporting a Disclosure' or any other similar or related expression shall be used interchangeably to mean the making of a Disclosure.

3. To whom does this Policy apply?

- 3.1. This Policy applies to all Public Servants and certain other categories of HMGGoG workers or persons providing services to HMGGoG, such as officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, agency workers, and trainees.

4. Who is responsible for this Policy?

- 4.1. The Office of the Chief Secretary of HMGoG has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this Policy and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this Policy.
- 4.2. The Department has day-to-day operational responsibility for this Policy. Public Servants should refer any questions about this Policy to the Department in the first instance. The Department must ensure that regular and appropriate training is provided to all senior officers and other staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this Policy.
- 4.3. This Policy is reviewed at least annually by the Department and the Office of the Chief Secretary of HMGoG.
- 4.4. All Public Servants are responsible for the success of this Policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected Whistleblowing Concerns. Public Servants are invited to comment on this Policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Comments, suggestions, and queries should be addressed to the Department, which will involve the Office of the Chief Secretary of HMGoG where appropriate.

5. What is whistleblowing?

- 5.1. Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information, which, in the reasonable belief of the Public Servant making the Disclosure, tends to show one or more of the following Whistleblowing Concerns, namely that:
 - (i) a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed;
 - (ii) a person has failed, is failing, or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he is subject;
 - (iii) a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur;
 - (iv) the health or safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be endangered;
 - (v) the environment has been, is being, or is likely to be damaged; and/or
 - (vi) the information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being, or is likely to be deliberately concealed.
- 5.2. A Disclosure must:

- (i) be made in good faith;
- (ii) be made in the belief that the information disclosed, and any allegations contained in it, are substantially true;
- (iii) not be made for the purposes of personal gain; and
- (iv) when made to an external person, be made where, in all the circumstances of the case, it is reasonable to make the Disclosure. In determining whether it is reasonable for a Public Servant to make a Disclosure to an external person regard must be had in particular, but not limited, to the seriousness of the suspected Whistleblowing Concern, the identity of the person to whom the Disclosure is made, and whether the Public Servant has previously made a Disclosure of substantially the same information to HMGoG and any action that HMGoG has taken, or might reasonably have been expected to have taken, as a result of that previous Disclosure.

- 5.3. If a Public Servant has any genuine Whistleblowing Concerns, they should report it under this Policy.
- 5.4. This Policy should not be used for complaints relating to a Public Servant's own personal circumstances, such as the way that a Public Servant has been treated at work. In those cases, a Public Servant should use the relevant procedure provided for in General Order 6.1.6 and any other relevant procedure that HMGoG may introduce in due course.
- 5.5. If a complaint relates to a Public Servant's own personal circumstances, but he also has wider Whistleblowing Concerns, the Public Servant should discuss this with his Line Manager in the first instance.
- 5.6. If a Public Servant is uncertain whether something is within the scope of this Policy, he should seek advice from his Line Manager in the first instance.

6. How to raise suspected genuine Whistleblowing Concerns

- 6.1. HMGoG hopes that in most cases Public Servants will be able to make a Disclosure to their Line Manager in the first instance or the Department. Public Servants may tell their Line Manager or the Department in person or put the matter in writing if they prefer. A Public Servant's Line Manager or the Department may be able to resolve a Public Servant's Disclosure quickly and effectively. In some cases, a Public Servant's Line Manager or the Department may refer the matter to the Whistleblowing Officer.
- 6.2. Where the matter is more serious, however, or a Public Servant feels that his Line Manager or the Department has not addressed his Disclosure, or he prefers not to raise it with them for any reason, he should contact one of the following persons:

- (i) the Whistleblowing Officer; or
- (ii) a Minister of HMGoG.

6.3. A Disclosure is also made if it is made:

- (i) in the course of obtaining legal advice; and
- (ii) to a person prescribed by an order made by a Minister of HMGoG.

6.4. A Disclosure is not a Disclosure if the person making the Disclosure commits an offence by making it.

6.5. HMGoG will arrange a meeting with the Whistleblower as soon as possible to discuss the Disclosure. A Whistleblower may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this Policy. A Whistleblower's companion must respect the confidentiality of the Disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

6.6. A written summary of the Disclosure will be prepared, a copy of which will be provided to the Whistleblower in due course following the meeting. Where possible, HMGoG may provide to the Whistleblower an indication of how HMGoG proposes to deal with the Disclosure.

7. Confidentiality

7.1. HMGoG hopes that Public Servants will feel able to report Disclosures openly under this Policy. If a Public Servant wants to report a Disclosure confidentially, however, HMGoG will, subject to paragraph 7.5, make every effort to keep his identity secret.

7.2. Subject to paragraph 7.5, if it is necessary for anyone investigating the Public Servant's Disclosure to know his identity, HMGoG will discuss disclosing the Public Servant's identity with the said Public Servant prior to disclosing his identity.

7.3. HMGoG does not encourage Public Servants to make Disclosures anonymously, although HMGoG will make every effort to investigate anonymous Disclosures. A Public Servant should be aware that proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if HMGoG is unable to obtain further information from the said Public Servant. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to one of the contact points listed in paragraph 6.2 and appropriate measures can then, subject to paragraph 7.5, be taken to preserve their confidentiality.

7.4. Public Servants should know that HMGoG will never require them to enter into any agreement that prevents them from making a Disclosure. Any such agreement is void under the Act.

- 7.5. It is important that Public Servants should bear in mind that HMGoG reserves the right to report a Disclosure, with or without notice to the Whistleblower, to the Royal Gibraltar Police, and/or an external domestic and/or international regulator, and/or a relevant external domestic and/or international authority in appropriate circumstances. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, where HMGoG forms the view that the Disclosure reveals the possibility that a Public Servant may have committed a crime and/or breached his professional obligations. Whether HMGoG reports a Disclosure to a relevant external entity, with or without notice to the Whistleblower, is a matter solely and exclusively within the discretion of HMGoG.

8. Investigation and outcome

- 8.1. Once a Public Servant has made a Disclosure, HMGoG will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. Subject to paragraph 8.3, HMGoG may inform the Public Servant of the outcome of its assessment. A Public Servant may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.
- 8.2. In some cases, HMGoG may appoint an investigator, or a team of investigators, including Public Servants, with relevant experience of investigations and/or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable HMGoG to minimise the risk of future Whistleblowing Concerns arising.
- 8.3. HMGoG will aim to keep a Whistleblower informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. Sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent HMGoG giving a Whistleblower specific details of any assessment, investigation, outcome, or any disciplinary action taken as a result. A Whistleblower should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.
- 8.4. If HMGoG concludes that a Whistleblower has made a Disclosure in breach of any of the matters set out in paragraph 5.2, the Whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the relevant provisions of General Orders.

9. If you are not satisfied

- 9.1. Whilst HMGoG cannot always guarantee the outcome a Whistleblower is seeking, HMGoG will try to deal with a Disclosure fairly, proportionately, and in an appropriate manner. By using this Policy, a Whistleblower can help HMGoG to achieve this.
- 9.2. If a Whistleblower is not happy with the manner in which his Disclosure has been handled, he can raise it with one of the other key contacts listed in paragraph 6.2.

10. External Disclosures

- 10.1. The aim of this Policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating, and remedying any Whistleblowing Concerns in the workplace. In most cases, a Public Servant should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.
- 10.2. In some circumstances, a Public Servant may find it appropriate to make a Disclosure to an external body, such as a regulator. It will never be appropriate to alert the media. HMGoG strongly encourages Public Servants to seek advice from their Line Manager or the Department before making a Disclosure to any external entity.
- 10.3. Disclosures usually relate to the conduct of Public Servants, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a supplier. HMGoG encourages a Public Servant to make a Disclosure internally first in keeping with this Policy. A Public Servant should contact their Line Manager or the Department for guidance.

11. Protection and support for Whistleblowers

- 11.1. It is understandable that Whistleblowers will sometimes be worried about possible repercussions. HMGoG aims to encourage openness and will support Public Servants who make Disclosures under this Policy even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 11.2. Whistleblowers will not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of making a Disclosure. If a Public Servant believes that they have suffered any detriment, they should inform their Line Manager in the first instance or the Department immediately.

Transfer to an existent alternative suitable vacant HMGoG post

- 11.3. In appropriate circumstances, Whistleblowers may be afforded the option of a transfer to an existent alternative suitable vacant HMGoG post within their grade if one such post exists.
- 11.4. Whether a transfer to an alternative suitable vacant HMGoG post within the Whistleblower's grade is possible will depend, firstly, on whether the Whistleblower is employed in a transferable grade under General Orders; and, secondly, whether an alternative suitable vacant HMGoG post in fact exists within his grade to which the Whistleblower could be transferred.
- 11.5. It may not be possible in all circumstances to transfer the Whistleblower to an existent alternative suitable vacant HMGoG post within his grade under the same employment terms and conditions, inclusive of, but not limited to, allowances, and/or overtime, and/or pension rights, as at the time that the Whistleblower made the Disclosure. In circumstances where the transfer to an existent alternative suitable vacant HMGoG post within the Whistleblower's grade is not to a post with the Whistleblower's same

employment terms and conditions, it will be a matter for the individual Whistleblower to voluntarily decide whether to transfer to the available alternative vacant post or not.

Retirement

- 11.6. In appropriate circumstances, a Whistleblower may be offered a retirement package rather than a transfer to a different post.

Transfer and retirement

- 11.7. Whether to offer a transfer to a different post or a retirement package to a Whistleblower is solely and exclusively within the absolute discretion of HMGoG.

Disciplinary action

- 11.8. Public Servants must not threaten or retaliate against Whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct, you may be subject to disciplinary action.

Counselling Service

- 11.9. A confidential support and counselling service is available to Whistleblowers who raise concerns under this Policy. Their contact details are set out at the end of this Policy.

12. Contacts

Whistleblowing Officer	Mr Nicholas Richardson Telephone: 20051684 Centrex: 2790 Nicholas.richardson@gibraltar.gov.gi
Contact at Department of Personnel and Development	Ms Helen Gustafson Telephone: 20041728 Centrex: 2791 Helen.gustafson@gibraltar.gov.gi
Contact at Support and Counselling Service	Mr Sean Keating Telephone: 58008439 Sean.keating@gibraltar.gov.gi



SPEAK UP POLICY

GIBRALTAR HEALTH AUTHORITY

Version Number	1	Version Date	28.09.2023
Policy Owner	GHA Executive Director for Workforce		
Author	GHA Executive Director Workforce and SEO Workforce		
First approval or date last reviewed	28 September 2023		
Staff/Groups Consulted	GHA Executive Director Team, GHA Board, Responsible Officer and Clinical Governance		
Draft agreed by Policy Owner			
Approved by:	GHA Director General		
Next Review Due	27 September 2024		
Equality Impact Assessment Completed	YES		
Approval Pathways	This Policy has been fully consulted upon with the GHA Executive Team and GHA Board		
Recommendations	Reviews to be conducted following NHS guideline updates		

Equality and Health Inequalities Statement

Promoting equality and addressing health inequalities are at the heart of Gibraltar Health Authorities values. Throughout the development of the policies and processes cited in this document, we have:

- Given due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic (as cited under the Equal Opportunities Act 2006) and those who do not share it; and
- Given regard to the need to reduce inequalities between patients in access to, and outcomes from healthcare services and to ensure services are provided in an integrated way where this might reduce health inequalities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Gibraltar Health Authority welcomes employees to the Speaking Up Policy and we will listen. By Speaking Up at work employees are playing a vital role in helping the GHA to keep improving our Services, enhance patient care and also provide a safe working environment for all our staff. The GHA is committed to the highest possible standards of honesty, openness and accountability. This policy is designed to help normalise speaking up within our organisation. It aims to ensure that all matters raised are captured and considered appropriately.

During the course of your career you may have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However it can be difficult to know what to do when they are about malpractice, dangers to patients, environment, unlawful conduct, ethical concerns about the way services are provided, breaches of codes of conduct and accountability or maladministration.

This policy will allow those employed in the Gibraltar Health Authority to come forward and raise concerns about anything that gets in the way of patient care or affects your working life. This could be something that may not feel right to you, for example the correct procedure or process is not being followed. It could also be an allegation of wrong doing or a negligent action which may involve the actions of any GHA employee, Public Servant, Contract Officer, or any aspect of negligence or not adhering to a GHA process or other Public Service Policy or the Law.

The Gibraltar Health Authority is committed to a policy which seeks to protect and safeguard those employees who wish to make a protected disclosure/speak up/ report on any instance of malpractice or wrongdoing, and commits to investigate them accordingly. The GHA welcomes Speaking up and is committed to listen to our employees' concerns and properly investigate these if there is reason to.

The GHA will not tolerate anyone being prevented or deterred from speaking up or being mistreated because they have spoken up. In turn, the GHA will not tolerate that this policy be used against any employee if the allegations brought forward are of a malicious or frivolous nature.

2. AIMS OF THIS POLICY

This policy seeks to set out how the GHA will formally handle and respond to Speaking Up concerns as described within the remit of this policy.

This policy is for all our employees. This includes consultants, contractors, sub-contractors, Locum or Bank employees, voluntary workers or students, who are engaged in work for the GHA.

The GHA commits to the following principles:

- i) that we each have a voice that counts,
- ii) that we all feel safe and confident to speak up,
- iii) that we take the time to really listen to and understand the hopes and fears that lie behind the words.

This policy has specific sections to advise on the process that should be followed when raising a concern under the provisions of this policy, and how the GHA will proceed to investigate these.

This Speak Up Policy seeks to:

- Provide for a culture of zero tolerance toward fraud and corruption and deter wrongdoing.
- Encourage employees and others with serious concerns to feel confident to come forward and voice their concerns.
- Raise concerns at an early stage and in the right way, ensuring that critical information gets to the people who need to know and who are in a position to take appropriate action.
- Provide safeguards to reassure those who raise concerns in the public interest and not maliciously or for personal gain, that they can do so without fear of reprisals, victimisation or disciplinary action, regardless of whether these are subsequently proven.
- Ensure that employees know how to proceed if they are not satisfied with the actions taken.

This Policy is not to be used where other more appropriate internal reporting procedures may be available. There are existing internal procedures which enable employees to report on any grievances, make a bullying allegation, raise matters of harassment or to make a general complaint. These generally do not fall under the sphere of Speaking Up as these have their own separate provisions and procedure which apply.

This Policy does not deal with any disciplinary matter. All disciplinary matters, processes and procedures and investigations will be dealt with under the GHA Disciplinary Procedures, in line with General Orders Section 7.

3. DEFINITION OF SPEAKING UP

Speaking Up is the term generally used when someone who is employed in an organisation reports a concern about suspected wrongdoing, malpractice, illegality or risk in the workplace.

4. WHAT CONCERNS CAN I RAISE?

You can raise a concern about **anything** you think is harming the service the GHA delivers or commissions.

This may include, but is not limited to the following:

- i) Unsafe Patient Care: Unethical or unprofessional behaviour witnessed from our staff, malpractice and/or negligence
- ii) Concerns about danger or liability in respect to any matter of Public Interest that may threaten others
- iii) Health Care matters including suspected mistreatment or abuse of patients and / or issues relating to the quality of care provided
- iv) Health and safety issues which affect patients, visitors and staff
- v) Suspicion or knowledge of theft, fraud, corruption or other financial malpractice
- vi) Concerns about the professional or clinical practice or competence of colleagues or other members of staff
- vii) Concerns regarding irregular working practices
- viii) Concern that the environment is, or is likely to be, endangered both physically or morally
- ix) Failure to comply with any legal obligation
- x) Information which may show that any of the above matters is being, or is likely to be, deliberately concealed
- xi) Any other unethical or unprofessional or concerning behaviour

You may also Speak up about any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of members of the GHA, or other individuals acting on behalf of the GHA.

Such matters may involve:

- Something that makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards based on your own experience or the standards you believe the GHA subscribes to
- Something that is against GHA and/or Government policies and procedures
- A matter that may fall below established standards of practice
- A matter that amounts to improper conduct
- A known criminal offence
- Abuse of authority

However, this list is not restrictive nor limited to the above.

4. WHAT CONCERNS DO NOT FALL UNDER THIS POLICIES REMIT

Personal grievances (for example bullying, harassment, discrimination) do not fall under the remit of this policy as there are separate policies to deal with such issues. Matters of these natures must be reported separately through their own processes and procedures which can be found in the GHA's intranet.

The GHA Workforce Team at email conduct@gha.gi will be able to advise you further on these matters and provide guidance on the correct procedure that should be followed.

This policy is not meant for people who have concerns about their employment that only affect them. If your concern is a personal complaint about your employment that only affects you, then you would be required to raise a grievance using the GHA's Grievance Procedure or grievance policy or put this matter forward to the GHA Workforce Team.

5. FEEL SAFE TO SPEAK UP

The most important aspect of your speaking up is the information you can provide, not your identity. You have a choice about how you speak up:

- **Openly:** you are happy that the person you speak up to knows your identity and that they can share this with anyone else involved in responding.
- **Confidentially:** you are happy to reveal your identity to the person you choose to speak up to on the condition that they will not share this without your consent.
- **Anonymously:** you do not want to reveal your identity to anyone. This can make it difficult for others to ask you for further information about the matter and may make it more complicated to act to resolve the issue. It also means that you might not be able to access any extra support you need and receive any feedback on the outcome.

In all circumstances, please be ready to explain as fully as you can the information and circumstances that prompted you to speak up.

The GHA as your employer want you to feel comfortable raising your concern openly, but we also appreciate that you may want to raise it confidentially. Therefore, we will keep your identity confidential at all times, if that is what you want, unless we are required to disclose it by law. However, the individual making the disclosure must bear in mind that if no evidence is found and a formal investigation needs to take place their statement although redacted may need to be released.

If the GHA, as your employer, sees any evidence that indicates that an employee is being harassed or victimised as a result of Speaking Up, we will carefully consider this situation and investigate and take any reasonable and necessary action. This may be removing the employee from their place of work as a safeguard until a formal investigation is undertaken. This may have wider implications on how the employees' Section or Department is being run and Management may need to consider what action we need to take to address this.

6. ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Details on the support available to you can be provided by the GHA Workforce Team on email conduct@gha.gi or found on the GHA Intranet under policy documents.

You can also contact your Trade Union Representative who may provide further support and advice in these matters.

Should you feel you require Wellbeing Support, you may contact one of the GHA Wellbeing Champions or Leads as they may be able to offer further guidance. An appointment can be arranged via email wellbeingchampionsupport@gha.gi.

You may also wish to avail yourself of the services provided by the HMGoG Wellbeing Team on the following numbers:

Mr Sean Keating	58008439
Mr Calum Couper	58007512
Mrs Melanie Victory	58007015
Mrs Amy Chipolina	58007193

7. WHO SHOULD I RAISE MY CONCERN WITH?

SPEAKING UP INTERNALLY

Most speaking up matters will be raised through conversations with supervisors and line managers where challenges are raised and resolved quickly. The GHA strive for a culture where this is normal, everyday practice and encourage you to explore this option in the first instance. This may give the opportunity to discuss any misunderstandings or

miscommunications appropriately and reasonably with members of your team, direct line manager and Head of Department. This may well be the easiest and simplest way of resolving matters instantly.

However, if the matter is of a serious nature or you are unable to take this initial approach, you have other options in terms of who you can speak up to, depending on what feels most appropriate to the matter in question or yourself as an individual. If you feel you cannot raise your concern with your direct line manager or superior, you can escalate this to:

- A Senior manager, Clinical Lead or, if it is a serious issue that causes an impact on the GHA as a whole, directly to the respective member of the Executive Director Team. Executive Directors are able to raise issues with the Vice Chair to the GHA Board, Chair of the GHA Board or the Minister for Health.
- The Responsible Officer for all matters that involve a Medical Professional, i.e. Doctors' performance or conduct.
- The Clinical Governance Team for all concerns in respect to clinical governance.
- The GHA Workforce and HR Team for further advice and assistance or on matters that involve employee wellbeing and conduct on extension 2955 or email conduct@gha.gi

SPEAKING UP EXTERNALLY

Speaking up about any concern you have at work is important. We hope that raising your concern with your employer will give you confidence that the matter will be, or has been, looked into properly. We do appreciate that there may be times when you will want to raise a concern with relevant Trade Unions, however, we always encourage individuals to raise any issues with the relevant Manager, Divisional/Clinical Lead, or in case of direct conflict with these, with the relevant Executive Director in the first instance.

If you **do not** want to speak up to someone within your organisation, you can speak up externally to:

- A Trade Union Representative to seek further advice on the matter in question
- If you would like to speak up about the conduct of a member of staff, you can do this by contacting the relevant professional body such as the Gibraltar Medical and Registration Board, General Medical Council, the GHA's Responsible Officer/Suitable Person (for issues regarding medical professionals), Nursing and Midwifery Council, Health & Care Professions Council, General Dental Council, General Optical Council or General Pharmaceutical Council.
- Report matters to the Chairman of the GHA Board for quality and safety concerns about GHA services, or Vice-Chairman in cases where the Chair may be conflicted.
- Report matters to the Royal Gibraltar Police for concerns about fraud, crime and corruption, using their online reporting form or calling their telephone line 20072500.

8. HOW SHOULD I RAISE MY CONCERN?

10.1 You can raise your concerns in writing (including email).

Please be ready to explain the information and circumstances that gave rise to your concern. If you have any supporting evidence please provide this.

9. WHAT WILL THE GHA DO?

The matter you are speaking up about may be best considered under a specific existing policy/process; for example, our process for dealing with bullying and harassment. If so, we will discuss that with you. If you speak up about something that does not fall into a HR or patient safety incident process, this policy ensures that the matter is still addressed.

What you can expect to happen after speaking up is shown in Appendix A.

Resolution and investigation

We support our managers/supervisors to listen to the issue you raise and take action to resolve it wherever possible. In most cases, it's important that this opportunity is fully explored, which may be with facilitated conversations and/or mediation. Where an investigation is needed, this will be objective and conducted by someone who is suitably independent (this might be someone outside your organisation or from a different part of the organisation) and trained in investigations. It will reach a conclusion within a reasonable timescale (which we will notify you of), and a report will be produced that identifies any issues to prevent problems recurring.

Communicating with you

We will treat you with respect at all times and will thank you for speaking up. We will discuss the issues with you to ensure we understand exactly what you are worried about. If we decide to investigate, we will tell you how long we expect the investigation to take and agree with you how to keep you up to date with its progress. Wherever possible, we will share the full investigation report with you (while respecting the confidentiality of others and recognising that some matters may be strictly confidential; as such it may be that we cannot even share the outcome with you).

How we learn from your speaking up

We want speaking up to improve the services we provide for patients and the environment our staff work in. Where it identifies improvements that can be made, we will ensure that the necessary changes are made and are working effectively. Lessons will be shared with teams across the organisation, or more widely, as appropriate.

Review

We will seek feedback from workers about their experience of speaking up. We will review the effectiveness of this policy and our local process, with the outcome published and changes made as appropriate.

10. WHAT WILL THE GHA DO WITH THE INFORMATION YOU GIVE US?

If you raise a concern, the GHA Workforce Team, in conjunction with the Senior Manager or the Head of Department (or more senior Manager should the concern be directly with these), will consider whether it could signal underlying problems with how the particular Section, Department or GHA is run. Where we identify wider concerns, we will obtain further information and consider whether it may be the case of noncompliance with the necessary governing body and we will determine whether further, possibly more formal, action is needed.

In some instances, it may not be necessary to launch a formal investigation, however, concerns raised will still be looked into carefully and risks mitigated.

We may decide that your concern would be better looked at by another organisation, such as the GMC (including the GHA's Responsible Officer/Suitable Person), GMRB, NMB, if it relates to patient safety or quality concerns or even the RGP if seen to be a matter of criminal nature. If so, we will give you the relevant contact details or, with your consent, pass your concern onto the relevant organisation.

In exceptional circumstances, we may decide to investigate an individual case, rather than focusing solely on what wider issues that may have been raised. It is not possible to define in advance what those exceptional circumstances might be, but we will take the following factors into account:

- the extent to which the case has been looked at, or investigated
- the potential impact of the issues raised on patient safety
- the potential learning available to the wider system as a result of an investigation
- how long ago the events in question occurred

If we do investigate an individual case, once it is concluded we would then consider whether the case raises wider concern about how the GHA is being run.

11. ROLE OF THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

All serious concerns regarding GMC-registered medical practitioners must be registered with the GHA's Responsible Officer (RO) who, under the Responsible Officer Regulations, must manage concerns about a doctor's practice. They must ensure that the case is considered and, if necessary, investigated appropriately. The Workforce/HR Team must designate an appropriately trained senior team member to oversee the case and ensure that momentum is maintained. All concerns should be investigated quickly and appropriately. Clear

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documentation must be established for initiating and tracking progress of the investigation and outcomes. The RO will need to work with the designated Workforce Team to decide on the appropriate course of action in each case.

The RO, as Chair of the Responsible Officer Advisory Group, will consider serious concerns within this group, with the intention that the group support the RO and provide the opportunity for greater calibration and input into decision-making with regard to performance concerns. Since it is an advisory group, final decisions rest with the RO.

12. EXECUTIVE TEAM AND GHA BOARD OVERSIGHT

All speak up investigations will be confidentially overseen and recorded by the GHA Workforce Team. The GHA Executive Team will receive a periodic summary of all cases reported. The Executive Team and the GHA Board of Directors fully supports their employees and wants you to feel free to speak up in the best interest of the organisation, but most importantly on behalf of our patients and Staff.

13. MAKING A 'PROTECTED DISCLOSURE' UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT ACT

A protected disclosure is defined in the Employment Act. This legislation allows certain categories of worker to lodge a claim for compensation with an employment tribunal if they suffer as a result of speaking up. The legislation is complex and to qualify for protection under it, very specific criteria must be met in relation to who is speaking up, about what and to whom. To help you consider whether you might meet these criteria, please seek independent advice from a Trade Union or a legal representative.

There are very specific criteria that need to be met for an individual to be covered by Employment Law, under the provisions of the Employment Act governing Public Interest Disclosures when employees raise a concern (to be able to claim the protection that accompanies it). Part IV A of the Employment Act section 45C to 45H refers.

There is a defined list of 'prescribed persons' who you can make a protected disclosure to as follows:

Disclosure to employer or other responsible person

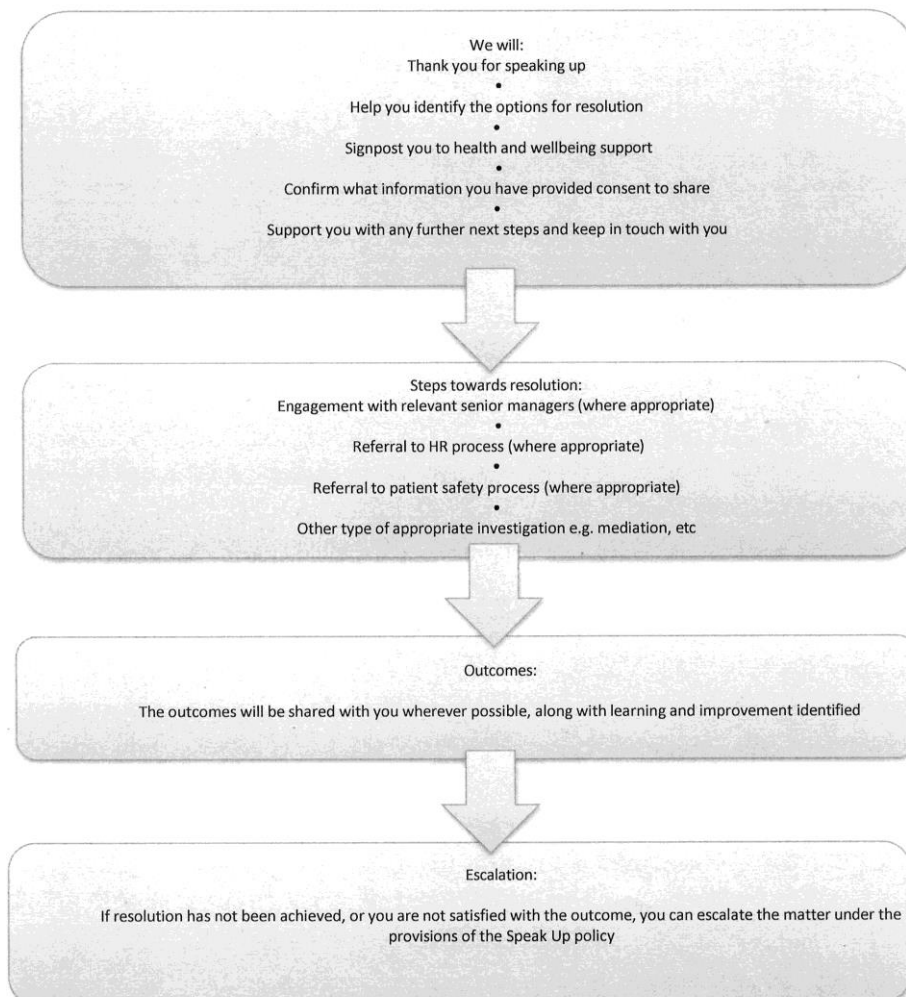
Disclosure to legal adviser

Disclosure to a Minister

Disclosure to prescribed person

To help you consider whether you might meet these criteria, please seek independent advice from a Trade Union or Legal representative.

Appendix A –What will Happen When I Speak Up



Q210/2025
GHA Protocol –
Underqualified/not experienced medical practitioners

1245 **Clerk:** Question 210, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: What is the GHA's protocol if a medical practitioner is not qualified to undertake a particular medical procedure or has no experience in doing so?

1250 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Health, Care and Business.

1255 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, all doctors in the GHA are registered with the General Medical Council and the Gibraltar Medical Registration Board, ensuring that they manage patients strictly within their scope of practise. Therefore, a medical practitioner should not perform a procedure that they are not qualified to carry out. Training and supervision are consistently provided to ensure that every medical practitioner has a necessary experience for their level of practice.

1260 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful to hear of this, but I do have information that has come to me that suggests that a practitioner did precisely that and that at least one procedure was carried out, which should have been carried out by a doctor or a practitioner of a different training level. Is the Hon. Minister aware that this does occur on occasion?

1265 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am not aware and I would suggest that the appropriate body that the patient complains to is the GMRB, who actually regulates doctors. Just to go a bit further into that question. The question relates to medical practitioners and I actually looked into their definition of medical practitioners and I believe that that is doctors, including psychiatrists and dentists. I am unsure if the hon. Lady is referring to anyone outside doctors, psychiatrists and dentists. If that is the case, the appropriate body to make any such complaints is the GMRB. If the
1270 hon. Lady is referring to a nurse, then the appropriate body to make any such complaint to would be the Nurses and Midwifery equivalent complaints body.

Q211-13/2025
Flu vaccines –
Cost of purchase; left over stock; Vaccines administered by the GHA's Mobile Health Unit

1275 **Clerk:** Question 211, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, what was the total cost of purchasing flu vaccines in (i) 2021, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2023, (iv) 2024 and (v) 2025 to date?
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Clerk: The Hon. 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 Questions 212 and 213.
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Clerk: Question 212, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many flu vaccines were left over at the conclusion of the seasonal flu vaccine campaigns in (i) 2021, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2023, (iv) 2024 and what was done with the leftover stock?

Clerk: Question 213, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many flu vaccines were administered by the GHA's mobile health unit in (i) 2021, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2023, (iv) 2024, (v) 2025 to date?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 211, the information is commercial in confidence.

In answer to Question 21; in 2021, there were 514 nasal flu vaccines and 5,986 adult vaccine. In 2022, there were 200 nasal flu vaccines and 4,622 adult vaccines; in 2023, there were 352 nasal flu vaccines and 5,410 adult vaccines; in 2024, the data is unavailable as the GHA is still offering the vaccine. Leftover stock is retained until its expiry date, at which point it is properly disposed of.

In answer to Question 213, the GHA's mobile health unit was established in 2023. Throughout that year, it was deployed on three separate occasions to casements. However, it is not possible to determine the exact number of vaccines administered during these deployments as the vaccines were not coded differently from the other, from those administered at other GHA premises. All vaccines are coded in the same way regardless of where they are administered.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, in respect of Question 212, can the Hon. Minister confirm how it is, I do not know whether the Hon. Minister has this information in front of her at the moment, but can the Hon. Minister confirm what procedure is undertaken in order to determine how many vaccines are actually ordered per year? Because it seems to me that the number has grown from 2022 to 2023 in terms of how many leftovers. Obviously, we do not know yet as to 2024, but I will ask this question again to determine whether the number has gone up.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, this is an issue, this is a question which is determined by the Director of Public Health. So the Director of Public Health, year on year, looks at the take-up, looks at the number of vaccines offered, and looks at what she predicts will be the take-up in the following year. So it is a matter which is consistently under review by the Director of Public Health, and she is the one that informs us clinically of what her view is on how many vaccines should be ordered in the following year.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, may I ask as to Question 211, I apologise for jumping backwards, but why is it that it is commercially sensitive information? Surely it is a cost that the public has borne in terms of purchasing the vaccines, and therefore the numbers should be transparent.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, because next year we have to negotiate the cost of the vaccines as well so we do not want to disclose year on year what the vaccines cost, because it would be alerting people to the negotiations prior to us embarking on them.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, in terms of the mobile health unit, is it something that has been looked into as to whether they can be codified in a different manner, so that if the mobile health unit is used again in future to administer such vaccines, we can determine the data? My understanding is that data is crucial, particularly in healthcare scenarios, to know how to respond

and to avoid things like wastage of vaccines. So could the Hon. Minister confirm whether that is been looked into?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I am unaware of whether that is been looked into or otherwise.

Madam Speaker: All right, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In relation to my hon. Friend's Question 211. In relation to the purchasing of flu vaccines, could I ask the Minister, because she made reference in answer to an earlier question that we are now plugged into the NHS sort of recruitment system, are we also, is the GHA also plugged into the NHS procurement system? So, for example, would these flu vaccines have been purchased via the NHS in England?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I am unaware of the source of the vaccines. If the hon. Member would like to put a question in the Parliament on that subject, I am very happy to answer it.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. D J Bossino had a question, or has that been overtaken?

Hon. D J Bossino: Overtaken!

Madam Speaker: All right, next question.

Q214/2025
GPs GHA Primary Care Centre –
Patient contacts

Clerk: Question 214, the Hon. J. Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: On average, over the last six months, how many patient contacts, including repeat prescription appointments, are GPs at the GHA's PCC having daily? Please provide a monthly breakdown.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. 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.

Madam Speaker: All right, we will come back to Question 214 in due course. We will move on to the next question.

Answer to Question 214

Month	Weekday	Weekend
August 2024	539	47
September 2024	581	49
October 2024	601	50
November 2024	552	51
December 2024	467	69
January 2025	650	69

**Q215-6/2025
Sleep study –
Waiting list/time for service users**

1380 **Clerk:** Question 215, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many service users are currently on the waiting list to undertake a sleep study, and what is the average waiting time from referral to having a sleep study undertaken?

1385 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Healthcare and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 216.

1390 **Clerk:** Question 216, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Is the GHA still undertaking sleep studies? If not, why not, and when were the last sleep studies undertaken?

1395 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Healthcare and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, there are currently 269 individuals on the waiting list for sleep studies, and the average waiting time is at February 2025 is 30 weeks. In answer to Question 216, yes, ma'am, the GHA is still undertaking sleep studies. The last sleep study was carried out on the 10th of February 2025.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

**Q217/2025
GHA –
Dieticians**

1405 **Clerk:** Question 217, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many dieticians does the GHA currently employ? One on a full-time basis, two on a part-time basis, and three on a temporary contract?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, part of the information requested is already available in the public domain. Additionally, the GHA does not employ any dieticians on a temporary basis.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful for that indication, but surely, even if it is available on public record, the numbers do fluctuate at times because perhaps there is recruitment in the middle of the year or the like. Have the numbers changed in the past few months at all?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, that is not quite how the complement of the GHA works. The complement of the GHA is set out in the estimates book, and the complement of the dieticians is set out on a specific line contained within the estimates book.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Can I ask this then? Are all dieticians within that complement currently available, or are any on, for example, long-term sick leave?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, because that is not what the question addressed, I do not have that information available.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q220-3/2025

GHA Cath Lab –

Waiting time for elective procedures; procedures carried out; Amount/type of elective procedures carried out; Emergency procedures carried out

Clerk: Question 220, the Hon J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: What is the current average waiting time for elective procedures to be carried out by the GHA's Cath Lab?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 221 and 223.

Clerk: Question 221, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: What procedures can be carried out at the GHA's Cath Lab?

Clerk: Question 222, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many elective procedures were carried out at the GHA's Cath Lab in (i) November 24, (ii) December 24, (iii) January 2025, (iv) February 2025 to date? Can the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown as to the types of elective procedures that were carried out?

Clerk: Question 223, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many emergency procedures were carried out at the GHA's Cath Lab in (i) November 2024, (ii) December 2024, (iii) January 2025, (iv) February 2025 to date? Can the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown as to the types of emergency procedures that were carried out?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 220, as a result of the significant investment that is been made by this Government and our policy on the repatriation of services, the average waiting time for elective procedures to be carried out by the GHA's Cath Lab is three days. In answer to Question 221, the types of procedures that can be carried out at the GHA's Cath Lab are as follows: Angiogram; PCIs on the left anterior descending branch of a coronary artery; coronary angiography; coronary angioplasty; percutaneous angioplasty; left ventriculogram; temporary pacemaker care; cardiac pacing; PCI of RCA; permanent pacing; peripheral vascular interventions; and endoscopic retrograde ERCP, something or other. Apologies to the GHA staff that carry out these procedures, they are a very complicated names.

In answer to Question 222, the GHA's Cath Lab has carried out the following number of elective procedures; in November 2024, there were zero; in December 2024, there were 21; in January 2025, there were 20; in February, up to the 13th of February, there were seven.

The types of elective procedures that were carried out are as follows: The angiogram; the PCI of the left anterior descending branch of the coronary artery; a coronary angiography; a coronary angioplasty; percutaneous angioplasty; the left ventriculogram; temporary pacemaker care; cardiac pacing; and PCI of RCA.

In answer to Question 223, the GHA's Cath Lab carried out the following number of emergency procedures: In November, there was zero; In December, there was one; In January 2025, there was three; and in February, up to the 13th of February, there was zero. The procedures performed included angiography and percutaneous coronary intervention.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I'm not going to attempt to repeat any of those procedural names, so I'm not going to ask specific questions on those. But I will ask, can the Hon. Minister provide the times at which the Cath Lab is actually open? Is it open 24-7?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, given that it is Cardiac Awareness Month, I'm actually going to take the opportunity to say how great it is that we have this Cath Lab service available in Gibraltar that is able to do these procedures. So when I talk about figures, when I talk about 21 people that have had a procedure in Gibraltar, that is 21 people that have had an elective procedure in Gibraltar and have been able to stay in Gibraltar for their procedure and throughout their procedure. This is what the repatriation of services actually means.

So currently we are doing elective procedures in the Cath Lab and we're getting the complement comfortable with those procedures. The reason that the emergency figures are low is because the GHA have not started doing emergency procedures 24-7. We started doing daytime emergency procedures from Monday to Friday, 8 to 4, but the GHA does anticipate expanding to 24-7 provision towards the end of April 2025. Can I just say, Madam Speaker, once again, that that is an amazing achievement for the GHA.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q224-7/2025

GHA –

Data protection security measures; Amendment of data; Electronic health records with barcode bracelets; Data breaches/hacks

Clerk: Question 224, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Minister confirm whether there are any cyber security measures in place to protect patient data held by the GHA? And if so, details as to what measures are in place?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I'll answer this question together with Question 225 to 227.

Clerk: Question 225, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Once patient notes are entered into the GHA's electronic systems, can those notes be amended at a later date? If so, does the system flag that those notes have been amended, the date on which they were amended, by whom and what the amendments were?

Clerk: Question 226, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Has the GHA considered the introduction of electronic health records coupled with barcode bracelets onto St Bernard's Hospital's wards? If so, when will this technology be introduced? If not, please provide reasons why.

Clerk: Question 227, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Have the GHA experienced any breaches or hacks of confidential patient or any other data held on its servers? If so, please provide a breakdown as to how many breaches there were in (i) 2021, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2023, (iv) 24, (v) 2025 to date, and whether those data breaches or hacks were internal or external.

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 224, the GHA takes the protection of its systems and data very seriously. It is crucial to safeguard our systems and data from unauthorised access and potential cyber threats. As a result of this, the GHA has implemented robust cyber security measures to protect all data and ensure the security of our systems. To achieve this, we have established a series of protective measures, firewalls, web filters, user access controls, network segregation, and antivirus software. Together, these layered defences provide comprehensive protection against cyber-attacks and ensure the ongoing security of our systems and data.

In answer to Question 225, in the GHA, as in all hospitals, there are several software and information technology systems that are used for recording data depending on the type of data being collected and required. As is the case with IT systems in general, only certain staff will have access to read and amend patient notes, whilst others will have read-only access. Access to these systems is tightly controlled and in all instances, there will be an audit trail of all changes made.

In answer to Question 226, the GHA has a number of electronic patient systems as opposed to one overall electronic patient record. The GHA has not implemented bar-coded bracelets as it does not see the value and the patient benefit that would be derived from this investment. The current bed management system within the hospital ensures that patient locations are known at all times and it is felt that the investment necessary to introduce barcodes would not be cost-effective given the size of the hospital. Looking forward, the GHA is currently reviewing its overall digital strategy.

In answer to Question 227, there have been no breaches or hacks either internal or external to the Gibraltar Health Authority servers. Therefore, no cyber breaches or compromises of patient data have occurred.

1560 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, on Question 226, in terms of the fact that the bracelets would not be cost-effective, are any other alternative options being looked at because we have heard that there are already a number of options in place, but is anything in line with that sort of service being looked at to be rolled up in the GHA?

1565 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, given the size of the hospital and given the awareness that doctors have of the patients, it is not envisaged that the GHA will have such a system or any others. Because of the bed management systems and the fact that the patients are known to the doctors and there are updates daily, it is not felt that any such system is required.

1570 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we often have reports of issues with patient information not reaching the doctor or the practitioner that it needs to reach properly. Indeed, it happens also when individuals are sent out to tertiary institutions in order to be treated. So, I ask, when the Hon. Minister says that we have a number of electronic health record systems in place, can the Hon. Minister perhaps specify what those are?

1575 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, in relation to the barcode bracelets specifically, in institutions where these have been used, there are several drawbacks which have been reported regularly. There are barcode scanning errors. Scanners may fail to read the barcodes correctly due to damaged wristbands or technical malfunctions. This leads to medication and treatment delays
1580 and there are workflow disruptions. Whilst barcoding does aim to improve efficiency, it can sometimes slow down the workflows. The advice that we have received is that such a system is not necessary. When I talk of other systems, we are looking at overall electronic patient systems that the GHA is looking to improve the patient experience, both in primary and secondary care.

1585 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful, but can the Hon. Minister be perhaps more specific as to exactly what systems are being looked at to improve the patient experience?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, again, I am sorry to persevere, but if a direct question such as that has been posed, I would suggest that it is posed in advance or it is posed for the next
1590 session so I can actually provide a detailed breakdown of the systems that we are looking at.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Sorry, can I ask on Question 226 if I may? The Minister says that they are looking at different options and so on. Does that involve, in terms of patient support, the introduction of perhaps a GHA app exists already? It was used for the COVID time, but introducing,
1595 injecting into the app systems that would coordinate with whatever they are doing on the electronic records. Like, for example, I am aware that in some NHS hospitals in England, you can consult the app to see some of your records or your appointment systems, et cetera. They inform you that way instead of by text.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, whilst it is not a specific question, I am actually quite
1600 happy to answer it. We are at the inception stages of looking at producing something such as the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is proposing at the GHA, but we are at the very inception stages of such a discussion.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, might this be a convenient moment, given
1605 that we have been at it since 10 and we intend to go through the morning, to spend 10 minutes on a short refreshment and comfort break?

Madam Speaker: I shall not argue with that. We will take 10 minutes for a short break.

1610

Q228/2025

Public Health Gibraltar –

Former Government Ministers employed, contracted or engaged

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1615 **Clerk:** Question 228, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Are any former Government Ministers currently employed, contracted or engaged in any role by Public Health Gibraltar or providing any remunerated service to Public Health Gibraltar? If so, what is their role? Since when have they been within that role and what is the nature of the contract and level of remuneration provided and whether this is monthly or on a job-specific or other basis?

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

1625 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, no ma'am.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, information has come to the Opposition, in fact, that there is in fact somebody who has been contracted recently. And that the person has held various ministries in the past. Transport to name but one. Can the Hon. Minister unequivocally confirm that that is not the case? This individual has not been employed or has any other contract as specified in the question?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the information is incorrect.

1635 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q229-30/2025

St Bernard's Hospital –

Operating at full capacity

1640 **Clerk:** Question 229, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: What are the criteria applied to determine whether St Bernard's Hospital is operating at full capacity and has St Bernard's Hospital been operating at full capacity at any point in the past 16 months? If so, please provide a breakdown of dates when the hospital was operating at full capacity.

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

1650 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 230.

Clerk: Question 230, the Hon. Jay Ladislaus.

1655 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** What measures are in place to ensure that St Bernard's Hospital can operate in an efficient manner, which is safe for service users and staff when the hospital is at full capacity?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, there is no universally accepted benchmark for optimal bed occupancy rates, let alone full capacity at the hospital. Madam Speaker, the reference to Question 230. If what is meant by the question is bed capacity, the statistics on occupancy levels have been shared across the floor of this House on numerous occasions. They do not suggest that St Bernard's Hospital is at full capacity at any point.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, there may not be a universally accepted process by which to determine full capacity, but I ask therefore, how does the GHA determine full capacity?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: It doesn't, Madam Speaker.

Hon. J Ladislaus: So, Madam Speaker, if it does not assess whether a hospital is at full capacity, then how is it that resources are tailored to suit any potential surge in numbers of individuals who might attend hospital or be admitted?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, discussions revolve around bed occupancy. We do not talk about full capacity at a hospital.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, so to speak, we may be talking across purposes, therefore. How is it determined? Is it simply a case of a ward has all its beds full or are there other things that are applied to determine whether a hospital is operating above its usual levels of operation?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the hon. Lady has previously asked questions in this House about bed occupancy levels. There are several wards in the hospital and the percentage at which each ward is at the percentage occupancy of each ward, has been shown to the hon. Lady. I think that what she means is, are any wards in terms of the bed occupancy full? The answer is no. Those statistics have been provided across the floor of this House before. I do not know exactly what she means by, is the hospital at full capacity?

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, can I ask what safeguards are in place and how those have come about in order for the NHS, the GHA to actually respond to a surge in patients that it may not otherwise have? So above average occupancy of beds. How is it that that is determined because surely that is important and drives things such as recruitment and whether a complement is full or not?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the staffing of the wards is one question and that is determined by the nursing director, the medical director, etc. So if we are talking about the staffing complement of the wards, that is as per the staff complement as prepared for the budget on an annual basis.

If we are talking about bed occupancy, I think that what the hon. Lady, is getting at is, are the wards at maximum bed occupancy? If the question is, are the wards at maximum bed occupancy in December, January because of flu surges, for example, then this is managed by bed management meetings every single day and the wards themselves determine whether or not they can take patients or otherwise. They then, for example, take away activity rooms if they determine that they are getting close to full occupancy or the wards are managed so the patients instead of going to one ward will go to another. There is flexibility in the way that the wards are managed but as to the hospital being at full capacity, the hospital is not at full capacity. Whether the capacity of a particular ward is full due to the bed occupancy rates, again, I believe those figures were shared across the floor of this House earlier this year or later last year. I can't remember when exactly it was.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: To be clear, because the hon. Lady, I think, in a previous answer to a supplementary suggested that the bed occupancy levels of the wards are not full. I think that is what I heard but she has given a more extended answer now. I just want to perhaps probe this in the context of my learned colleague has asked about capacity and I hear what the Minister says about the difference between full capacity and occupancy levels because I suppose the St Bernard's Hospital would not be functioning at full capacity in terms of surgery because operations are being cancelled because there are no beds in hospital. Clearly we are receiving information from users and constituents who have had surgery cancelled as a result of being told that there are no beds in hospital and so we can understand in nomenclature terms, the difference between you are not functioning at full capacity in terms of certain functions of the hospital, but in others, you are absolutely full. Now, on the issue of occupancy, can I ask the Minister just to clarify what seems to me a disconnect between two of her answers where in her latest answer, she said that there were bed management meetings and it might be that at certain times, certain wards were not taking the patients. In another answer, she suggested that there was never a time that the hospital was full. Can I ask her to clarify that?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the hospital being full means that every ward in the hospital is full. That is what this question relates to. There is not a breakdown asking me for bed occupancy, which there has been in the past.

Previous questions that the hon. Member, the hon. Lady has asked relate to bed occupancy on each and every ward. So if we are talking about full capacity of a hospital, it would mean that each and every ward of the hospital were full. The question does not relate to full capacity of theatres. The theatre will never be, or the theatres, as the most expensive piece in the hospital, the theatres will be used as efficiently as possible. So it is true to say that the number of elective operations would depend on beds being available. To my knowledge, there haven't been, I do not know and I do not want to be accused of misleading Parliament by the hon. Member's opposite, but to my knowledge, I do not think that any operations have been cancelled this year.

I reiterate, I do not have that information for certain because that is not what the question has asked. The question has asked me if the hospital is at full capacity. Again, we may be talking about a difference in nomenclature, but given that the hon. Lady has previously asked me for a breakdown, ward by ward, of the occupancy levels, and that has been provided across the floor of the House, I have no issue with providing the hon. Lady on occupancy rates of each and every one of the wards at the hospital if that is what she means. If she asks me that question in the next session of Parliament, I will happily provide that information as I have done previously in percentage terms but the question of is the hospital at full capacity, it has to be clear what I am saying.

The hospital is not at full capacity because all of the wards are not full. To my knowledge, and again, I do not know for certain, to my knowledge, there are few, if any, elective operations. We are talking about elective operations here.

The operations which are necessary are obviously done. To my knowledge, there are few, if any, elective operations that are being cancelled this year because the bed management team is moving around and has been flexible in its requirements. I do not want to be accused of misleading in what I'm talking about in relation to full capacity. When we talk about full capacity of the hospital, the hospital is not at full capacity. Are some wards more full than others? Yes, we saw that in the figures. Some wards in the last session of Parliament were shown to be at 96% capacity. But that does not mean that the hospital as a whole is at full capacity. That is what I mean by the bed management teams playing around with the availability of the wards or otherwise.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, I see. I understand. It certainly would be helpful for us on this side, and perhaps we can ask those questions again, to get a feel for the occupancy levels broken down by ward and it would certainly be helpful, and again, we can probably put that question on to see

what kind of cancellations there has been divided in terms of electives or other surgery. What is elective? I suppose it is all relative, in that you can have emergency operations. You can have true elective operations and then you can have operations that someone who is programmed to have an operation might think it is necessary and not necessarily elective in that sense. Although clinically, it might be elective. We can have a debate about that.

Can I ask on the issue that the hon. Lady mentions because I think she recognises in her answer that while the hospital might not be full in terms of bed occupancy in every single ward, because and I would understand that, for example, the Calpe ward that deals with isolation would not be full, or Maternity might not be full, but in terms of surgical wards might be full, or the wards that deal with the medical cases might be full. As the GHA tracks bed occupancy figures, as I'm sure it does, and it identifies that there may be wards that are fuller than others, is there also a bed management plan not just to deal with matters as they arise on a daily basis, but to deal with the concept of whether we have now reached the point that certain wards in certain areas, whether they be surgical or medical, need to be expanded?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: No, Madam Speaker, we have not reached that point. What I would suggest, Madam Speaker, is that across the board in the Opposition, they do actually specify the actual content, or they ask the question in such a way that it elicits the response that they are actually trying to get. As I have said previously, I have no issue in sharing the bed occupancy rates ward by ward, as I have done before, but the nomenclature which is currently used in the current question is not clear of what the hon. Lady is trying to achieve.

Madam Speaker, one thing which I will say is that I will not be lectured on cancelled operations by the Leader of the Opposition, when in fact in the GSD days the number of elective procedures that were cancelled were huge. We now have an omni-cell system where the devices which are required for operations are actually always available. We have a management system which actually functions so that there are the least cancellations possible. What I will not do is take any lessons from absolutely anybody who had massive numbers of cancelled operations, when in fact the numbers of cancelled operations are minimal at the moment, because we are managing both the systems which give us the equipment which the doctors need, as well as the bed management in the hospital, to ensure that there are the least possible numbers of operations cancelled. Now, again, I revert to the first point that I made, that if the hon. Members opposite want specific information, they should word their questions in a way that is accurate, and in that case accurate figures will be provided across the floor. If I am spoken about at the hospital being at full capacity, whatever that may mean, then I am unable to go into the level of detail which the Leader of the Opposition is requesting.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, certainly I remember, I'm not sure why the hon. Lady has taken that tone on the answer. I thought I was asking a perfectly sensible and reasonable question. In other words, have we reached a position as a community that having identified, for example, because of population growth, that we have reached the level that we need more beds in surgical wards, or more beds in medical wards, that the GHA was looking at it, and instead what I get is some kind of deflection from the hon. Lady taking us back to the GSD days in terms of statistics on operations. I can certainly tell her I do not have all the GSD statistics on bed operations in front of me, but I certainly know that when I was occupying that seat as Health Minister, the overall bed occupancy levels were not as high. It might have been because the population was smaller, and that is why I was asking, I thought, a perfectly reasonable and sensible question that wasn't inviting and not lecturing the hon. Lady on surgical cancellations. Can I ask her why she is being so defensive about the question?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, what I am highlighting is the improvements in the system that have been seen in the last 12 years. I stand on the shoulders of previous Ministers who have improved the system to such an extent that we now have four theatres, an omni-cell system, and

a complement which is able to carry out elective procedures largely when they are determined. There may be some cancellations, there may be some bed issues, but again, these questions should be asked in a manner where the appropriate question is being asked.

The response that the Member got is because this is about the sixth time in a single session that the question asked is not actually accurate and does not elicit the response which is then subsequently answered. So I would honestly suggest that they sit down and review the manner that they ask questions so that the information that we can provide can be more specific.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q231-5/2025

GHA –

Lack of adequacy/resilience within staff complement; Risk to patients in connection with staffing issues; Nursing complement; Vacancies 2023 to date; internal investigations

Clerk: Question 231, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: In the past 12 months, have any members of the GHA Board raised concerns in terms of a lack of adequacy of resilience as regards any of the GHA's staffing complements? If so, which ones and what were the issues identified?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. 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 Questions 232 to 235.

Clerk: Question 232, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Has the letter to the GHA highlighting the risk to patients because of staffing issues which was cited by 180 nurses last year been replied to? Has any action plan been put in place by the GHA to address the concerns raised in that letter? And if so, what does that action plan entail?

Clerk: Question 233, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Does the GHA currently have a sufficient nursing complement? If so: (i) what criteria is applied to gauge staffing levels, (ii) who determines whether the complement is sufficient, and (iii) is the current nursing complement considered to be sufficient to ensure the proper and efficient running of all services whilst maintaining a safe working environment for nursing staff?

Clerk: Question 234, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many vacancies within the GHA were advertised in: (i) 2023, (ii) 2024 and (iii) 2025 to date? Please provide specifics as to each of the vacancies advertised, how they were advertised and how they were filled.

Clerk: Question 235, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1860 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many internal investigations of a human resources nature relating to GHA staff were carried out in (i) 2022, (ii) 2023, (iii) 2024 and (iv) 2025 to date? What was the average time span within which those investigations were concluded and how many are currently live?

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

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Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 231, suggested business plans are continuously put forward by different board members during the course of the year. These then go through numerous filters, finally that of the Director General and if urgent, the business case is then put to me to approve. However, the most prudent approach is for the Executive Board to determine year-on-year what the requirements are for the GHA together with the financial forecasts and submitted at the time of preparing of the budget. As I have confirmed to this House on numerous occasions, each and every clinical vacancy that was requested last year was approved at budget last year.

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In answer to Question 232, yes ma'am, I have met with United Union and the relevant stakeholders in order to discuss several issues as mentioned in my press release earlier this year, including those raised in the contents of the letter. As I have stated in the press release and I quote Madam Speaker, HMGOG and the GHA remain committed to constructive engagement with United Union and all stakeholders to ensure the welfare of staff and the delivery of high-quality healthcare services. One of the constructive outcomes of these discussions has resulted in a joint nursing skill mix audit that is currently taking place. An action plan will be devised and implemented once this has been completed.

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In answer to Question 233, yes ma'am, the GHA does have a sufficient nursing complement. Nursing staffing levels are frequently assessed by the nursing management team in alignment with bed occupancy, patient acuity, and dependency across each ward, clinical area and speciality. This dynamic approach enables adjustments to staffing levels and skill mix, for example, registered nurses versus nursing assistants through staff redeployment. The objective is to ensure that the nursing care volume corresponds to the patient needs whilst considering the direct care activities undertaken by different members of the nursing team. A structured triangulation process between the GHA board, the GHA executive team and the director of nursing/ the nurse management team exists. Further Madam Speaker, as I have previously mentioned, in order to ensure that the staffing complement is always fit for purpose, the GHA is reviewing the complement by conducting a nursing skill mix audit. This reviews the existing nursing workforce composition, which includes both registered nurses and nursing support workers.

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In answer to Question 234, in 2023, 71 vacancies were advertised, and in 2024, 64 vacancies were advertised. In 2025 to date, 29 vacancies have been advertised. I now hand over the schedule to the hon. Member with the information requested.

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Sorry. In answer to Question 235, 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.

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Madam Speaker: All right, I will give the hon. Member some time to consider the schedule in relation to Question 234, but in relation to Questions 231, 232, 233 and 235, are there any supplementaries?

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Hon. J Ladislaus: Yes, Madam Speaker, in respect of 231, is the simple answer for the public, therefore, that yes, concerns have been raised by members of the board as to lack of resilience in respect of staffing complements?

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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: No, Madam Speaker, as I said, these issues are frequently raised. It doesn't necessarily mean that there are complaints as to staffing complements. The way that the staffing

complement works is that the Director of Nursing, the Medical Director and the DG put together a budget every year.

As I have said on numerous occasions in this House, Madam Speaker, in the last round of the budget, this Government approved each and every clinical vacancy. That includes every medical vacancy and every nursing vacancy that was requested by the GHA. This therefore says that there should be no issues with staffing complements because the staffing complement given to the GHA was exactly what the GHA requested in the last budget. As I have explained in answer to that question, what happens is that throughout the year, there are issues raised. This then goes towards a business plan, which is put forward to the DG. The DG then discusses the business plan with finance and that is then put through the ministry to be addressed in the budget.

If there is an urgent request or there is an urgent business plan or there is something that urgently needs to be addressed, this will then be put to me directly so that I can take it to Cabinet so that a supplementary funding request can be put in but by and large, the complement is approved by the executive team and the complement of nursing will be approved by the Director of Nursing. The complement of clinicians will be approved by the Medical Director and this will be put to the Government in these sessions that happen now.

So in these sessions that are currently happening, as the hon. Members opposite will be aware, we sit with each and every department and we put together the plan for the next year. And let me be clear once again, in case I have not made myself sufficiently clear already, in the last budget session, every single post that was requested by the GHA that was a clinical post was approved by HMGOG. So every single clinical post was not, there was not a single clinical post in the GHA budget that was removed by HMGOG. Therefore, the staffing complement is exactly as was requested by the GHA.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, there is a difference to be made between budgets and what is handed to the GHA at the commencement of a financial year and whether issues have been raised by members of the board as to any issues with complement. Certainly, 180 nurses complaining that there are issues on wards because the staffing complement of nurses wasn't enough certainly suggests that there are issues that have been raised. Have any of the Board members made any comments as to that, for example?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, precisely for that reason, there is an audit being carried out, which determines whether or not they are correct, that every ward is understaffed or otherwise. They have agreed and they are currently in the process of carrying out a staffing audit so that we can make sure that all the staffing complement is correct but again, Madam Speaker, the staff complement of the GHA is exactly as a GHA has requested.

The nursing complement of 180 nurses put together a letter and in response to that letter, we agreed to submit ourselves to an audit to make sure that each and every ward is sufficiently well manned. So in response to that letter, what we are doing is to make sure that the hospital is appropriately staffed, even as per the request that the GHA themselves put in.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, Unite's stance certainly was that these issues are persistent in respect of nursing staff for over four years. Now, what is the reason for such a lengthy period of time having elapsed without these issues having been addressed before now?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, clearly I am not making myself clear enough. That nurses themselves have issues, right? The nursing complement, the Government is advised on the nursing complement by the Executive Board of the GHA. If the GHA come and says to the Government, if the Executive Board of the GHA says to the Government that 512 nurses are what is needed to run the GHA, then Government appropriately accepts advice from the clinicians and from the Executive Board and finances a complement of 512 nurses. So Government has given each and every vacancy that the Executive Board recommended last year. I do not know a

different way of saying that. So each and every vacancy that the executive board of the GHA requested last year, whether that be in terms of clinicians or whether that be in terms of nursing, was acceded to by Government and the finance provided for that level of complement. If there are 180 nurses that feel that the awards are under complemented, we are actually listening to those nurses and saying to them, right, go and do a nursing audit to make sure that what you're saying is correct. We're not saying it isn't. But actually what should happen is that the nursing director should make representations to the executive board. The executive board should then tell us what they feel the complement should be and then the financing is sought for that level of nursing. Again, let me repeat myself in case I have not made myself clear on the last three occasions that I said it. Each and every clinical...

I'm not going to accede to the hon. Shadow Minister's request because he interrupts at every possible opportunity. So I'm going to repeat it again. Each and every clinical vacancy, and clinical vacancy includes clinicians and nurses, were acceded to by HMGOG and funding was provided for the 512 nurses that the Executive Board of the GHA requested from HMGOG. So if that is a complement that the Executive Board has told HMGOG is required, then that is a complement that HMGOG has provided. So we do not accept that there is not sufficient complement but in any event, what we are doing in response to the letter is that we are conducting a staff audit.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, why then did we have a letter from 180 nurses just last year flagging that there were serious staffing issues which Unite have gone on to highlight? Why on earth did it take until this year to address that?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the budget was entered into and the hon. Lady was present at the budget speech. The hon. Lady was present at the budget speech in July where the complement of 512 nurses was approved. So the hon. Lady was here when the subsequent questions have shown that she hasn't actually registered the fact that there are 512 nurses in the complement. The hon. Lady was present at the budget session where the nursing complement was discussed. So if there are 180 nurses that feel that the nursing complement is understaffed, those 180 nurses should actually go to the Nursing Director and make sure that the Nursing Director is aware that they feel that the nursing complement is understaffed. Because, and again I repeat for the hon. Shadow Minister for the Port amongst other things, if I have not made it clear enough on five previous occasions, because last time you told me there were four, each and every clinical and nursing vacancy that was requested by the GHA in last year's budget was approved by the Government. So, 512 nursing staff was the complement that the GHA asked HMGOG for.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, we're delighted to hear that an audit will be taking place because it is clearly something that we very much pushed for within the last election and which we said we would do if we had won the last election and which we were laughed at for. So I am extremely glad to see that the Government are taking a leaf out of our book, so to speak, and auditing. Why on earth is it the case that an audit is needed if the Hon. Minister is of the view that, or has been informed that the nursing complement had no issues? What is the reason for that and how long would that audit take?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, again, let me clarify so that there is no accusation that we are misleading Parliament. We never laughed at an audit of the nursing staff in the hospital. What we found amusing was the number of audits that the hon. Members opposite were proposing to do in their campaign last year. That is what we found amusing because I think the word audit was mentioned quite a few times in the manifesto. So the nursing, what is actually called a nursing skill mix audit was never laughed at by any member of this Government. Why do we feel it is necessary? They've asked for it and we feel it is necessary. Now, I, like the hon. Lady, am not a clinician. I'm not a nurse either and I thought that a skill mix audit was something that

2015 could be completed immediately. When I actually spoke to the clinical nurse managers in this meeting organised by Unite, which they attended when we spoke about these issues, it was them that informed me that this was actually quite a lengthy process, which would take a couple of months. So the process is being run by them and they are controlling the timescales of the nursing skill mix audits.

2020 It has got absolutely nothing to do with Ministry. It is something which they themselves are running and they themselves are aware of the length of time that it takes because it was them that told me, who thought it was a matter of days rather than months, the length of time that it would take to carry out the audit.

2025 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker in respect of Question 235 on the internal investigations of human resources nature. And we're not asking for comments as to specific investigations. What I am asking is as to statistics, because again, this goes to the point that Unite's made, which is that many are being left in limbo for a long period of time and that this is becoming quite an issue and surely that impacts service. Therefore, could I ask the Hon. Minister what the issue is with providing data in respect of the numbers of those internal investigations of HR nature, which are ongoing and those that have already been concluded?

2030 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it is HMGOG policy that we do not comment on disciplinary matters at all. So we do not comment on any statistics, etc, of disciplinary nature within the GHA.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Can I ask then, does the Hon. Minister agree with Unite's position that there are a great many individuals being left in limbo who are awaiting the conclusion of these such processes?

2040 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker, we do not agree. The reality is that these investigations take time because they have to get the witness statements from both sides. Sometimes it is numerous parties. So these investigations are done as quickly as is possible whilst trying to get all the information available from all parties.

2045 As the hon. Lady will be aware, we have recently restructured the workforce team in order to ensure that these matters are carried out in a more expeditious way. But no, we do not agree with Unite's view that these matters are left out standing for a significant period of time.

2050 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** How does the Hon. Minister foresee that the restructuring will impact positively upon these numbers? Again, if we go back to Unite's comments and it doesn't seem that they are of the same view, Madam Speaker.

2055 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the workforce team has been restructured in order to address grievances. So the teams internally within workforce are also being restructured.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 235**ANSWER TO QUESTION 234****2023**

Grade	How advertised	How Filled
ADMIN & SUPPORT		
JUNIOR GHA CLERK	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
ASSISTANT ELECTRONIC HEALTH TECHNOLOGY OFFICER	Public Service/External	Internal Applicant
ELECTRONIC HEALTH TECHNOLOGY OFFICER	Public Service/External	Public Service
GHA EXECUTIVE CLERK	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
HIGHER EXECUTIVE CLERK	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
HEAD OF FINANCE & PROCUREMENT	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
LEGAL SERVICES & CLAIMS MANAGER	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
SENIOR EHT OFFICER	Internal/Public Service	Public Service
GHA CLERK	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
GHA STORES MANAGER	Internal/Public Service	Public Service
PALS MANAGER	Internal/Public Service	Public Service
DOMESTIC SERVICES MANAGER	Internal/Public Service	Public Service
DIRECTOR OF WORKFORCE	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
DEPUTY HEAD OF FINANCE & PROCUREMENT	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
DEPUTY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR - CATERING	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
CANCER SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
DEPUTY DOMESTIC SERVICES MANAGER	Internal/Public Service	Public Service
AHP		
PHYSIOTHERAPIST SENIOR I (Paeds)	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
COUNSELLOR	EXTERNAL	Public Service
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT - PATHOLOGY	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST TECH II	EXTERNAL	External Applicant
PHYSIOTHERAPIST SENIOR II (ROTATIONAL)	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	Internal Applicant
PHYSIOTHERAPIST SENIOR I (FALLS)	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
PHARMACY ASSISTANT TECHNICAL OFFICER	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
BASIC SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPIST	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
HEAD OF SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPIST	Internal	Internal Applicant
CLINICAL PHARMACIST	Internal	Internal Applicant
CHIEF PHARMACIST	Internal	Internal Applicant
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	Internal	Internal Applicant
AMBULANCE		
CLINICAL ADVISORS 111	Internal	Internal Applicant
EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCHER	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCHER	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
INDUSTRIALS		
GENERAL OPERATIVE DOMESTIC (P/T)	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
SUPERVISOR GENRAL OPERATIVE SERVICES - DOMESTIC	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant

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CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 235

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 234

MEDICAL		
CONSULTANT ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON	EXTERNAL	Internal Applicant
CONSULTANT GENERAL SURGEON (COLORECTAL)	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
CONSULTANT OPHTHALMOLOGIST	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
CLINICAL FELLOW IN ORTHO/TRAUMA	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
CLINICAL FELLOW IN A&E	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
GENERAL PRACTITIONER (P/T)	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
CONSULTANT GYNAECOLOGIST	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
MEDICAL DIRECTOR	Internal	Internal Applicant
DEPUTY MEDICAL DIRECTOR	Internal	Internal Applicant
CLINICAL FELLOW IN SURGICAL SERVICES	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
CLINICAL FELLOW IN ORTHO & TRAUMA	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
CLINICAL FELLOW IN GENERAL MEDICINE	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
CLINICAL FELLOW IN GENERAL MEDICINE	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
CLINICAL FELLOW IN ANAESTHESIA	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
CLINICAL FELLOW IN A&E	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
NURSING		
DENTAL NURSE	EXTERNAL	External Applicant
CHARGE NURSE - CMW	Internal	Internal Applicant
CHARGE NURSE - RAINBOW	Internal	Internal Applicant
CHARGE NURSE - THEATRES	Internal	Internal Applicant
CHARGE NURSE - JMW	Internal	Internal Applicant
CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST - STOMA CARE	Internal	External Applicant
DIVISIONAL CLINICAL LEAD - PCC	Internal	Internal Applicant
DIVISIONAL CLINICAL LEAD - MEDICAL	Internal	Internal Applicant
DIVISIONAL CLINICAL LEAD - SURGICAL	Internal	Internal Applicant
OPERATING DEPARTMENT PRACTITIONER	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
OPHTHALMIC NURSING TECHNICIAN	Internal	Internal Applicant
REGISTERED NURSE - MENTAL HEALTH	INTERNAL/EXTERNAL	External Applicant
REGISTERED NURSE - PCC DISTRICT	Internal	Internal Applicant
REGISTERED NURSE - DAY INFUSION SERVICE	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
REGISTERED NURSE - DIALYSIS	INTERNAL/EXTERNAL	Internal Applicant
CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST -CARDIAC REHAB	Internal	Internal Applicant
MATRON - PCC	Internal	Internal Applicant
OPERATING DEPARTMENT PRACTITIONER	EXTERNAL - ABOARD	External Applicant
SENIOR NURSE LECTURER	Internal	Internal Applicant
TSSU TECHNICIAN	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
TSSU TECHNICIAN	Internal/Public Service	Internal Applicant
TSSU TECHNICIAN	EXTERNAL	External Applicant

Cont....

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 235**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 234****2024**

Grade	How advertised	How Filled
ADMIN & SUPPORT		
Accident & Emergency Clerk	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicants
Head of Internal Audit	Internal - Public Service	Public Service
Public Health Information Analyst	Internal - Public Service	No successful candidate found at interview
AHP		
Senior Paediatric Audiologist	Public Service /External Abroad	Internal Applicant
Occupational Therapist - Senior I (paediatric)	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicant
Occupational Therapist - Senior II	Public Service /External Abroad	Successful applicant declined position
Occupational Therapist - Senior II	Public Service /External Abroad	External Applicant
Occupational Therapist - Basic Grade	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicant
Physiotherapist Senior I - Adult Community Rehab	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicant
Physiotherapist Senior II -Rotational	Public Service /External Abroad	External Applicant
Physiotherapy Helper Part Time	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicant
Senior Paediatric Support Worker	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicant
Pharmacy Technician	Public Service /External Abroad	External Applicant
Radiographer Senior II	Public Service /External Abroad	External Applicant
Radiography Assistant	Internal - Public Service	Successful applicant declined position
Speech and Language Therapist - Senior I Paediatric	Public Service /External Abroad	External Applicant
AMBULANCE		
Ambulance Care Assistant	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicants
Clinical Advisor 111	Public Service /External Abroad	Filled by Internal/External Applicants
Emergency Medical Dispatcher	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicant
Paramedic	Public Service /External Abroad	Internal Applicant
Clinical & Educational Lead Paramedic	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicant
INDUSTRIALS		
General Operative Domestic - Supply	Public Service /External Abroad	External Applicant
General Operative Domestic - Full Time	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicant
General Operative Labourer	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicant

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 235**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 234****MEDICAL**

Cardiac Physiologist	External/Abroad	External Applicant
Clinical Fellow General Medicine	Internal/Abroad	External Applicant
Clinical Fellow A&E	Internal/Abroad	External Applicant
Clinical Fellow A&E	Internal/Abroad	External Applicant
Clinical Fellow A&E	Internal/Abroad	External Applicant
Clinical Fellow Surgical Services	Internal/Abroad	External Applicant
Clinical Fellow Surgical Services	Internal/Abroad	External Applicant
Clinical Fellow Anaesthesia	Internal/Abroad	External Applicant
Clinical Fellow Anaesthesia	Internal/Abroad	External Applicant
Clinical Fellow Anaesthesia	Internal/Abroad	External Applicant
Consultant Cardiologist	Internal/Abroad	Not filled as Candidate not found appointable
Consultant Anaesthetist	Internal/Abroad	Internal Candidate
Consultant ENT	Internal/Abroad	External Applicant

NURSING

Registered Nurse - Cardiac Catheter Laboratory	Internal - GHA Employees / External Abroad	Successful applicant declined position
Registered Nurse - Cardiac Catheter Laboratory	Internal - GHA Employees / External Abroad	Internal Applicant
Registered Nurse - Cardiac Catheter Laboratory	Internal - GHA Employees / External Abroad	External Applicant
Clinical Nurse Manager	Internal - GHA Employees / External Abroad	Internalk Applicant
Charge Nurse - Theaters	Internal - GHA Employees	Internalk Applicant
Charge Nurse - A&E	Internal - GHA Employees	Internalk Applicant
Charge Nurse - Captain Murchison Ward	Internal - GHA Employees	Internalk Applicant
Registered Nurse - Calpe Ward	Internal - GHA Employees / External Abroad	Filled by Internal & External Applicants
Registered Nurse - Calpe Ward	Internal - GHA Employees	Filled by Internal & External Applicants
Registered Nurse - Calpe Ward	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicants
Registered Nurse - Child	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicants
Registered Nurse - PCC District	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicants
Registered Nurse - Theaters	Internal - GHA Employees / External Abroad	Filled by Internal Applicants
Paediatric Diabetic Nurse Specialist	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicant
Charge Nurse - Maternity	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicant
Registered General Nurse	External - returning University of Gibraltar students	Internal Applicant

Cont...

2075

2080

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 235**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 234**

NURSING (cont)		
Allied Mental Health Practitioner	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicant
Clinical Nurse Specialist - Haematology	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicant
Registered Nurse A&E	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicant
Charge Nurse - Victoria Ward	Internal - GHA Employees	No successful candidate found at interview
Charge Nurse - Victoria Ward	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicant
Charge Nurse - Crisis Liaison Team	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicant
Charge Nurse - Calpe Ward	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicant
Charge Nurse - Cath Lab	Internal - GHA Employees / External Abroad	External Applicant
Resuscitation Officer	Internal - GHA Employees / External Abroad	Successful applicant declined position
TSSU Technician	Internal - Public Service	Internal Applicant
Registered Midwife	Internal - GHA Employees	Internal Applicant

2025

Grade	How advertised	How Filled
ADMIN & SUPPORT		
ERS Administration & Facilities Manager	Internal/Public Service	Vacant recruitment on-going
Senior Crown Counsel	Internal/Public Service	Vacant recruitment on-going
Junior GHA Clerk	Internal/Public Service	Vacant recruitment on-going
GHA Clerk	Internal/Public Service	Vacant recruitment on-going
GHA Executive Clerk	Internal/Public Service	Vacant recruitment on-going
AHP		
Audiologist Adult	External/Abroad	Vacant recruitment on-going
Basic Grade Pharmacist	Public Service/External	Vacant recruitment on-going
Biomedical Assistant	Public Service/External	Vacant recruitment on-going
Physiotherapist Senior I (Paediatrics)	UK/Abroad	Vacant recruitment on-going
Physiotherapist Senior II	External	Vacant recruitment on-going
Radiographer Assistant	Public Service	Vacant recruitment on-going
INDUSTRIALS		
ERS Catering Manager	Internal	Internal Applicant
MEDICAL		
Clinical Fellow A&E	External/Abroad	Vacant recruitment on-going
Clinical Fellow A&E	External/Abroad	Vacant recruitment on-going
Clinical Fellow General Medicine	External/Abroad	Vacant recruitment on-going
Clinical Fellow Surgical Services	External/Abroad	External applicant
NURSING		
Charge Nurse - Endoscopy	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going
Charge Nurse - Primary Care Centre	Internal	Internal Applicant
Charge Nurse - John Ward	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going
ERS - Divisional Clinical Lead	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going
Matron - PCC & Emergency Services Division	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going
Charge Nurse - Mental Health (CMHT)	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going
Nursing Assistant	Internal/Public Service	Vacant recruitment on-going

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 235

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 234

Registered Nurse - PCC District	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going
Registered Nurse - PCC District	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going
Registered Nurse - Chemotherapy	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going
Registered Nurse - Dudley Toomey Ward	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going
Registered Nurse - Dialysis	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going
Registered Nurse - Child	Internal	Vacant recruitment on-going

2090

2095

Q236/2025

GHA –

GHA service users sponsored to see Mental Health Practitioners at local private clinics

Clerk: Question 236, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2100 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Are any GHA service users sponsored by the GHA to see mental health practitioners at local private clinics? If so, how many service users have been sponsored by the GHA for this purpose in the past 12 months, broken down by month, and what was the monthly cost to the GHA of doing so?

2105 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, no service users are sponsored by the GHA to see mental health practitioners at any local private clinic.

2110 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q237/2025

IVF Treatment –

Average success rates for sponsored GHA patients

Q238/2025

IVF Clinics –

Complaints

Q239/2025

IVF Treatment –

Sponsored women

2115

Q240/2025

IVF Services –

Tender applications, scoring matrix criteria

Clerk: Question 237, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2120 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Government provide statistics as to the average success rates for individuals sponsored by the GHA to undergo IVF treatments at tertiary providers, broken down by clinic, for the following years: (i) 2021, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2023, (iv) 2024, (v) 2025, to date?

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

2125 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 238 to 240.

Clerk: Question 238, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2130 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many complaints in respect of IVF clinics where GHA-sponsored patients have been referred to were received by the GHA, broken down by the specific clinics being complained of in: (i) 2021, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2023, (iv) 2024, (v) 2025, to date?

Clerk: Question 239, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2135 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many women have been sponsored by the GHA to undergo IVF treatment for the following years: (i) 2021, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2023, (iv) 2024, and (v) 2025, to date, broken down by the specific clinic where the treatment was received?

Clerk: Question 240, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2140 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister provide details as to the scoring matrix criteria that was followed to assess the tender applications for IVF services, which resulted in Clínica Medrano being awarded the tender for services?

2145 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Health Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 237, average success rates are as follows: In 2021, there was 16 patients with a 33% success rate at Clínica Medrano; in 2022, the data is unavailable from the Ovo Clinic; 2023, the data is unavailable from the Ovo Clinic; in 2024, there are 10 patients with a 62.5% success rate at Clínica Medrano; in 2025, there are two new patients that have commenced IVF treatment in Clínica Medrano.

In answer to Question 238: in 2021, there were five formal complaints received, all in respect of Clínica Medrano; in 2022, there were no formal complaints received; 2023, there was one formal complaint received from Clínica Medrano. 2024, there was one formal complaint received from the Ovo Clinic; in 2025, there are no formal complaints received to date.

In answer to Question 239, the number of women referred to undergo IVF treatment for the following years are as follows. In 2021, there were 25, all went to Clínica Medrano. 2022, there were three to Clínica Medrano and 18 to the Ovo Clinic; in 2023, there was one to Clínica Medrano and 18 to the Ovo Clinic; in 2024, there were 18, all to Clínica Medrano; in 2025 to date, there were two, all to Clínica Medrano.

In answer to Question 240, Madam Speaker, it is not in the public interest to share the information requested by the hon. Lady, but however, I am happy to share this behind the Speaker's chair.

2165 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, looking at the statistics, the complaints all seem to relate to Clínica Medrano, or most of them seem to relate to Clínica Medrano, save for one which was Ovo. I ask therefore, why it is that given the high number of complaints there and the fact that they all related to Medrano, why it is that the tender was awarded to Clínica Medrano in the end?

2170 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the GHA investigated the complaints received in all instances, and they also received the submissions and reviewed the submissions received in the clinics. A scoring matrix criteria was followed to assess each tender, and the Clínica Medrano received the highest score, hence the decision to award the tender to this clinic. When the individual complaints were reviewed, it was felt that there were some that were of substance, but the majority related to communication issues.

2175 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** In respect of the communication issues, have those been looked into and have those been addressed by the clinic since?

2180 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am informed that they have.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q241/2025

GHA –

Approval process for referrals

2185

Clerk: Question 241, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Can the Hon. Minister outline the process for approvals of referrals by the GHA for medical appointments at tertiary providers?

2190

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the process for approving referrals by the GHA for medical appointments at tertiary providers is as follows. A secondary care consultant identifies a treatment or seeks a specialist opinion that is not available within the GHA; The referral request is submitted to a tertiary referral board for review and approval, and upon approval, an appointment request is made with the designated tertiary provider; Once the appointment is confirmed, the patient is informed and all necessary logistical arrangements are coordinated through the sponsored patients department.

2200

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful for that answer. The reason I ask that question is because we have information coming to us from members of the public that the approvals are being delayed until quite late and sometimes very close to the appointments, which is resulting more and more in appointments being missed, for example, at tertiary providers in the UK, where a person must drop everything and fly over very quickly. Has the Hon. Minister had information that this is the case also and what is being done to alleviate that?

2205

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the process with tertiary institutions, particularly with the UK, is normally very fluid. What happens frequently and is out of the GHA's hands is that the NHS is sometimes quite delayed in providing us with the appointment. So the NHS sometimes does not provide the GHA with the appointment until very late in the day and then, yes, the appointment is scheduled and the flights and the hotel or Calpe House is organised at this point. When that appointment is scheduled is unfortunately out of the GHA's hands because it falls squarely within the NHS and what often happens is that because, for example, there is a cancellation of an operation or procedure at the NHS, they then contact the patients and the liaison happens then to try and put one of our patients into that slot. Unfortunately, because that is driven by the NHS, that is out of the GHA's hands.

2215

Madam Speaker: Next question.

2220

Q242-3/2025

GHA –

Transferring critically ill babies and children; Criteria to determine whether a baby or child requires specialised care

Clerk: Question 242, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2225

Hon. J Ladislaus: What is the GHA's protocol regarding when and how to transfer critically ill babies and children to more specialist facilities than the GHA?

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

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 243.

Clerk: Question 243, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: What are the clinical criteria that are applied at the GHA to determine whether a baby or child requires more specialised care at a tertiary medical facility and by who is that decision made?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 242, the decision to transfer critically ill babies or children rests with the paediatric consultant. Once the decision is made, the paediatrician contacts the appropriate hospital based on the patient's condition. The hospital then allocates a bed according to the clinical urgency. The method and route of transfer are determined by the patient's medical needs. In relation to Question 243, there are limits to the service which can be provided locally in the GHA. The paediatrician responsible for the care of the patient evaluates the case and if deemed necessary upon clinical judgement, seek specialist input or further management advice from more advanced centres in Spain or the UK, depending on the clinical presentation and the expertise required.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the answer, but again, I ask the question because we have had reports by members of the public that that comments have been made when some children, babies have arrived in quite a critical condition at some of these tertiary institutions, in particular, one of them and the comment was that they are being sent very late and the situation obviously becomes a lot more urgent the later they are sent. Is this information that the Hon. Minister has had brought to her attention and what has again been done to address that?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I am unfamiliar with this particular case and I am happy to discuss it if the hon. Lady feels that it is required. What frequently happens on the ground is actually that the paediatric consultants in the GHA have direct contact to their equivalents in some tertiary institutions and one in particular and what frequently happens is the paediatric consultants in both institutions will be in touch to assess the patient's needs. They are normally assessed on an ongoing basis to determine whether or not it is required to transfer the patient to Spain. As the hon. Lady will be aware, what does happen, particularly in critically ill babies, is that babies can take a turn for the worse very quickly and it is at this point that it is determined whether or not the baby should be transferred to Spain but the paediatric consultants, this is not a case of it going to any board or otherwise. In the case of critically ill babies in particular, it will be the paediatric consultants that are in direct contact with each other to determine whether the child should be transferred to a tertiary institution.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Next question.

Q244/2025

Tertiary healthcare institutions – Cardiac procedures carried out

Clerk: Question 244, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many cardiac procedures were carried out at tertiary healthcare institutions in: (i) September 2024, (ii) October 2024, (iii) November 2024, (iv) December 2024, (v) January 2025 and (vi) February 2025 to date, broken down by type of procedure and the healthcare institution in which they were carried out?

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

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

2285

Madam Speaker: All right, we will move on to the next question and revert to this one for supplementaries in due course.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 244

Sep-24

Procedure	Evelina Hospital	Guys and St Thomas	Hospital Punta de Europa	Quiron Campo de Gibraltar	Vithas International	Royal Brompton
CPET Study	2	0	0	0	0	0
Cardiac Electrophysiology	1	0	0	0	0	0
Atrial Ablation	0	0	6	0	0	0
Pacemaker	0	0	1	0	2	0
TAVI	0	0	1	0	0	0
Replacement Aortic Valve	0	0	1	0	0	0
Repair Aortic root	0	0	1	0	0	0
Arrhythmogenic Cardiomyopathy	0	0	1	0	0	0
Pulmonary hypertension	0	0	1	0	0	0
Coronary Angioplasty	0	0	1	0	0	4
Outpatient appointment	0	0	1	0	0	0
ARVD Investigation	0	0	1	0	0	0
Primary PCI	0	0	0	1	0	0
Angiogram	0	0	0	0	2	0
NSTEMI	0	0	0	0	0	1
CRT-D Insertion	0	0	0	0	2	0
Boston ICD Interrogation	0	0	0	0	0	1
Review post orthotopic heart transplant	0	0	0	0	0	1

Oct-24

Procedure	Evelina Hospital	Guys and St Thomas	Hospital Punta de Europa	Quiron Campo de Gibraltar	Vithas International	Royal Brompton	Harefield Hospital	Materno Infantil
Cardiac Ablation	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Aortic valve replacement	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
TAVI	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Ischaemic Heart Disease	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Arterial Switch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Primary PCI	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0
Pacemaker Insertion	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
Coronary Angioplasty	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0
Chest Pain diagnosis	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Pre-Syncopal	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
NSTEMI	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
PCI	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Angiogram	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
CRT-D Insertion	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
VATS-Wash out	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Cont...

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CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 244

Nov-24					
Procedure	Guys and St Thomas	Hospital Punta de Europa	Quiron Campo de Gibraltar	Vithas International	
Ablation	6	0	0	0	0
Angioplasty	1	0	0	0	0
TAVI	4	0	0	0	0
Repair Aortic Root	1	0	0	0	0
ARVD Investigation and Filtration	1	0	0	0	0
Atrial Myxoma	1	0	0	0	0
Ebstein condition	1	0	0	0	0
Primary PCI	0	3	2	0	0
Pacemaker Insertion	0	0	6	0	0
NSTEMI	0	0	0	0	2
Coronary Angioplasty	0	0	0	0	6
VATS	0	0	0	0	2
Angiogram	0	0	0	0	2
45 M NSTEMI	0	0	0	0	1

Dec-24					
Procedure	Guys and St Thomas	Hospital Punta de Europa	Quiron Campo de Gibraltar	Vithas International	Harefield Hospital
Atrial Ablation	3	0	0	0	0
3 Vessel Coronary Disease	1	0	0	0	0
TAVI	1	0	0	0	0
Pulmonary hypertension	1	0	0	0	0
Repair Mitral Valve	1	0	0	0	0
Cardiomyopathy	1	0	0	0	0
Pacemaker	1	0	0	1	0
Coronary Angioplasty	1	0	0	0	0
Review appt	1	0	0	0	0
Coronary Artery byass	1	0	0	0	0
Cardiomyopathy	0	0	0	0	1
Primary PCI	0	2	0	0	0
Pacemaker	0	0	0	0	0
Angiograph	0	0	0	0	1
Angioplasty	0	0	0	0	0

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 244

Jan-25

Procedure	Guys and St Thomas	Quiron Campo de Gibraltar	Vithas International
Replacement of Mitral Valve	1	0	0
Ablation	3	0	0
Replacement Aortic Valve	1	0	0
Cardiomyopathy	1	0	0
Angioplasty	3	0	0
Coronary Artery Bypass	1	0	0
Infective endocarditis	1	0	0
Repair aortic root	1	0	0
Pacemaker	0	4	0
CRT-D Implant	0	0	3
Aortic Valve replacement	0	0	1

Feb - 25 up to 18/2/2025

Procedure	Evelina	Guys and St Thomas	Vithas International	Harefield Hospital
Cardiac CT Scan	1	0	0	0
TAVI	0	2	1	0
Replacement Mitral Valve	0	0	1	0
Ablation	0	1	0	0
Coronary Angioplasty	0	1	0	0
Replacement Mitral Valve	0	1	0	0
Repair Aortic Root	0	1	0	0
Coronary Artery bypass	0	1	0	0
Ischaemic heart Disease	0	0	0	2
Aortic Valve replacement	0	0	3	0

Q245/2025

**Patients discharged by Spanish care providers –
Transport ambulance drop off location**

Clerk: Question 245, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

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Hon. J Ladislaus: When a patient is discharged by a Spanish care provider and transferred back to Gibraltar to be released back to the GHA's care, where does the transport ambulance drop that patient and where relevant any accompanying chaperone off?

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

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Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the majority of discharges from Spanish hospitals are directly to the patient's home. Transport is typically facilitated by family members or friends as well. In cases where assistance is required, an ambulance service transports the patients along with their escort, ensuring that they are safely dropped off at the entrance of St Bernard's Hospital.

If a patient requires a readmission to St Bernard's Hospital, the drop off location will be determined based on their medical needs, either via the Accident and Emergency Department or directly into the appropriate receiving ward.

2320

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, again, I have had information from members of the public that certainly on at least one occasion, a baby has been dropped off, incubator and apparatus needed, at the entrance of the hospital, which as the Hon. Minister may appreciate was quite traumatic experience for the parents. Can the Hon. Minister commit to perhaps looking into this and whether it would perhaps be better for drop offs to happen within A&E in the ambulance bays?

2325

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, from personal experience, the babies are sometimes dropped off at the entrance to A&E. My son was dropped off at the entrance to A&E. He came back in an incubator with oxygen. He was then transferred from the entrance to the hospital to the relevant ward, which is Rainbow. Did I have an issue with this at the time? Absolutely not. The ward was awaiting my arrival, so I do not necessarily think, I'm unaware of this issue and I'm talking from personal experience rather than anything else. Did I have an issue? Absolutely not, because the staff at Rainbow Ward were aware that the baby was arriving and met me upon arrival. So I do not necessarily think it is an issue, but if the parents are concerned, then by all means, if they can contact me or my team, we'll happily look into it.

2330

2335

Hon. J Ladislaus: Sorry, I do not know whether the Hon. Minister has understood the question. I will rephrase it. The child in question was dropped off at the very entrance of the hospital, so the very public entrance to St Bernard's Hospital, which is very different from being dropped off by the A&E entrance around the back, which is exactly what they expected would happen, but didn't happen. Can the Hon. Minister perhaps commit to looking into that so that it does not occur again that a baby's dropped or any other patient right at the entrance, if they are going to be readmitted to the hospital?

2340

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I did not misunderstand the question. I was dropped off with my son at the entrance, the main entrance to the hospital for the avoidance of doubt beside the PCC. So you go up the ramp, the ambulance went up the ramp and dropped me at the entrance to the hospital. My son's incubator was then wheeled to Rainbow, which is directly above the entrance of the hospital and closer to the entrance of the hospital than the A&E.

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2350

So again, I am not sure what the issue is, but I would urge any parents that have any concerns to contact my team directly. Having had personal experience of the circumstances that

the hon. Lady is referring to, my son was dropped in an incubator with oxygen at the main entrance of St Bernard's Hospital. I did not misinterpret her question.

2355 He was dropped at the main entrance of St Bernard's and we went directly to Rainbow Ward. I did not have an issue with this.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Sorry, it is perhaps because and maybe inadvertently, probably inadvertently, but the Hon. the Minister did say the entrance to A&E, which has given rise to the confusion in my supplementary now. In any event, are there any side entrances perhaps that could be used for
2360 such purposes which are maybe more private entrances if a child has been readmitted into Rainbow and it is actually much closer to the hospital entrance?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, again, if the patients feel like there is an issue, I am more than happy to be put in touch with them. It is the closest practical entrance to Rainbow.

2365 It is the entrance to the hospital. We're not going to open a specific side entrance for this.

It would probably cause more of an issue if the baby were to be put in A&E. As I said, I have personal experience of having been dropped off at the door to St Bernard's Hospital and the incubator and the oxygen tanks was wheeled directly to Rainbow Ward and there were no issues whatsoever. However, having said that, if this family does feel for whatever reason that there is
2370 an issue, I am more than happy to be put in touch with them and I'm more than happy to discuss the issue with them.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

2375

Q246/2025

Private Medical Practitioners – Referrals to the GHA

Clerk: Question 246. The Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Hello Speaker. How many referrals to the GHA have been made by private
2380 medical practitioners working for private local clinics in the following years: (i) 2022, (ii) 2023, (iii) 2024, (iv) 2025 to date?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the GHA does not typically accept referrals from private clinics. However, in certain cases, patients may be seen in emergency situations based on a private clinic referral. As these referrals are not processed through the GHA's formal referral system, corresponding data is not systematically recorded and therefore statistical figures are not available.

2390

Madam Speaker: Next question.

2395

Q247-8/2025

Pump Station –

Minimum number of cleans; Regularity of flushing

Clerk: Question 247, the Hon. C Sacarello.

2400 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Is there a minimum number of cleans requirements per pump station as a matter of policy and is this part of the contract with a third party?

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

2405 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 248.

Clerk: Question 248, the Hon. C Sacarello.

2410 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Could the Hon. Minister please provide us with a breakdown of the regularity of the flushing of each sewage pump station in the last five years, simply stating the month of the year each station was flushed?

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

2415 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez)** Madam Speaker, AquaGib informs us that there is no minimum number of cleans that are required for the wet well locations in the sewage pumping station that it operates and maintains. AquaGib monitors all of the sewage pumping stations included in its contract and will contract a partial or full empty clean of the wet well as and when it is deemed required. In relation to Question 248, I now hand over a schedule
2420 with the information requested.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary at this stage on Question 247. Thank you to the Hon. Minister for her reply. I understand that there is a third party provider of the service. Is it not the case that the provider has limited resources in terms of the lorry that
2425 is used for this and this is often used for alternative procedures elsewhere other than the pump stations? In addition, as a result of the pump stations not being cleaned regularly, there are increased number of blockages, not to mention the waste, the additional waste that we see in our influence at Europa Point of plastic waste. I will leave it at that and that this could be resolved with a greater number of cleans of these pump stations.

2430 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, in terms of all the detail, I am not aware of that being the case. Again, if the hon. Member wants to provide me with a question detailing out that he wants confirmation of precisely that, I am happy to confirm that or otherwise. As I confirmed in the answer to my question, there is no minimum number of cleans and AquaGib do carry out these
2435 cleans regularly.

Any further detail, please do ask me more specifically and I will be happy to answer.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

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Q249/2025

**AquaGib reverse osmosis plant –
Negotiations with staff**

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Clerk: Question 249, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Can the Government provide the House with an update of the stated negotiations with the AquaGib staff within the Reverse Osmosis Department?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, AquaGib informs us that during a meeting with the Reverse Osmosis Department, the timeline of a company-wide review was shared and the employees confirmed that they were content to wait for the conclusion of the company-wide review before considering further industrial action in relation to the claim.

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Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Would the Hon. Minister be able to share the timeline with us?

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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, again, if you ask a detailed question, I'll provide the detailed response next time around.

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Hon. C Sacarello: I think I do not see what the issue is with the question arising out of her response. It's just a simple question, one which she would have had the, I'm sure has the information. Is this a question of not knowing or not willing to?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I have a vague knowledge of what the timeline is. However, so that I am not accused of misleading Parliament, I do not wish to provide that information unless I have been specifically asked a question and AquaGib have confirmed it. I do not have that information in front of me. Therefore, if the specific information is asked of me, I will make sure to get that information from AquaGib and I will provide it across the House at the next session.

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Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I think it is standard procedure to ask supplementaries. So I do not think there is anything hidden or nefarious about the question. It was a simple question based on a very basic response.

I think it is important to note, Madam Speaker, the importance of Parliament and its process in something which is of great wide public interest. This is a situation where the water supply to Gibraltar was threatened to be cut off only a month ago, the morning of which Parliament last sat and I do not think that shoving this under the carpet is befitting of Parliament and certainly not helpful to the rest of the public.

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Madam Speaker: Question?

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Hon. C Sacarello: So I ask the Hon. Minister, would she be able to share at least with us her basic understanding, not holding her to account, of what the timeline is for these negotiations?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I am not sweeping anything under the carpet. I just do not want to provide inaccurate information. There is a question at the moment on the update on the state of negotiations with the AquaGib staff with the Reverse Osmosis Department. That question in no way asks me about the company-wide review. All I am saying to the hon. Gentleman

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is that I will provide the information when asked the question about the company-wide review. I do not have accurate information about when the company-wide review will be concluded.

I am saying that I will provide the information. I am not sweeping anything under the carpet, nor do I have the habit of sweeping anything under the carpet. Therefore, again, the hon. Member's opposite should take note. If the correct question is asked, the correct information will be provided.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q250/2025

**Government and AquaGib –
Transport ambulance drop off location**

Clerk: Question 250, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Is the Hon. Minister confident that the Government's and AquaGib's approach to industrial relations is working?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, yes, ma'am.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, there have been numerous claims and leading to strikes over the years, some predating the Minister naturally and it is actually an accusation that is coined not by us, but by Unite the Union and their National Officer, who are quotes from a press release saying that AGL's approach to industrial relations is broken. Would the Government not agree that this is correct and what are they going to do to redress it?

Madam Speaker: I remind the hon. Member the questions as to whether a statement in the press is accurate is not an appropriate question. So I am going to disallow that question. If the hon. Member has a different supplementary question, which does not breach the rules, I will allow him to phrase another question.

Hon. C Sacarello: Yes, Madam Speaker. Apologies for the slight infraction there, in which case, perhaps I could share the view that based on experience of the number of issues that AquaGib and the Government have faced with regards to industrial relations in the past, would suggest that the industrial relations policy is perhaps not working as effectively as it might and would the Government not reconsider changing it?

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): No, Madam Speaker, the Government will not reconsider changing it. I would remind the hon. Gentleman that the Government took over the remaining 66% of AquaGib in December 2024. The Government is not considering changing its policy. In fact, what it is doing in relation to these outstanding claims, is it is conducting a company-wide review of the information of which you sought earlier.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: So it is conducting the company-wide review in relation to all these issues. In the context of this particular question and the company-wide review that stems from this, and as my hon. Colleague has already indicated, there was a meeting that was held because this was brewing on one of the days that Parliament last met and with some degree of fanfare, there were some social media posts involving the hon. Lady, which showed her taking a leading role in the

resolution of the matter. So can she not inform us with a bit more detail as to what is the timeline for the resolution of these issues?

2545 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am not quite sure what social media post the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to. What I would say is that at the time this was dealt with, the issues were dealt with as was required at that moment in time. What we have decided, and in fact, my response to the hon. Gentleman previously, was that the Reverse Osmosis Department, for example, is holding off any industrial action pending the company-wide review. This is a
2550 discussion that we have had across the company. There is a company-wide review that is been carried out. The procedure has been agreed by Unite the Union and it is an ongoing process. I am unable to detail the dates on which the review will be carried out. And I am not going to go into the dates because I am not going to be accused of misleading Parliament or I am not going to be held to dates in the future but there is an ongoing review going on, which has already commenced.

2555 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Let me understand what the hon. Lady is saying. She is not going to give us the timeline because she doesn't have the information with her? Or maybe she is unwilling to answer because we have had different answers in the past? So I want to understand the premise of what she is saying because in the last House she indicated to my hon. Colleague that she wasn't
2560 going to answer some questions because they were questions best put to AquaGib. Is it that the hon. Lady is saying that she is not going to answer the question because she doesn't have the information or that she doesn't wish to answer the question?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I think I have given the answer quite clearly to the hon. Gentleman. It's not that I do not wish to provide the information. I am happy to share the information when I have the accurate information in front of me.

The question that we are answering at the moment is about AquaGib's approach to industrial relations. So in answering this question, I haven't asked AquaGib for a detailed timeline of their company-wide review. If I get a detailed question or if I get a question that relates to the
2570 company-wide review and the timing of that company-wide review, of course, I will provide information as I always do relating to the issue that is asked in the question. Now, what I am not going to do is I'm not going to give a rough estimate to then be held to or then be told that I'm misleading Parliament. I hope that is sufficiently clear.

2575 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, that is clear. But has the issue of the timeline of the work that AquagGib is doing in terms of this, the industrial relations review, not come up in discussions of the board of AquaGib, which she chairs?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: It is not an industrial relations review. It is a company-wide review on AquaGib. Of course, it has come up in discussions.

2580 However, I do not have the firm dates in my head because that wasn't the question that was being asked of me. I am not going to give information which I do not have 100% accuracy on in front of me to then be told that I'm misleading Parliament. Again, I would remind hon. Members opposite that if an accurate question is posed, I will, of course, provide the information as I always
2585 do.

Again, as the hon. Member suggested prior to that, if you want to share drafts with me, I'm very happy to check them for you.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

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Q251-3/2025

**Battery Energy Storage Solution (BESS) –
Confirmation of arrival; BOOST contract details; Asset life and running costs**

Q254/2025

**BOOST –
Payment information**

Q255-7/2025

**Battery Energy Storage Solution (BESS) –
Government contribution; Payment tranches; Details of costs**

2595 **Clerk:** Question 251, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Given the reminder we were given of Gibraltar's ongoing issues with power supply following the latest power outage due to an interruption to the supply of LNG on the 14th of February 2025, would the Hon. Minister please confirm if the battery energy storage solution, or BESS, has arrived in Gibraltar as the Government promised it would arrive in January 2025?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker. I'll answer this question together with Questions 252 to 257.

Clerk: Question 252, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: What measures has the Government insisted on in the BOOT contract to mitigate against fire risks given the known danger of the volatility of BEST batteries?

Clerk: Question 253, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: What is the asset life of the BESSs and what will the annual running cost be following the three-year BOOST period?

Clerk: Question 254, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: The Minister stated in October 2024 that the £6.63 million for the BOOT payments were to be contributed by the GEA and paid by Zero Carbon Footprints Limited. Does this contribution comprise the total amount, i.e. £6.63 million, or are there any contributions to this quantum being made by another party? And if so, by whom and how much?

Clerk: Question 255, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Could the Minister confirm that the Government's contribution of £9.79 million, as stated in Parliament in October 2024, is for the purchase of the BESS exclusively?

Clerk: Question 256, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: When will the Government be making the payments, or payments totalling £9.79 million towards the BESS, the sum provided by the Hon. Minister for public utilities in answer to Question 772 answered in October 2024 and featured on line 2632 of Hansard, please detail the payment tranches?

2635 **Clerk:** Question 257, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Can the Hon. Minister please separate out the costs for the £16.42 million BESS costs into the following categories: 1. Purchase of BESS, 2. Infrastructure build, 3. Installation costs, 4. Finance, 5. Consultancy, and 6. Annual operation and maintenance costs over the three years?
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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 251, I can confirm that both the control system units and the battery units were shipped by the manufacturers on the 19th of January 2025 and the 2nd of February 2025, respectively, and are now on their way to Gibraltar. We expect the power control system units to arrive on or around the 25th of March and the battery units to arrive on or around the 3rd of April 2025. Civil and infrastructure works on site are currently ongoing and to date, no delays have been experienced with, no delays have been experienced with all of the aspects of this project currently going to schedule.
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In answer to Question 252, there is a specific, there is a specific clause in the Boot contract that deals with the fire suppression system. The clause ensures that the relevant industry standards are met and ensures that the design prevents a risk of fire spreading between the items of equipment.
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In answer to Question 253, the asset life of the BESS is expected to be 20 years plus, provided that the maintenance schedule as recommended by the manufacturer is followed. It is envisaged that the individual battery cell replacements could commence as and when required as from year five. With regard to the annual running costs following the three-year Boot period, this is a commercially sensitive. Stating an amount now would not be acting in the best interest of the taxpayer, as such an amount could become the basis of negotiations with potential contractors should it be decided in three years time to outsource the operation and maintenance of this facility.
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In answer to Question 254, I can confirm that the contribution by the GEA will cover the, will cover the total amount of the 6.63 million spread over a three-year period and the commercial operation date. No other contributions will be made by any other party.
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In answer to Question 255, I can confirm that the contribution of 9.79 million covers all costs associated with this project, except for the operation and maintenance costs over three years.
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In answer to Question 256, as with projects of a similar nature, payments are based on completion of the works and milestones achieved. These payments made with regard to the project will be made by Zero Carbon Footprint Company Limited and not Government. I am unable to provide details of when the amounts of money due are to be paid, as I am requested by the hon. Member opposite.
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In answer to Question 257, as I have confirmed previously in this parliament and in particular in answer to Question 772 of 2024, HMGOG's contribution on this project is around 9.79 million and the approximate cost of the build, own, operate and transfer scheme for a period of three years is 6.63 million, including inflation projections. With the tender process for this project having been conducted by Solar Century Africa Limited, I do not have the details breakdown requested by the hon. Member opposite, other than to state that the 6.63 million is inclusive of part of all the elements which the hon. Member has broken down in his question.
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Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, thank you very much to the hon. Lady for her reply. They will be all grouped together.
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I would like to start with the first supplementary on Question 251. From what I understand, there are two main parts of the BESS, the latter of which arrives in April. That

effectively is a four-month delay. The Government have a projected date of August, as previously mentioned publicly. Is this going to have an impact on that or are we still on for an August bringing in online?

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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the delivery of the two parts of the BESS, which is the power control system and the battery units, are not on the critical path of the BESS. So the delivery in March 2025 will not have an impact on the August date that was stated. As I confirmed in reply to the question, the BESS is still due to be completed by August 2025 and we have no reason or we are not told by the contractor of any reason for any delays. As the hon. Member will be aware, this is a small construction project. There may be delays, but at this present point in time, it has been confirmed by the contractor that it is going to date and the date will be as forecasted in August 2025.

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Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Lady for her reply.

Moving on to Question 256. The Hon. Minister mentioned that she was unable to provide detail on the payment tranches. Is this because they are not available, in which case, would she provide them for us perhaps in an email if I sent her an email later on? Or is this because they are simply not willing to share them?

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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, again, this is not something that I am going to brush under the carpet to use the hon. Member's terminology. This is simply because the project was tendered out to Solar Century Africa and the sum that they provide is a global sum. We simply do not have that information.

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Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, the reason I ask this question is because I think it is in the public interest to know part of the deal that has been struck with the suppliers is to do with financing. The finance package that is involved is in the public, or details of it is in the public interest. If the finance is being paid up front, then you would expect a much more favourable finance deal, which is why I also asked for a breakdown of all the individual areas but it seems that because there is another middleman involved, even though the Government is directly in contracts with them, someone who handled the tender process, that the information is being kept from the public. Would the Minister not agree with that comment? If so, would she be prepared to divulge a little bit more information on the same?

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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the information is not being kept from the public. When a party enters into a normal construction contract, there are costs within that construction contract that are never divulged to the contracting party. If, for example, the developer enters into a contract with a contractor, there will be costs in that contract. The costs of supply, the costs of subcontracting will not necessarily ever be divulged to the developer because it is simply not in the interest of the contractor to divulge it. Furthermore, it is not common for the costs to be broken down. What we are saying is that the costs to the tenderer, the direct costs to the tenderer are not broken down to us. The figures that have been provided, I am not sweeping it under the carpet. There is no middleman involved. There is nothing shady here. We have entered into a contract and the breakdown of that contract is the contribution of 9.79 million and the cost of 6.63 million. The contract has been entrenched by the parties and the breakdown behind those costs is not necessarily divulged to the GEA, not even to HMGOG.

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Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I think it is a very, very simple request that the public would want to know where their money has been spent. It is all well and good saying there is a round sum of a total amount, but if we can not work out what the cost of the finances, what the cost of the consultancy is and break it down into those areas other than those two very broad figures of

9.79 and 6.63, then I think there is a lack of transparency. Would the Hon. Minister not agree that perhaps on this topic the Government isn't being as transparent as it might like to?

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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: No, Madam Speaker. I do not agree. Although I am sure that the hon. Member opposite would be delighted to run his usual Google searches or contact suppliers himself just to make, just to confirm that the prices provided are correct.

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The reason is, it is quite simple. There is a contract with the third party. That third party provides you with the costs and the costs that we have been provided with are the breakdown that we have provided in Parliament. There are no further costs. We are not sweeping things under the carpet, which is the general impression that the hon. Member opposite would seem to be trying to create. We are not sweeping things under the carpet. We have made the information available, which the hon. Member has requested. Now, there is no further information available because the contract is with the third party and that third party then breaks down those own costs. I have explained that numerous times and there are no more ways to explain the same thing.

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Hon. C Sacarello: Nonetheless, Madam Speaker, it is still the taxpayer's money that the Hon. Minister is refusing to account for in full, like we have requested. I would just like to correct the Hon. Minister so that she no longer refers to this as she did erroneously last time in referring to my quotes that I got for the production and cost and implementation of a BESS machine in which the hon. Lady referred to a Google search. I corrected her last time. I said it wasn't. She is continuing to go down that line. I request that she retract that statement because it is wrong. Twice now.

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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I provided the full cost that we have available to us. The full breakdown has been provided to the hon. Members opposite.

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Madam Speaker: The Hon. R M Clinton had a question in relation to 255.

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Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just in relation to 255, the question asks about the Government's contribution, £9.79 million. Can the Minister advise the House whether the Government has now decided how it is going to fund that £9.79 million because last time, I believe when we ventilated the question of how this was going to be financed, the Chief Minister, in fact, said he had not made up his mind yet as to how this was going to happen. Does the Minister now have some clarity as to how this is going to be funded? I believe it will all be channelled through Zero Footprint Limited. Is Zero Footprint Limited going to receive a capital injection from the Government or is it going to get a loan from the Government? Can the Minister advise the House?

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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, once again, that is quite a detailed question. I have not asked for an update from the last information that I provided because I have not specifically asked for that information. If the hon. Member asks that question in Parliament, I would be more than happy, as I always do, to provide him with a detailed answer.

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Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, I am happy to do so, but surely the Minister on such a massive project of this scale will know how it is being funded. I mean, she will forgive me. I find it a bit incredible that she cannot provide that answer across the floor of the House now. Does she really have no idea as to how this company or this project is going to be funded?

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Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, of course I am aware. I just wish to receive confirmation of the same because otherwise I'm accused of misleading this House. Again, the hon. Members opposite seem to have a recurring theme in their questioning of today. If they wish to have a

specific question answered, that specific question needs to be put on the order paper. I am very, very happy to provide the information once the proper question is asked.

Happy to review your drafts. I would suggest that the hon. Members opposite review their questions and make sure that the questions that they want answered in Parliament are actually the questions that they ask. If they do not ask the questions on the order paper, I will not have the information provided and I will not provide information in Parliament... which might then have me accused of being inaccurate or misleading Parliament. If you want a specific question answered, Madam Speaker, and I speak across the floor, across the Opposition members, if they would like a specific question answered, I would urge the hon. Members opposite to provide me with a specific question and as I have each and every time, I will provide them with a detailed answer of the questions they ask. Not of the question that they determined that morning when they wake up that they wish to ask.

There is a procedure to ask questions in Parliament. You submit questions, you submit detailed questions, I then get detailed confirmation of what the answers to those questions are and I then provide the information in Parliament. When on other occasions I have provided information, they have accused me of providing inaccurate information. I will not do that. If you want an answer to a specific question, the specific question needs to be asked in the usual form, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, what an extraordinary contribution from someone who's been in this House not that long and is now not only redrawing the way that question and answers have been run for the last 60 years, but is giving us a lecture on how to put questions. I mean, if there are questions that the rules are clear, there are questions that flow from the original answer, they can be put and indeed, there are supplementaries that are put that arise from that, that are not only inevitable and reasonably foreseeable, but if they are within the knowledge of the Minister that gives the answer, I've been on that side when someone's asked me a question and if you have the information, you have the information. If you do not have the information, then the answer is, ask me the question because I do not have the information but the extraordinary aspect of the hon. Lady's position is that she is saying or implying that she does have the information, but she is refusing to tell the House. Is that her position?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, that is not my position. What I am saying is that I do not have accurate information to date on the question asked because that was not the question asked. Let me read to the hon. Member what the question asked was.

Could the Minister confirm that the Government's contribution of 9.79 as stated in Parliament in October 2024 is for the purchase of the BESS exclusive? If I look at the rules, Madam Speaker, the supplementary arises from the answer given. Again, it cannot be I wake up in the morning and suddenly I think that there are numerous questions that I should have posed and actually want to put a supplementary now. The question that was asked by the hon. Member was a very specific question and I am very happy to provide the information on the very specific question that the hon. Member asked. I just wish to have confirmation of what the current position is. I am not going to hypothesise and be accused of misleading Parliament because they did not submit a question correctly.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: So the hon. Lady doesn't know where they got the money from or wants to check what the answer to the question is on a project as big as this and as important to this. In the public interest, she is the Minister responsible but wants to check where they got the money from. Is that her position?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, are we really resulting to juvenile politics now? So now they are belittling me. I am having the Leader of the Opposition mansplaining to me what the position is. I am being belittled by the Leader of the Opposition into giving him an answer for a

question that he didn't ask... right? So let me be clear. The Hon. Roy Clinton asked a question specifically on where the money was coming from two sessions ago, three sessions ago and all the information was provided. All the information was provided in a very detailed format. They can talk amongst themselves. Maybe they listened to the answers I was providing. They wouldn't then misquote me back to myself. What I am saying, Madam Speaker, is that if you ask an accurate question, you will get an accurate reply. Maybe that is a consistent message which needs to be spread across the Opposition bench. What I am not going to do is hypothesise on what I think is the issue. When I've already replied in Parliament previously on where the money is coming from and a detailed explanation has been provided by me before on where exactly every penny of the money was coming from and I wish to make the Hon. Leader of the Opposition aware of that specific fact. An answer has been specifically provided previously. It has. It absolutely (*interjection*) has.

Madam Speaker: All right... Is there a specific supplementary other than this one? We are having a debate now on supplementaries and I am going to stop it. So I will allow the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to ask a specific supplementary and a specific question.

But we are not going to debate the issue of this particular subject any longer.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, absolutely and of course, I respect your ruling...

It's just to intervene at this point, just to ask the question in a different way, if I may, because it is clear from the hon. Lady's answer just now that perhaps she is misunderstood what we're saying. She has given a previous answer but my hon. Colleague, Mr Clinton, specifically asked and the Chief Minister replied, that he had not made his mind up where the source money was coming from. What we are asking is, has the Government now taken that position? Does she have that information? Not mansplaining her because I am asking her a reasonable question. She doesn't need to get as defensive as that. Having now asked more precisely, that is what we are talking about. We are not talking about her previous answers, but rather the position that the Government previously took that they had not decided where the source was going to come from. Have they now decided?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, again, I do not have that information in front of me. I do not have a specific confirmation in front of me. Again, if the hon. Gentleman wants to ask a specific question, the specific question needs to be put on the order paper.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. D J Bossino had a supplementary.

Hon. D J Bossino: I hope it fits.

Madam Speaker: A different supplementary.

Hon. D J Bossino: I hope it fits the bill. So this is on Question 251. The Hon. Minister said, gave dates as to, gave arrival dates of the BESS equipment and she she mentioned a shipping date, I think it was, and a potential arrival date. May I ask where this equipment is coming from?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: I believe the equipment is coming from China.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q258-60/2025

**Mid Harbour Small Boats Marina –
Empty berths; Allocation of empty berths; Selling of berths**

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Clerk: Question 258, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: How many empty berths are there in the Mid Harbour Small Boats Marina?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. 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 Questions 259 and 260.

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Clerk: Question 259, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Has the Government allocated any of the empty berths at the Small Boats Marina to those on the waiting list?

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Clerk: Question 260 the Hon. D J Bossino:

Hon. D J Bossino: Does the Government have the intention of selling any of the berths at the Small Boats Marina, and if so, at what price?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, as at Tuesday, the 18th of February 2025, there are 37 unassigned berths in the marina.

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Answer to Questions 259 and 260. Madam Speaker, no berths have been allocated to those on the waiting list. As stated by the Chief Minister in answer to Question 462 of 2023, HMGOG is still committed to the sale of the berths. We will make an announcement when the lease provision has been agreed and when the final prices have been fixed.

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Hon. D J Bossino: In relation to the answer that the Hon. Minister gave in respect of Question 258, the hon. Member says 37. The information that I have received, and there is absolutely no reason to doubt the veracity or the quality of that information, is that it exceeds 70 in number. Could I ask you to comment in relation to that?

2925

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the information I have is from the port directly, so if the port is telling me that there are 37 unassigned berths, there must be 37 unassigned berths.

2930

Hon. D J Bossino: So be it. In relation to the answer that the Hon. Minister gave in respect of Question 259, I didn't quite catch I think the tail end of her answer. I think the answer was no berths are going to be allocated, and then she made a reference to the Chief Minister (*interjection*) sorry? To the sale of berths. But could I ask her to clarify that for me because I didn't quite catch what the Hon. Minister said after no berths are being allocated.

2935

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Of course, Madam Speaker, very happy to reread the answer. Madam Speaker, no berths have been allocated to those on the waiting list. As stated by the Chief Minister in answer to Question 462 of 2023, HMGOG is still committed to the sale of berths. We will make an announcement when the lease provision has been agreed and when the final prices have been fixed.

2940 **Hon. D J Bossino:** There was that bit that I did not quite catch just before the reference of the lease provisions. Is she able to provide the House with a timeline as to when the lease arrangements are going to be sort of settled and crystallised and so that the Government is then able to make an announcement in relation to that?

2945 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I am not able to give a firm commitment, but it is something which is on our radar and we are chasing to try and have this sorted as quickly as possible.

2950 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Is the Hon. Minister able to provide details as to numbers in respect of the waiting list?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I do not have that information available.

2955 **Hon. D J Bossino:** At the risk of entering into the exchange that we had a few moments ago and on various occasions in the course of this morning's very long session. Is that information which the Hon. Minister would have available to her if a suitably drafted question was filed for her to answer?

2960 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am so happy that the message has got across. Of course, Madam Speaker, I will happily provide that information if an appropriate question is put to me.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is there any reason why similar by analogy to the housing waiting list where numbers are provided and are provided online? Is there any reason why that information ought not to be made public? And is this something that the Hon. Minister would consider doing?

2965 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, not that I am aware of.

Hon. D J Bossino: Not that she is aware of as to any reason why it should not be done. Is that the case?

2970 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Sorry, yes, Madam Speaker.

Hon. D J Bossino: So is it something that the Hon. Minister would consider doing?

2975 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as with all of these things, it depends on the time benefit analysis. If it does not take time, then possibly, but it is not something we have actively considered.

2980 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Presumably, given that she is given a composite reply in respect of the three questions I have asked in relation to this issue, as I understand it, one would need to glean from the answer that the answer specifically to Question 260 is that, yes, the Government does have the intention of selling births at the marina.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, that was specifically referred to in the answer that I read twice. I will reread it. HMGOG is still committed to the sale of births.

2985 **Hon. D J Bossino:** May I also ask whether the Government is consulting, seeking advice from, indeed obtaining advice from the small vessels advisory board as instituted and constituted under the small vessels mooring controls rules of 2016. Is she obtaining assistance from that particular board?

2990 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, we are in negotiation, oh sorry, we are in consultation with LPS and with the Port. I am unclear on whether we are in consultation with the board and indeed whether the board has been constituted.

2995 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I think this naturally arises from the answer that the Hon. the Minister has provided and does not breach the rules. Is the Minister putting into question and therefore doubt that the Board that I referred to in my supplementary question right now may in fact not be constituted as yet? I mean, we are talking here about a piece of legislation which would have been passed on or about, judging by the title of the regulations in 2016. That is almost nine years ago. Is that the information? She may wish to check the accuracy or other words of that but is that the information that the Hon. the Minister is providing across the floor of the House?

3000

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I am saying that I am not aware whether there is such a board or otherwise. However, what I would say is it is amazing that we have the facility of a small boats marina to be even able to have this discussion, right? So we have a marina, we have an act which constitutes the marina and it is all thanks to this Government that we have those facilities available.

3005

Do I know whether there is a Board constituted or otherwise? Again, Madam Speaker, even though in his previous answer, he asked me whether or not he would have to submit a question. I would suggest that the Hon. Minister, that the hon. Shadow Minister for the Port submits a question and I will happily answer whether the Board is constituted or otherwise.

3010

Madam Speaker: All right, before we move on, there are seven supplementaries. I am going to move on. But before I move on to the next question, which I believe is the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition, I am going to go back to the Hon. J Ladislaus, Question 209. Are there any supplementaries on that? That was the policies one. No? All right, Question 214.

3015

Supplementary Questions to 214, 234-235, 244 and 248/2025

Hon. J Ladislaus: Yes. Madam Speaker, Question 214 was in respect of the number of contacts that the GPs have per day. Do those figures include individuals who do not attend and specialist clinics? Is that all included in the calculations undertaken?

3020

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Specialist clinics will definitely be included in these figures. What I'm unclear of is whether DNAs will be included. I suspect that they will be included, but I am not 100% certain.

3025

Hon. J Ladislaus: Does the Hon. Minister perhaps have information as to how many appointments a GP has each session? So my understanding from previous exchanges is that sessions are either a.m. or p.m. Does the Hon. Minister have any information as to that?

3030

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Yes, Madam Speaker, 18.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Thank you. And if a GP is having 18 sessions, sorry, 18 appointments within one session, say in the morning, would they then go on to see further patients on the p.m. session?

3035

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: They can, Madam Speaker, but that would depend on numerous factors.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, is the Hon. Minister aware whether that complies with the British Medical Association's recommendations for safe practice, which I believe is 25 contacts per day? Madam Speaker, this is precisely why I said it depends upon certain factors.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: The recommendation is 25 patient appointments per day. It does not necessarily mean that that is what GP clinics in the UK comply with, but it also means that there are some GPs which will have sessions in the morning and admin sessions in the afternoon, or there will be different variations thereof. Therefore, the previous answer I gave that it will depend on certain factors included those types of issues.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, we have had this exchange in past sessions, and the answer always comes back that we have plenty of GPs available. Now, my understanding is that each of the GP appointments take 10 minutes in Gibraltar, whereas, again, the recommendation by the British Medical Association is that each slot should be taking 15 minutes. How then is it that we appear to be doing possibly extra and over and above the recommended safe practice?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the time allocated to each appointment has always been in Gibraltar 10 minutes. I've had a meeting with all of the GPs two weeks ago in which all of these issues were raised. I'm not surprised that they are being raised by the hon. Lady. All of these issues that will be looked into are how can we increase the number of appointments? Indeed, on a viewpoint where the hon. Lady was present as well, we said there was a PCC task force that was meeting regularly to discuss these issues. The PCC task force then took these issues to the GPs to discuss these issues.

What we are saying to the GPs and what the GPs feel is that there are some appointments, for example, advanced appointments, which might require more than 10 minutes. However, this does not necessarily mean that GPs feel that all their appointments would require more than 10 minutes. What we are looking to do is we are looking to ways in which we can increase the number of appointments by different means.

Hon. J Ladislaus: What sorts of things are being looked into in order to address, as the Hon. Minister has said, that they are looking into ways in which to address this? What ways?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Well, Madam Speaker, for one, we have doubled the complement of GPs since that which was available in 2011. So that is one of the ways to ensure that we have more GP appointments available because there are double the number of GPs that there were in 2011. So we currently have 28 full-time equivalent GPs. That is one of the things that we're looking at doing.

What we have also done, which I have announced in press releases, is that we are calling patients in advance to make sure that they attend their appointments and if indeed they called for an advance, if they booked an advanced appointment a month in advance and they do not need that appointment, what we are in fact now doing is that we are calling them to make sure they want that appointment and if they do not, it goes into the general bank of appointments. All of these are the subject of press releases which were issued in the past month. I am sure the hon. Lady should have that information available.

Separately, we are also looking at, we have also introduced a sick line so that if you require a sick note, you dial one of the numbers in the 52441 number. Again, this is all publicly available information, which has been the subject of press releases in the past month.

Madam Speaker: All right... On to Question 234.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, the schedule I have before me is the answer to, it says answer to Questions 235 and 234. So if possible, if I can take any questions together, because otherwise it will be quite confusing.

3090 **Madam Speaker:** My understanding was that we have dealt with Question 235, but by all means, put the questions and see where we go.

Hon. J Ladislaus: It is simply a general question. I note that many of the adverts are internal, particularly because we have been honing in on nursing today in particular. I go to the nursing and it says internal on a lot of those ads. What is the reason why the internal adverts are not opened out to the general public, given the shortage of nurses that there are? Would not it be more beneficial to open that out to the general public at large and perhaps we'd have applicants from abroad?

3100 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, that is a specific policy of the GHA, I am sure, as to why specifically it is an internal applicant. There are specific positions, such as, for example, the Cardiac Catheter Lab Registered Nurse, which has been opened externally. If there are positions which it is felt that specialist knowledge is required, then that is advertised externally.

3105 In relation to the Diabetes Specialist Nurse, for example, that position has been advertised internally and externally. Whereas the position is usually, and I think this is across the Government, though I do not expect to be held to that, the position across Government is that the position will be advertised internally first, and then if there is no successful applicant, it will then go external, unless it requires specialist skills, which are not available within the GHA.

3110 **Madam Speaker:** The Hon. R M Clinton had a question.

Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just looking at the schedule in answer to Question 234, I notice in 2024, on the medical staff, there was a vacancy for consultant cardiologist and there is a comment saying not filled as candidate, not found appointable and yet in 2025, on the medical, I do not see a vacancy being advertised for a consultant cardiologist. And I was wondering the Minister might be able to shed some light as to how, why that would be.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I had not actually been drawn to that fact that consultant cardiologist position was fulfilled because we now have two consultant cardiologists in the GHA. Two consultant cardiologists and one is not a consultant, but he specialises in cardiology. We actually have three cardiologists available in the hospital. I'm not 100% sure and I wouldn't be able to provide accurate information as to why it says that the cardiologist position was not filled. I am aware the complement of cardiologists at the moment is two consultant cardiologists and one cardiologist.

3125 **Madam Speaker:** The Hon. E J Reyes had a supplementary.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you Madam Speaker. Yes, mine is of a very similar nature to my colleagues. Again, referring to 2024 under the nursing section, one of the last posts there is that of Resuscitation Officer, which was advertised internal for GHA employees and even external abroad. Then it says in the how filled column, successful applicants declined position, which leads me to sort of two minor questions. Was the successful applicant an internal or perhaps an external one and it was declined. Does that necessarily follow that the post is still empty because looking at the 2025 lists of adverts, most of which are vacant, recruitment is currently ongoing. I do not see that to a Resuscitation Officer. So the Minister might be aware of some of the information that will shed some light on this otherwise useful piece of data.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Sorry, Madam Speaker, I am unaware of whether that position has been subsequently filled or otherwise, and I would not want to mislead the House. What does sometimes happen is that there are three applicants for the job, but the job sometimes, the applicant sometimes applies for a position in Gibraltar and in two other jurisdictions. When we

revert to them, they decline the position in Gibraltar because they have gone somewhere else. That could well be what happens, what has happened here. As to whether that position has been filled, I do not see it in the 2025 compliments. I am unsure of what exactly happened to that position.

Hon. E J Reyes: Yes, I'm grateful. I can understand what the Minister is saying from experiences but within my question, I was asking, you know, the successful applicants who unfortunately then declined the position, was that person one of the internal applicants or was it an external applicant? Sometimes, what tends to happen from my experience, you offer them to external applicants and then when the reality comes and they look at housing costs, for example, in Gibraltar, they say, well, it is not worth my while. Perhaps the Minister is aware of some of those details.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, as the Opposition often insists, I am not involved in these day-to-day decisions of the GHA and the GHA workforce. So unfortunately, I am unable to answer that specific question.

Madam Speaker: All right. Any supplementaries on Question 244? No, anybody else? No? We'll take Question 248, the Hon. C Sacarello has any supplementaries.

Hon. C Sacarello: Yes, indeed. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Question 248 was a question on the pumping stations and how often they were clean for the last five years. This is in regards to AquaGib, whose own sustainability report refers to the importance both in the foreword and the text later on by the importance of the efficiency and the maintenance of these pumps because of the responsibility of the company to the environment. In the report, it says that they are constantly monitored, cleaned and repaired, particularly on one page. It talks about overflows to reduce the chances of overflow. Now, my understanding is that there are over 20 pumping stations. This list provided shows that there have been five cleans in 2020, 10 in 2021, 10 in 2022, 5 in 2023 and 9 in 2024, with just one so far this year. Given that the responsibility to the environment and the dangers of sewage over spilling onto our roads and our seas, would the Government not agree that it might be worth looking at cleaning these pumping stations out more regularly to produce the overflows, which back in 2020 were at around 37?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I am delighted to be able to say that I have actually visited these sewage pumping stations, and actually they are very well maintained by the staff of AquaGib. The staff of AquaGib know exactly when the pumps are required to be cleaned and as far as I am aware, and informed by the staff of AquaGib, they are adequately maintained.

Hon. C Sacarello: My understanding is slightly different to the hon. Lady's. I understand that there is a limitation. There would be a wish for them to be cleaned more often, but there is a limitation as to the availability of the lorry, which is what I mentioned earlier on. So I shall reiterate this question. Is it a question of funding and resources?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Absolutely not, Madam Speaker. He seems to be quite keen on the lorry. I am not quite sure this is an interview for a position in AquaGib. I do not know. I do not even know what lorry the hon. Member is (*interjection*) speaking about. So I am not aware of any lorry issues which AquaGib has.

As far as I am aware, AquaGib has its own funding procedures and states its own requirements. I am told by the Board of AquaGib that the cleaning requirements are sufficiently met.

Madam Speaker: Right, next question.

Q261/2025

DPC –

Proposed development at the Ex-Amars Bakery (Line Wall Road)

3195 **Clerk:** Question 261, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, following the DPC planning representations deadline of the 29th of January 2025, have representatives of residents, neighbours, or objectors to the proposed development at the Ex-Amars Bakery on Line Wall Road sought to meet the Government or to make representations to it in respect of the development? And if so, what is the Government's view on the issue?

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

3205 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, a total of three written representations were submitted to the DPC in respect of the outline planning application at the Ex-Amars bakery, 47 Line Wall Road. The application is under active consideration and it would therefore not be appropriate to comment further at this stage.

3210 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Lady, asked members on this side to not to come here and ask questions that they decide when they wake up in the morning. I mean, I will tell her that I do not decide the questions that I'm going to ask in supplementary when I wake up in the morning. I normally decide in the moment because it depends on the answer.

Can I just ask, she has given us information about the written representations to the DPC and indeed my question does ask, in terms of time, having seen the close of the deadline, but I was more interested in, because I do not think I've had an answer to this, if she looks at my original question, whether they've sought to meet the Government or make representations to the Government? She has talked about representations to the DPC, but have the objectors or residents or neighbours sought to meet the Government itself, separate in terms of the planning authority?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: No, Madam Speaker, the DPC is completely independent.

3225 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, I appreciate the DPC is independent. I am asking, have they met the Government? Do I take it from her answer that the answer is no, they have not sought to meet the Government. Is that right?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Yes, Madam Speaker, it is correct that they have not sought to meet the Government.

3230 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Sometimes with these developments, there are planning matters, there are matters for the DPC, but there are also matters for the Government. For example, if a proposal for planning requires, will require permission from a planning authority, but may require permission from Government as the crown in respect of any particular matter, is there any particular matter in relation to this development that would require Government consent, not planning consent?

3240 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker, quite differently to the matter that we have debated in parliament a couple of months ago relating to the Montague Pavilion, where the Government had an interest. This building is a freehold and therefore there is no interest from the Government.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. And quite apart from the decisions that will need to be made by the planning authority separately, in terms of the Government's responsibility for planning, does the Government have a view of this development given the size and density of it in a very compressed space and the highly publicised nature of the objections of the citizens concerned?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, this Government has set up the DPC to be entirely independent and that means that the Government doesn't influence those decisions. The town planner will have his views and the town planner is the chair of the board and he will lead the discussion, but the Government doesn't get involved in independent decisions that are made by the Development and Planning Commission.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, I am not asking them to get involved in the planning decision. I am asking if they have a view as Government in the discharge of the Governmental responsibilities for planning in terms of the development plan that they approved years ago or whatever views they've got in relation to that. Do they have a view in relation to this particular development?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, Government does not develop a view. Government has a development plan which as discussed with the hon. Member opposite on Viewpoint, the development plan will be coming. The development plan informs the decision of the Development and Planning Commission, but the Development and Planning Commission is entirely independent of Government and therefore Government views are not relevant in this discussion.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Adjournment

Clerk: The Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia): Hon. Madam Speaker, grateful if the House could now recess until 3pm this afternoon for questions to the Chief Minister.

Madam Speaker: Do I need to put the question? All right, we will recess until 3pm this afternoon.

The House recessed at 1.45 p.m.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.00 p.m. – 6.40 p.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 27th February 2025

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 3.00 p.m.

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

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

Questions for Oral Answer

CHIEF MINISTER

Q270-272/2025

Disability Benefit – Criteria

Disability Benefit – Application/Assessment

Clerk: Questions to the Hon. the Chief Minister.
Question 270, the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. E J Reyes: Madam Speaker, I apologise, I think my colleague has been unfortunately delayed, but I gladly ask a question with your leave on her behalf. Could the Government confirm the date of the most recent review of the criteria for awarding disability benefits to child applicants?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I will answer with Questions 271 and 272.

Clerk: Question 271, the Hon. E J Reyes on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. E J Reyes: Could the Government confirm the date of the most recent review of the criteria for awarding disability benefit to adult applicants?

Clerk: Question 272, the Hon. E J Reyes on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. E J Reyes: Could the Government confirm whether every disability benefit application submitted is referred to the relevant panel for assessment?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Department for Social Services that the most recent review of the criteria for awarding disability benefit to child applicants was in November 2020, and the most recent review of the criteria for awarding disability benefit to adult applicants was in July 2015. Madam Speaker, all disability benefit applications submitted to the Department are referred to the relevant panel for assessment. However, in exceptional circumstances, such as end-of-life applications supported with medical evidence, the Director of Social Security can expedite the approval and award of the benefit.

Hon. E J Reyes: Madam Speaker, if I recall correctly, when my hon. Colleague was discussing this, the Question 270 was in respect of the child applicants, and the one of 271 was in respect of the adult applicants. In reviewing the criteria, are they both viewed and taken as collective, or are there any differences in criteria to be applied?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I understand that there are many common elements, but they are, in the end, different criteria. That is why there are two different standards.

Hon. E J Reyes: Grateful for that, Madam Speaker. I think it is best if I leave my hon. Colleague to pose further questions in the future should require any other clarifications.

Madam Speaker: Next question. Yes, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I just ask in relation to the reviews of the criteria, which is Question 270, will the Government be publishing that particular criteria? I think when we last looked, the criteria was not publicly available.

Hon. Chief Minister: No, Madam Speaker, I understand that last time we debated this matter. The criteria was not publicly available. I have not received advice suggesting it should be made publicly available.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, will the Government perhaps reflect on that position? Because clearly, this is criteria that is governing the application of people who make applications for disability benefit. It would be important to them to understand on what basis applications are considered, granted or rejected.

There is, as far as we understand, a possibility of appeal of further review of the disability decision. But again, unless people are aware of the criteria for the original decisions in respect of this matter, it is difficult for them to form a view as to whether or not an appeal should be made. So, can I ask the Government to perhaps reflect on that position in the interest of making it more known to people the basis on which these things are done?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, this matter has been ventilated in the past and the Government has already taken a view and nobody has advised us to take a different view. The hon. Gentleman, as far as I can recall, has even taken legal proceedings, which would have resulted in the Government being required to publish the criteria if he had succeeded in those proceedings, which I seem to recall did not proceed to trial and were resolved in another manner.

In any event, Madam Speaker, the criteria is known to individuals because the criteria was changed by this Government. Before, it was very simple. When they were in Government, they ought to be able to benefit from any of these disability benefits. An individual had to be born with a disability. So, the assessment was simply, were you born with it? Yes or no.

The criteria is now different and hon. Members are aware of what the criteria is, which is, does this affect your ability to lead a normal life? How that is scored by individual practitioners who may be on the panel, etc., is not something that the Government has advised we should be objectively publishing. The position has not changed.

That is why I said in my original answer that the Government has not been advised to change its view in that respect. The hon. Gentleman knows that when a Government determines not to publish a criteria, it is in order to ensure that people are not able to manufacture their submissions in a way that is designed simply to meet the criteria, but are objectively assessed by those who know how the breakdown of the assessment against the criteria is assessed, looking at the facts that they manifest when they arrive, that is to say, the reality of their situation, without being able to mould it to what

might be the published criteria in any particular way. That, in our view, we are advised, makes for a more objective assessment of the reality manifesting in the life of the individual applicant, rather than to give them the list of things that they need to tell a panel in order to have the panel be more likely to accept their application.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q273/2025
EU Commission –
Investigation

Clerk: Question 273, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Further to Question 481 of 2024, can the Government advise whether the investigation by the EU Commission has concluded? If so, how has the balance of the £23,454,019.50 received in 2022, less the £9 million released in 2024, i.e. approximately £14.5 million being applied?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, the £23.5 million received on 30 September 2022, represents funds received in favour of His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, pursuant to the judgement issued by the European Union's General Court on 6 April 2022, in relation to Commission decision EU2019/700 of 19 December 2018 on the State Aid SA34914 [2013/C], implemented by the United Kingdom as regards to the Gibraltar Corporate Income Tax regime. The balance of approximately £14.5 million remain in abeyance, pending the outcome of EU decision C (2022) (7665) confirmed by letter of 31 October 2022, seeking to extend the State Aid investigation in case SA34914.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the Chief Minister for the detailed answer. Fully as said, can I take it then that the EU Commission investigation has not concluded and that the £14.5 million remains, as he said, in abeyance?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave a few moments ago that addressed exactly that.

Hon. R M Clinton: Well, Madam Speaker, I am sorry to admit that I am not a lawyer, so maybe I did not fully understand the significance of all the case numbers, etc. All I really seek to know, Madam Speaker, is whether the £14.5 million effectively still held in reserve and has not been used by the Government in any way.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, of course acknowledge the fact that the hon. Gentleman suggests that because he is not a lawyer, he could not understand everything to do with the numbers that I referred, which are just the case numbers, which are the reference numbers for the case names. I am surprised he did not understand the bit that I read, which was in plain English. I will read it again, Madam Speaker. The balance of approximately £14.5 million remain in abeyance.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, it remains in abeyance, and I think the next words were, because there was a letter from the Commission extending the state aid investigation, and I believe the Hon. Chief

Minister referred to a date sometime in late 2022, October 2022 or something like that. What we are asking for is, does the Government have information about the progress of that investigation and when it would be concluded so that there will be a decision on the release or otherwise of that money?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, what I said after that, I will read that again too, was pending the outcome of EU decision in case number 2022-7665, which is confirmed by a letter of the 31st of October 2022 seeking to extend the state aid investigation in that case. Madam Speaker, the Government is not a party to that case.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, I appreciate that the Government is not a party to the case. My question had been whether the Government had information about the progress of that investigation, not whether the Government was a party.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I would have thought that given the answer I had provided a moment ago, the hon. Gentleman would have worked out that because we were not a party to the case, we do not have the information in relation to the case.

Madam Speaker: Next Question.

Q274/2025

Import Duty

Clerk: Question 274, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government advise the amount of import duty collected in the following month being January 2025?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, as we are now in the final quarter of the year, the Government will wait until the end of the quarter to provide figures in order to ensure that they are reliable.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q275/2025

Government - Owned Companies

Clerk: Question 275, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government provide a schedule advising the full name and principal activities of the following Government-Owned Companies, Gibraltar Development Corporation-owned and Savings Bank-owned companies, namely: GDC [directors] Ltd; GCP Investments Ltd; RMB Investments Ltd; ES Ltd; GAR Ltd; GRP Management Company Ltd; GSBA Ltd; GBIC Ltd; GOC [secretaries] Ltd; GEP Ltd; GSTR Ltd; GUT Ltd; GSF Ltd; GIC Ltd; and KIYJ Parkings Ltd.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, as I made clear in answer to Question 641 of 2024, the GSLP Liberal Government that I lead has published more information about Government-owned companies than any other Government in the history of our nation. We have published that which the law requires that each company must file, so that in relation to Government Companies, Members of the public have access to the relevant information without having to pay a fee. That is much more than the party of Members opposite ever did when it was in Government.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, they did not even publish that which the law they passed required them to publish. I will nonetheless now go even further in providing transparency to our people that they never provided whilst in office and I will provide a schedule of the information requested which the hon. Clerk is now passing. Usher is passing, sorry.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 275

Company name	Principal Activity
ES Limited	Its principal activity is to operate the Gibraltar North Mole Power Station.
GAR Limited	The principal activity of the company is the ownership and management of assets.
GCP Investments Limited	Its principal activity is the ownership and management of assets.
GDC (Directors) Limited	The Company provides directorship services to other entities that are ultimately controlled by the Gibraltar Development Corporation. The Company is not remunerated for these services.
GEP Limited	The principal activity of the company is to oversee the development and construction of schools. The primary objective of the company is not the generation of profit as the company does not generate turnover from commercial activities.
GOC (Secretaries) Limited	The Company provides secretarial services to other entities that are ultimately controlled by HM Government of Gibraltar and the Gibraltar Development Corporation. The Company is not remunerated for these services.
GRP Management Company Limited	The company has been dormant since incorporation on 27 January 2012.
GSBA Limited	The principal activity of the company is the ownership and management of properties.
GSF Limited	The principal activity of the company is the ownership and management of properties.
GSTR Limited	The Company's principal activity was to enter into a contract for the construction and development of short-term rental accommodation. Following the completion of the properties in 2019, it was then made available to students attending the University of Gibraltar and the wider business community on short-term lets. The renting and rental process has been outsourced to a third-party, Europa Residence Management Limited. The Company has also invested in residential units in Clemence Suites as well as several floors of car parking spaces in Ocean Spa Plaza all of which the Company has rented out on a short-term basis.
GUT Limited	The principal activity of the company is to operate and manage the Kingsway tunnel.
KIJY Parkings Limited	The company has been dormant since 2015.
Not Government owned companies	
RMB Investments Limited	
GBIC Limited	
GIC Limited	

Madam Speaker: All right, does the hon. Member wish to postpone supplementaries or is he in a position to ask them? All right.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the Chief Minister for the schedule, especially the principal activities, which is not something we have had until today. But the main piece of information I had asked for was in respect of what do the abbreviated names stand for and I do not seem to see that on this list and perhaps I would be grateful the Chief Minister would explain why the full names do not appear on this list.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I am told those are the full names.

Hon. R M Clinton: So, Madam Speaker, the Chief Minister will recall the exchange he had with the Leader of the Opposition last week in which he indicated that, of course, a company of initials has to have a word relevant to each initial when the company is incorporated. So, on that basis and indeed reading Guidance Note 4 of Companies House which talks about sensitive words and expressions and I quote, names of letters or abbreviations or letters for any names that include singular letters which contain any form of abbreviation within the name, Companies House will always require a signed letter in writing from the applicant explaining clearly what the abbreviation stands for or what the particular letters in the name stand for. So, Madam Speaker, in order to comply with this guidance, the Government must have provided such information. So, therefore, I ask again, Madam Speaker, what do the initials for these companies stand for?

I mean, I have had this exchange with Sir Joe back in March 2018 and I guess that the G probably stands for Gibraltar in most of them. But surely, Madam Speaker, given that the Chief Minister was content to disclose that Gibraltar AquaGib Holdings which is actually GAH Limited, that was the abbreviation for Gibraltar AquaGib Holdings, what is his problem explaining what the abbreviated names stand for? And it is a requirement of Companies House. Can he please provide the information?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman seems to be confusing different concepts. His question asked for the full name and principal activities. Actually, at Companies House and the registered full name of each of these companies is what I have given him.

When you file a name, the name, which is an abbreviation, you have to inform Companies House what it stands for. But the name of the company does not change. The hon. Gentleman is asking me to give him the meaning of the initials as he now appears to accept I was right about when I was debating this matter with the Leader of the Opposition some weeks ago.

But that is not the name of the company. The name of the company is the name as appears. If he wants to know what the initials mean, if you ask me a question I would be delighted to tell him.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the Chief Minister for the clarification and would he then basically provide the House with comfort that if I do file such a question in the next session, he will provide the information requested in respect to what each initial stands for?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, that is a hypothetical question. Once it is filed, of course, I will take advice and being consistent as I always am in my position, he can expect that he will have an answer, which will be in keeping with what I have said to the House today. But I would have to see the question before I can tell him what I am going to answer.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q276/2025

Private Sector Property – Rentals

Clerk: Question 276, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please list all private sector property rentals entered into by the Government and GDC to date, giving the date and length of the lease, annual rental and the Department or Agency which is or is expected to be in occupation.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I now hand over the schedule with the information requested.

Madam Speaker: Right, we will move on and come back to this one for supplementaries. Next question.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 276

Department / Agency	Private Property Rental	Date the lease was entered into	Length of the lease	Annual rental fee
AUDIT OFFICE	Unit 3.13 World Trade Center	23/03/2017	21 years	£10,286.50
	Unit 3.26 World Trade Center	23/03/2017	21 years	£26,256.64
	Unit 3.28 World Trade Center	23/03/2017	21 years	£23,795.08
	Unit 3.30 World Trade Center	23/03/2017	21 years	£83,282.78
STATISTICS DEPARTMENT	Unit 3.22 World Trade Center	23/03/2017	21 years	£38,974.70
	Unit 3.24 World Trade Center	23/03/2017	21 years	£31,590.70
CIVIL STATUS & REGISTRATION OFFICE	Units 3A, 3B, 4A and 4B Lease Place	04/01/2023	9 years	£217,680.00
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT	Suite 3A,3B,4A & 4B Town Range (Lease Place)	18/04/2023	9 years	£214,680.00
INCOME TAX SOCIAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS DEPARTMENT	Suite 1B,2A & 2B 50 Town Range (Lease Place)	24/08/2021	4 years	£181,080.00
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	Suite 1A 50 Town Range (Lease Place)	24/08/2021	4 years	£33,600.00
DIGITAL SERVICES	44 Town Range AND 10 Victualling Office Lane	30/09/2021	150 years	£1,135,214.16
EMPLOYMENT	323A & 323 01 Main Street	31/01/2014	12 years	£124,707.50
GIBRALTAR REGULATORY AUTHORITY	No.3 Convent Place	01/01/2025	12 years	£60,000.00
TOURISM	2nd Floor, Building 4, Eurotowers, Europort Road, Gibraltar	05/01/2023	10 years	£178,500.00
GOVERNMENT LAW OFFICES	Unit 4.3.03 Eurotowers, Block 4, Europort Road	12/03/2020	6 years	£29,200.56
OFFICE OF CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS & LITIGATION	Natwest House, Suite 6, 57/63 Line Wall Road	19/12/2019	12 years	£123,858.00
HM CUSTOMS	8th Floor Natwest House, 57/63 Line Wall Road	19/12/2019	12 years	£123,858.00
HOUSING DEPARTMENT	Unit 25, Harbours Deck	19/12/2022	on-going	£120,448.00
HOUSING WORKS AGENCY	ICC Units 9.3a,9.7A,B,9.8 & 9.9	07/03/2022	12 years	£97,934.64
	ICC Units 9.6,9.12 & 9.13	22/12/2022	12 years	£93,036.72
MINISTRY FOR EQUALITY, EMPLOYMENT, TOURISM & CULTURE	Suite 10, 10th Floor ICC, 2a Main Street	01/10/2021	12 Years	£181,286.76
MINISTRY FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, CIVIL CONTINGENCIES & SPORTS	John Mackintosh Hall	27/08/2021	14 years	£125,000.00
TBC	Suite GE, Ground Floor, Regal House, Queensway	12/08/2020	8 years	£81,872.00
TOURISM	80A Queensway	08/09/2023	21 years	£1,047,200.00
TREASURY DEPARTMENT	Gibraltar Heritage Trust : The Main Guard, 13 John Mackintosh Square, Gibraltar.	19/03/2023	2 Years	£7,800.00
	19C 01 Town Range, Blake House	28/02/2014	9 years	£75,842.96
CHILD PRIMARY CARE				
PRIMARY CARE CENTRE				
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY				
FINANCE & PROCUREMENT				
BUSINESS AND THE OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING		01/12/2024	18 years	
TOWN PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL		29/11/2021	21 years	
DIGITAL SERVICES		29/11/2021	21 years	
FINANCE CENTRE		01/12/2021	21 years	
GAMBLING DIVISION		12/01/2021	21 years	£1,948,200.00
GIBRALTAR CO-ORD CENTRE FOR CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE & DRUGS		01/12/2021	21 years	
GIBRALTAR ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY		01/06/2024	1 Year	
GIBRALTAR FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT		01/12/2021	21 years	
MINISTRY FOR EQUALITY, EMPLOYMENT, TOURISM & CULTURE		29/11/2021	21 years	
MINISTRY FOR EQUALITY, EMPLOYMENT, TOURISM & CULTURE			21 years	
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, TRADE & INDUSTRY		01/12/2021	21 years	
FACILITIES	St Bernard's Hospital			£5,200,000.00
GHA FACILITIES	New Harbours - Archive Storage Rent	NO LEASE		£178,950.20
GHA FACILITIES	GHA Portable cabins	NO LEASE	Dec-24	£36,690.00
GHA FACILITIES	Covered storage area	01-Oct-23		£90,000.00
GHA FACILITIES	Marquee at Coaling Island		Mar-25	£7,200.00
GHA FACILITIES	Rock Vaults	01-Aug-24		£4,356.00

Cont...

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 276

GHA ACCOMMODATION				
Dept / Section occupying rented property	Address of Property	Date lease commenced	Length of lease	Monthly rental fee
Nursing	406 Atlantic Suites	15/02/2025	14/02/2026	£1,175.00
Speech & Language	507 Atlantic Suites	18/09/2024	12/09/2025	£1,590.00
Ambulance	611 Atlantic Suites	28/02/2025	19/02/2026	£1,175.00
Pathology	806 Atlantic Suites	04/02/2025	03/02/2026	£1,175.00
Nursing	1004 E1	05/02/2024	04/02/2025	£1,375.00
Medicine	312 Eurotowers	23/08/2024	24/02/2025	£1,400.00
Speech & Language	314 Eurotowers	04/11/2024	03/11/2025	£1,365.00
Nursing	401 Eurotowers	01/07/2024	30/06/2025	£1,300.00
Medicine	411 Eurotowers	01/05/2024	30/04/2025	£1,350.00
Nursing	506 Eurotowers	01/01/2025	02/07/2025	£1,420.00
Nursing	510 Eurotowers	01/01/2025	30/06/2025	£1,300.00
Nursing	514 Eurotowers	02/09/2024	01/09/2025	£1,150.00
Medicine	732 Eurotowers	14/04/2024	13/04/2025	£1,350.00
Medicine	805 Eurotowers	28/03/2024	27/03/2025	£1,200.00
On- Call Staff	807 Eurotowers	29/04/2024	28/04/2025	£1,350.00
On- Call Staff	906 Eurotowers	16/12/2024	15/12/2025	£1,250.00
Medicine	907 Eurotowers	30/03/2024	29/03/2025	£1,350.00
Medicine	911 Eurotowers	01/01/2025	31/05/2025	£1,300.00
Nursing	1110 Eurotowers	24/02/2024	23/02/2025	£1,250.00
Nursing	905 Forbes	03/04/2024	04/04/2025	£1,200.00
Vacant - Reserved for Locum - Pet Friendly	1 Rocio House	01/01/2025	31/12/2025	£1,275.00
Medicine	2 Rocio House	01/01/2025	31/12/2025	£1,995.00
Occupational Therapy	3 Rocio House	01/01/2025	31/12/2025	£1,275.00
Nursing	4 Rocio House	01/01/2025	31/12/2025	£1,375.00
Medicine	5 Rocio House	01/01/2025	31/12/2025	£1,975.00
Nursing	307 Westone	15/10/2024	14/10/2025	£1,400.00
Ophthalmology / Medicine	402 Westone	13/04/2024	13/04/2025	£1,450.00
Physiotherapy	404 Westone	23/10/2024	24/10/2025	£1,130.00
Nursing	405 Westone	19/11/2024	18/11/2025	£1,150.00
Pathology	406 Westone	18/10/2024	17/10/2025	£1,050.00
Pathology	408 Westone	18/10/2024	17/10/2025	£1,050.00
Speech & Language	412 Westone	10/09/2024	09/09/2025	£1,050.00
Nursing	702 Westone	09/04/2024	08/04/2025	£1,500.00
Pathology	711 Westone	01/04/2024	31/03/2025	£1,200.00
Nursing	705 Carrara Euro City	01/06/2024	31/05/2025	£2,200.00
Ambulances	501 Carrara Euro City	09/05/2024	02/05/2025	£1,300.00
Nursing	601 Carrara Euro City	09/06/2024	08/06/2025	£1,350.00
Radiography	701 Carrara Euro City	26/04/2024	25/04/2025	£1,300.00
Nursing	809 Carrara Euro City	03/05/2024	02/05/2025	£1,300.00
Nursing	909 Carrara Euro City	03/05/2024	02/05/2025	£1,300.00
Nursing	1001 Carrara Euro City	03/05/2024	02/05/2025	£1,300.00
Medicine	1201 Carrara Euro City	25/05/2024	22/05/2025	£1,300.00
Medicine	1112 Ocean Spa Plaza	01/05/2024	30/04/2025	£1,300.00
Medicine	7 Park View	07/09/2024	06/09/2025	£1,600.00
Medicine	39 The Arches	22/12/2024	21/12/2025	£1,250.00
Nursing	13 Willis Road	01/04/2024	31/03/2025	£1,200.00
Nursing	112 Arengo's Garden	01/09/2024	31/08/2025	£1,650.00
Director General	202/203 Arabian Seas	01/09/2024	31/08/2025	£4,550.00

Q277-278/2025

Civil Status and Registration Office – Change of location & Costs

Clerk: Question 277, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: When will the Civil Status and Registration Office move from its current address at Joshua Hassan House and which address will it move to?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I will answer with Question 278.

Clerk: Question 278, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: What will be/is the total cost(s) of the refurbishments of the premises which the Civil Status and Registration Office will be moving to?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, the CSRO is due to relocate to units 3B, 4A and 4B at Leanne's place shortly. An announcement will be made when it is ready to do so. It is a complex process involving the transfer of secure systems, some of which require specialist expertise from visiting professionals.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is the Hon. the Chief Minister able to provide to this House details of the... I am just thinking very carefully how to pose the question given the experience that we had in relation to

the Queensway, to the other property where we have the resulted in the motion in respect to misleading, the current monthly rental. Which current in a sense that it has been agreed.

I am assuming that the rental is not yet being paid. But what is the agreed figure in relation to the monthly rental at the property at Leanse place that he has referred us to?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I do remember that motion. It was the motion that resulted in the historic view of this House that the Leader of the Opposition had in fact been the first politician in our democratic history to be found to have misled this House. But in relation to the detail of the question that the hon. Gentleman is asking me, I refer him to the answer I gave a few moments ago.

Hon. D J Bossino: I do not at this moment recall, based on the answers that he gave, anything in that the Hon. the Chief Minister provided by way of an answer which would prevent him from providing information, which I assume is information which would be available to him. It may not be available to him now, but it would be made available to him if he were to put an enquiry as to what has been agreed with the landlord at Leanse Place. So, he is shaking his head.

So I would ask him again, whether given the explanation I have given, whether he would reconsider his answer and provide information as to what the agreed rent is in respect of this property at Leanse Place.

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

Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful to the Hon. Chief Minister. Is it the case that the answer is as provided in respect of a previous question in the schedule?

Hon. D J Bossino: Right. Okay. Okay. And that is something that I will need to consider, Madam Speaker. In respect of the second question and the two that he has bunched together, which is Question 278, which talks about the total cost of refurbishment, does he not have that figure available to him now? Because I do not think that he answered the question.

He answered the question in a roundabout way when he says that there are certain technical things that need to be dealt with before... Well, that is how he answered the question. I was going to add before he is able to answer the specific question that I posed, is he able now, this afternoon, to provide details as to the expected cost of refurbishment at Leanse Place?

Hon. Chief Minister: I am very pleased that at last the hon. Gentleman realised that I had given him exactly the information that he was requesting, and I was telling him where it was. I had given it to him a few moments ago. He is the one who told you he was going to continue having him receive the schedule.

So, he had the schedule. The rent is set out in the schedule that I gave him. And so therefore, Madam Speaker, I am surprised that despite having told him on three occasions, he had not worked out that I had actually given him, to the penny, the amount that he was asking about.

I cannot give him, Madam Speaker, right now, the refurbishment cost because the refurbishment has not finished yet. And so I do not want to give numbers which may turn out not to be correct because I would not want them, once again, in error, to try to persuade the public that I am somehow misleading the House because things might turn out to be more expensive by the time the refurbishment is over and once again find that they have a motion that they bring with great fanfare turned against them on issues as sensitive as whether the House is being misled or not. So, at this moment, I cannot give him a figure for the refurbishment because, as I told him, it is not over.

Hon. R M Clinton: Sorry, Madam Speaker. Just one question arising from the schedule. In terms of St Bernard's Hospital, I know there is the annual rental fee of 5.2 million. But I seem to recall that the Government announced that they had terminated the, or come to, or were going to exercise the breaking clause in the arrangement of the Royal Bank of Scotland and take on the, or basically make whatever payment was required to terminate that arrangement. Can the Chief Minister advise whether that has happened or is it that the old arrangement is still continuing?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Gentleman may be right. The rental cost of 5.2 million a year, in other words, please just focus this, the rent of 5.2 million a year, which hon. Members agreed for the property at Europort, is no longer rental. And I think therefore that should not be on this list because we exercised the break clause.

We got Gibraltar off the hook for the 5 million a year of rent that hon. Members opposite had agreed for that building. And now we pay the financing costs, I think, to a Government company. So this one is now in a Government company, as I believe.

So it should not be there as third-party private property. The hon. Gentleman is right. The 5 million they agreed to pay as rent is no longer paid by the Government to a third party.

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, one has now had an opportunity to consider this schedule, which Madam Speaker, as normal, grants us the courtesy to have a bit of time to consider and then to pose questions on it. But given the way that the Hon. Chief must be nervous, he must be nervous. I gauge that and sense that from him because he is playing his usual games.

Now, it appears that there are, in effect, what appear to be, in effect, two office spaces, or they seem to be very closely, I imagine because of the unit numbers, we will need to consider this a bit more carefully, which are assigned to the Civil Status and Registration Office, which is the Government's office, a subject of this question. In relation to that, they are paying in excess together of £400,000 an annual rental fee. Now, the question is, in respect of both those leases, one dated 4 January 2023 for nine years, and the other one dated 18 April 2023 for nine years, in respect of premises which have not yet been occupied, can the Hon. Chief Minister confirm my understanding, or correct it otherwise, that these payments are currently already being made?

In other words, that the Gibraltar Government is making these payments by way of rent, presumably on a monthly or quarterly basis, to the landlord of those particular premises?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that you continue to give hon. Members the courtesy of time to consider a schedule. You are not the first speaker to do so. They are not the first Opposition to have the benefit of that, and I am surprised that we should want to labour the point quite so much.

But I want to assure the hon. Gentleman that I have absolutely no tingling in my central nervous system when he gets up to ask questions, but he is right to say that he does stir my emotions. I am always amused, bemused, and entertained by him. I have been amused, bemused, and entertained by him since I met him when he was 12, and I continue to be amused, bemused, and entertained by him.

He seems to amuse, bemuse, and entertain himself, Madam Speaker, and he should continue to at least provide, as the head of light entertainment at the BBC used to say in Ronnie Corbett's time, that amusement, bemusement, and entertainment for many years, Madam Speaker. Perish the thought that he might actually ever have to make a decision or be in a position of power, but amusement, bemusement, and entertainment, we are all very pleased to receive from him. Madam Speaker, yes, I can confirm that the Government, as I understand it, but I would be corrected if I am wrong by those who prepare these answers, is paying the rent for the property that is not yet occupied.

The hon. Gentleman has been, I was going to say one of Her Majesty's Council for Gibraltar, that would be the wrong way of referring to him, Madam Speaker, has been a lawyer for many years, and

being one of Her Majesty's Council means a KC, he is not. So a lawyer, yeah. He has been a lawyer for many years, Madam Speaker, and he should know that you start to pay rent when you rent the property.

Landlords sometimes give you a bit of time, a bit of rent-free period, before you are liable for the whole rent whilst you are refurbishing, exactly as happened at number 80A Queensway, where we got a period which was rent-free, and which led to them not being able to do their math right. But Madam Speaker, it would be remarkable that the Government was to be in occupation of a property and not pay rent for it, and it would be remarkable for the hon. Gentleman to think, unless his view of the world is so simplistic, that it would be impossible for anyone ever to entrust him with serious decision-making, that you can move a Department like the Civil Status and Registration Office, which involves, in this day and age, complicated machinery and secure systems, as you move a gym. And so on the day that you enter into the rental agreement, you carry the treadmill and the bicycle in, you pull the curtain, and you ask people to start enjoying the new premises.

This is a very secure system that has to be moved. It is taking time to move that system, to provide security and security guarantees, a word that is a lot in the news, thank God, not in relation to Gibraltar, security guarantees to those who provide the other end of that system, the United Kingdom. And therefore, Madam Speaker, yes, the Government is paying the rent, although it is not yet in operation, but in occupation, because as the hon. Gentleman knows, the tenant is in occupation from the moment he gets the keys and starts to work on the property.

Madam Speaker, nothing could be more normal and less remarkable, but I have no doubt that there will be a reason why the hon. Gentleman will amuse me, bemuse me, and entertain me in his retort to what I have told him.

Hon. D J Bossino: Many of the things that the Hon. Chief Minister has said, one can take it on one's chin, and in fact, everything he says, one's skin is sufficiently developed, having been in this House now for some time, to be able to withstand that. And indeed, I have known the hon. Gentleman long enough to understand and to assume what he says, and simply just brush it off. But I must say that a lot of what he has said, a lot of what he has said, is not only, quite frankly, pathetic, but nasty, because he has spotted certain belts, which are inaccurate in some cases, but in all cases, and he cannot resist but hit below it.

Now, in relation to the rent, which is what we are questioning him about here and now, can he at least say, and he alluded to it in his response, whether in respect of those, I assume, two leases, yes, two leases, dated, as I said before, start dates of 4th of January and 18th of April 2023, there was an element of a rent relief period.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I have been here longer than him. I have been here since 2003, and in that time, I have been called many things. The gentlemen that represent the GSD have called me unfit to govern, but that was on the cusp of the people of Gibraltar returning me to be their Chief Minister for four times.

I have said that he is amusing, bemusing, and entertaining. I mean, the uncouth GSLP, Liberals, I do not think they are determined to be uncouth because they are Liberals, but we in the GSLP were always determined to be uncouth by their standards, by the landed gentry's standards, say that we are bemused and entertained. They say that we are unfit to govern, and now that I am pathetic and that I hit under the belt.

And nasty as well. Oh, we did not say it when he was standing up, Madam Speaker. So I know that he sometimes forgets the bits that he wants to say.

So pathetic, nasty, and under the belt, okay? Pathetic, nasty, and under the belt. Because I have said that I am giving him the information that this is a very complex move.

Well, I mean, Madam Speaker, by the mouth dieth the fish as to who is more uncouth. Madam Speaker, I am told by those who prepared the schedule that they fear that there is a double entry. And in fact, in respect of Leanse Place, it is actually only £214,680 a year that there is a double entry.

So, I cannot tell him whether there was a rent-free period. That wasn't part of the question. If he wants to know, he can ask me a question.

And I will, of course, seek to provide the information subject to seeing the question when it comes because otherwise, I would be committing myself to answer a hypothetical, which I cannot do. However pathetic, nasty, and under the belt I may be. And however, amusing and entertaining the question might be.

Hon. D J Bossino: Okay, Madam Speaker, I mean, this is a type of question which I honestly did not expect and really, I should know him well enough. I should know him well enough that he simply cannot help himself.

All I am asking was for factual information. I was quite pleased when he passed the schedule through respect to Question 276, and one would leave it at that. But it is not possible with him and he always manages. When I come in to these sessions, I always think, no, just ask my questions, get the answers and move on.

But it is impossible with the hon. Gentleman because he squirms around playing his usual games. Now, I have two further questions, but I will split them in order to be faithful to the hon. Madam Speaker's direction in that regard. In respect of what, the hon. Gentleman has just said, can he then, given that there is a mistake in the answer to which he referred me to when I asked the following Question, 277, he said, well, the hon. Gentleman needs to refer to the answer I gave the hon. Member a few moments ago, playing his usual games.

And in fact, the answer that he gave was actually inaccurate, given his own admission right now. Can he at least state what this information, i.e. the line which refers to a date, a start date for release of the 4th of January, 2023, with a length of lease of nine years, with an annual rent of £217,680 relates to, because as it stands now, and he has said it stands in error, as it stands now, the record will show that this is being paid to the relevant landlord, and I will do the relevant searches to who the landlord is, but I would invite him to provide me with that information, but he need not do so, is occupied by the CSRO.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman has now remembered your direction, which I gently prodded him to remember this morning, and is splitting questions up into two. And I am a little concerned that for somebody who has on so many occasions sought and failed to obtain high office, he should still say that after 40 years, he knows how old we are, we met when we were 12, after 40 years, he says I can still surprise him, 40 years of being friends, old school chumps, as he says, and opponents, and I can still surprise him, and he still comes here to ask me something he does not expect me to answer in a particular way, but I do, and I swarm around, I mean, I think like I fly like a butterfly and I sting like a bee, Madam Speaker, as the results of the Election have shown. But if after 40 years, you have not been able to work out how your opponent is going to deal with you, good luck ever dealing with the Spanish, let alone the Europeans, or indeed, Perfidious Albion, as the United Kingdom is sometimes referred to.

You cannot deal with me, Madam Speaker, it is a good thing that people of Gibraltar decided that they should sit over there, and we should sit over here, that is all I can say. Madam Speaker, I have corrected the record as soon as I have been told by those who prepare the answers for me. I can see that it is the same, it is the same hereditaments that are being dealt with, one referred to as units and one referred to as suites, which is probably why those who prepared the answers for me were not able, were a little flummoxed by it because there was a slightly different amount payable.

And so I have provided all the factual information that I have, Madam Speaker, and in the process, I have not been surprised to be called pathetic and under the belt, although I was surprised to

additionally be called nasty. I do not know who the landlord is, if the hon. Gentleman wants to know, he can ask me a question, he does not have to do a search, I will tell him who the landlord is, but I do not have it here, I just know it is a private landlord.

Madam Speaker: I think we have spent enough, one more and then I am done.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am very grateful. I mean, there is one further inaccuracy in what the hon. Gentleman said, because we are now 53 years of age, so we have known now known each other for 41 years. Now, he makes references, pugilistic references to, I think, Muhammad Ali, which I think are totally irrelevant, and I certainly do not identify any of that in him and in his time in Office.

But in order to make absolute, to make absolutely sure that we have at least, perhaps not accurate or inaccurate information in relation to this, is he, at least what we, I think, ought to try and obtain is fuller information in relation to that particular lease, Madam Speaker. Is the Hon. the Chief Minister, able to say in relation to the lease, which I understand from his replies, is the pertinent one, which is the one which is extracting from the Government exchequer an annual payment of £214,680 to that particular landlord. In relation to that, I will take him to his word that if I do ask a question in a future session of the House, he won't rely, as I think he tried to rely, in the context of the other property, the Bassadone property in the dockyard, where he said, well, it is publicly available information and therefore the question ought not to have been posed because it breaches that particular standing rule. Is he able to say whether there are any rent review provisions, and if so, the nature and the detail of those?

Hon. Chief Minister: No, Madam Speaker, I am not going to commit to answering a question in the event that the information is publicly available. If the lease is registered, the hon. Gentleman is right, then he should just search the lease because those are not my rules, not my attempt at obfuscation, not my inventing it as we go along. It is the rules of the House that have applied since this House was constituted and it would be inappropriate of me to provide the answer.

Indeed, it is possibly also true that it would be inappropriate to permit the question, but that would be a matter for you, Madam Speaker. So, depending on what the question is, Madam Speaker, I will take advice on whether it is in keeping with the rules of the House that I should answer or not. And Madam Speaker, the second part of the question that he asked, now blatantly ignoring your earlier ruling to keep to one question in supplementaries, is whether there are rent reviews.

I do not have all of these leases with me. I have not been asked about that in the main question and so therefore, if the hon. Gentleman wants to have an answer to that question, then subject to how he phrases it, he would have an answer if one can be prepared in keeping with the rules of the House.

Hon. D J Bossino: That is not correct. The question was asked. The question dealt with annual rental. Annual rental must include, and that information ought to be available to the Chief Minister in answer to an obvious supplementary question as to whether it includes any rent reviews, because if the rent reviews tend to go up, that would have an impact on the annual rental during the course of the nine-year lease.

So it is absolutely an answer that the hon. Gentleman ought to have available to him. I should have simply brushed it to one side as he has done, on the basis that the question was posed. The hon. Gentleman has simply not answered it.

Hon. Chief Minister: With respect to the hon. Gentleman, he needs to be less nervous and less upset and more abusing and bemusing. We are on Questions 277 and 278 and Question 277 and Question 278 relates to the cost of refurbishment of Civil Status and Registration Office and when it

will move from the current address. So, there is no question of that supplementary even potentially arising.

That is where we are. We are on Questions 277 and 278. I referred him to the answer to Question 277 in respect of his supplementary, which was about the rent because I told him I have given you that answer already.

So, I am afraid, Madam Speaker, he is both formally and informally, in my view, completely out of kilter with what the rules require.

Madam Speaker: No, we are moving on. No, no, I am not having a discussion.

Hon. D J Bossino: The point of order,

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member is raising a point of order.

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, because we need a clarification, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Take me to take me to what is being breached or what.

Hon. D J Bossino: The way he is absolutely right that we moved from Questions 276 to 277, 278 bunched together. What happened here was in respect of the supplementary that I asked in respect of Questions 277 and 278, the Hon. Chief Minister, hence the confusion, refers to the previous answer he had given. I thought that the answer was in respect of Questions 277 and 278.

In fact, the Hon. Chief Minister, as a result of the assistance from the Leader of the Opposition, actually admitted that the answer given was in respect of Question 276.

Madam Speaker: What is the point of order?

Hon. D J Bossino: Well, the point of order is, am I, therefore, Yes, but he simply cannot shift. And this is the point of order.

Am I therefore, by way of clarification, Madam Speaker, able to ask questions, which is the leave that you allowed me in relation to supplementary questions in relation to Question 276 arising from an analysis of the schedule? And therefore, and there I will ask questions which he has to answer in respect of the rent review relating, he is laughing, he accuses me of this.

Madam Speaker: Right, so I am not sure. I am not sure this is a point of order. What the hon. Member is asking for is clarification. But I do. I think that is a different issue to this being a point of order. As far as I understand, we were dealing with supplementaries to Questions 277, 278, and there was reference to information on the schedule as a result of Question 276, which has also been discussed, and which questions have also been posed.

I allowed the hon. Member one last question because we are now on 10 questions on this. That was posed. That was answered. And now we are going to move on. Not for another supplementary. No, we are going to move on.

What I propose to do, which is what I said originally, is to allow the hon. Member to consider the schedule of Question 276 and ask any supplementaries on that that do not relate to the CSRO and Leanse Place because we have dealt with that. And the hon. Member has looked at that schedule. So, I will come back to Question 276. We can have a discussion when I come back to Question 276. But now we are going to move on to Question 279.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, if I may, before I was going to say your leadership, but before, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: If it was that, I could intervene a lot more, believe me.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Will you take a final view, if I may? Madam Speaker is right that we were on Questions 277 and 278. I had one question, a supplementary on Question 277.

We have tended to gravitate away as a result of the way that the Hon. Chief Minister answered, referring the hon. Member to his previous answer, which was not in relation to Questions 277 and 278 and my hon. Colleague has asked a number of nitty-gritty questions with reference to the schedule in relation to Question 276. And that has given the impression, therefore, that all those supplementaries are more specifically in relation to Questions 277 and 278, but it has not been really.

It has been in respect of the Leanse Place answer in relation to Question 276. So if my Learned Friend were to ask supplementary...

Madam Speaker: That is precisely what I have said.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Is that if my Learned Friend to my right is going to ask questions in relation to the schedule in Question 276, it would be understandable if he were not to be allowed to ask any questions in relation to Leanse Place. But perhaps my supplementary on Question 277 could be allowed because a lot of the number counting in relation to the supplementary count has been in reality in respect of Question 276. That is really my point.

Madam Speaker: Well, I am not sure I agree with that. It was in relation to the information provided in Question 276 as it related to Questions 277 and 278 and not in relation to Question 276 proper. I am concerned that we have spent a lot of time on this.

I know there are two questions, but jointly there has been 10 supplementaries. So even that is a lot and the length they've taken. So, we are going to move on to Question 279 and then I will come back to Question 276 later.

Q279/2025

Bob Peliza Mews – Phase 2

Clerk: Question 279, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, when will phase two of Bob Peliza Mews be completed?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, as the hon. Gentleman knows, the completion date for the second phase of Bob Peliza Mews estate is dependent on when the site is vacated by AquaGib and when an agreement is reached with the commercial warehouse owners over their relocation. In respect of AquaGib, they will be vacating the southern end of their facility by the end of March 2025. This will allow demolitions to begin immediately, as I previously indicated, in order to clear the site.

Construction of the first block in phase two can then commence immediately with completion programme to be two years from then. The remaining AquaGib facilities on the northern end of the site are programmed to be decommissioned by November 2025, at which point that part of the site can also be demolished and cleared. Construction can then also begin on the second block in phase two, with completion also programmed to be two years from the start of it.

In relation to the commercial warehouse, the original plan had been to relocate this in its entirety out of the site. However, despite agreement having been reached to provide a new warehouse on another plot on a like-for-like basis, the owners changed their requirements and requested a series of upgrades, which were not acceptable to His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar. This meant other options have had to be explored and an in-principle agreement has now been reached.

This will allow them to remain at their current location without affecting the construction of the affordable housing blocks. This will, however, affect the pensioner rental block that is part of the Bob Peliza Mews Estate, but a new location has already been identified. This will deliver at least the same number of units while still being linked to the estate.

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, Madam Speaker, there certainly has been some movement, not historically, but certainly since the last time that I raised this question in the House, which was in November 2023, which I think the Hon. Chief Minister there provided me with expected completion dates. And then there was a report by the local press, I think it was Gibraltar Chronicle, where the Government spokesman was unable to provide a definitive completion date. This was in October 2024, a year after, more or less a year after I asked my question.

I hear what the hon. Gentleman says, and I am glad to hear also that there has been a resolution, at least insofar as the AquaGib-related matters are concerned. But in respect of what is causing an obstacle to the further development of the site, which is what is going to impact on the pensioner flats, which the Hon. Chief Minister mentioned, at the end of his answer, he made a reference to an alternate location, having, I think he said, having been identified, but somehow linked to the rest of the development. Is he able to provide more precision as to the location of this particular alternative site?

Hon. Chief Minister: Not at this stage, Madam Speaker.

Hon. D J Bossino: And why is that the case?

Hon. Chief Minister: Because Madam Speaker, there are others who need to hear from the Government before the whole community hears from the Government what we intend to do.

Hon. D J Bossino: And is he able to provide this house with some form of timeline as to when the Hon. Chief Minister will be able to provide that type of information by way of an announcement to the general public, who I am sure are very eager to learn of when they will be able to hold those keys and enter into those pensioner flats.

Hon. Chief Minister: Given the exigencies of accuracy, which the rules require, Madam Speaker, I do not want to delve into the realms of speculation.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q280 and 281/2025

Harbour Views Promenade reclamation – Studies & Assessments

Clerk: Question 280, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: What studies beyond those in answer to question 113 of 2025 have been carried out in respect of the Harbour Views Promenade reclamation?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, we will answer with Question 281.

Clerk: Question 281, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Who have carried out the studies and assessments in respect of the Harbour Views Promenade reclamation and at what cost?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, no further studies beyond those stated in answers to Question 113 have been undertaken by His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar. It will be for the developer to carry out any further studies necessary in order to take the project to planning stage and complete the final design. The wave study and the navigational study were undertaken by WSP Netherlands, BV, at a cost of €140,540.

Hon. D J Bossino: If I may, Madam Speaker, that last limb of his reply, I assume from that, that was a cost, the £140,000, that was a cost to the Government. Is that correct?

Hon. Chief Minister: That is what I understand, Madam Speaker.

Hon. D J Bossino: Why do I detect a sense of lack of confidence in the Hon. Chief Minister's reply by saying that is what he understands and what is it that he needs in order to be more affirmative in his response? And hopefully, avoid his Learned Colleague, the Minister for Business, kept on referring us to it. She was angst.

She had a lot of anxiety. She did not want to, in any way, mislead the House. So if he could take a page of her book and state what is preventing him from being absolutely accurate and affirmative and more confident in providing that particular answer.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I must say, I am getting a little fed up with having a diagnosis of mental states from the hon. Gentleman. I mean, I am nervous. The Hon. Minister for Business is anxious, suffering from anxiety.

I mean, I really do not understand why the hon. Gentleman feels that he is qualified to make these determinations. It is very simple, Madam Speaker. Saying that I understand it to be the case is another way of saying that that is what I have been told in order to come here and answer him.

Because short of going into the offices of WSP Netherlands, seeing the letter from us to them, asking them to do it, then coming to our office and seeing their invoice and their report etc, none of which I have been able to do in the context of preparing for these questions because I rely on the magnificent Civil Servants and my Parliamentary preparations team, and in particular, the Chief Technical Officer who deals with these matters, who tell me these things are accurate and I therefore rely on them with no anxiety and no nervousness whatsoever.

I come here and tell him and therefore, it is accurate grammatically to say that it is what I understand to be the case.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is it correct to assume from the totality of the answers that the Hon. Chief Minister has provided to the House in respect of these questions that in effect the reclamation as announced, which we say does not give us much confidence that it will in fact come to fruition because it simply was an announcement which the Hon. Chief Minister made in his New Year's message with what we have described as a tippex mark in the port waters, that basically, given that he is saying, the

developer is the entity and not the Gibraltar Government which will be conducting any further technical studies, that in effect, the Gibraltar Government will not be carrying out analysis and studies in terms of the wider impact of this particular reclamation will have, and I referred the Hon. Chief Minister to this point in the last session of the House, for example, to the sporting activities of the two rowing clubs which are very close to the identified site.

Or indeed to the other port related activities which are also very close to that particular site. Or indeed to the impact that there will be, for example, in relation to the traffic needs once that, should that particular site come to fruition. Or indeed be to the educational needs and all the rest of it.

Is it the case that in effect, what we are seeing here is that the developer in the course of its planning application of all the rest of it is simply going to be producing an environmental impact assessment. And that is all.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman started that very long question by saying, is it correct to assume? Now, the hon. Gentleman will know the saying of what assume does to you and me, not you, Madam Speaker, and not me, but what assume does to you and me generally. And therefore, I am not going to be persuaded, Madam Speaker, to comment on the hon. Gentleman's assumptions.

He can make as many assumptions as he like, and I am not going to tell him whether they are correct or not. But I am delighted, Madam Speaker, that he has wanted to double down on their view that this reclamation isn't going to happen, and it is just a tippex mark and that it was just something I said during my New Year's statement. I am delighted to see that they are sticking their colours to that view and that they are now once again on record in Hansard as having said so.

Hon. D J Bossino: Well, it may or may not happen. All I am saying, all I am saying, all I am saying that we are not filled with confidence on this side of the House, because precisely, because in certainly some respects of the issues that I have raised here, and we have raised during the course of exchanges of press releases. But it is precisely because of what the Hon. Chief Minister alludes to when he makes a reference to what assuming does to you and to me, that I am asking him to assist us so that we do not end up in that particular hole or corner.

That is why I am asking the Hon. Chief Minister to provide information to this House so that it fills us with confidence. We are not confident that he is going to do it as soon as he says.

Madam Speaker: May I press the hon. Member for the question, please.

Hon. D J Bossino: So that I would ask the Hon. Chief Minister to state so that we are filled with confidence that he will be able to complete it in the time that timeline that he gave to the Gibraltar public in answer to GBC questions. That the Government has conducted the studies or at least will conduct in the future the studies in respect of the areas that I referred him to in the course of my earlier supplementary.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I am sorry to break it to the hon. Gentleman. It is not my job to come here to assist him. I come here to answer questions, Madam Speaker.

This is an exercise in transparency as in every democracy. It is not the Government coming here to do the hon. Member's job for him. If I were here to assist him, Madam Speaker, I would have told him that the things that he generically refers to as studies are not technically at all relevant, do not exist sui generis or at all. And all of the areas that he has highlighted are covered by the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q282/2025

State of Discussions – Retired Police Officers

Clerk: Question 282, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, what is the state of discussions between the Government and retired police officers on a claim of a historic 3% abatement of salaries for retirement, gratuity and pensions?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I will answer Question 283.

Clerk: Question 283, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: What is the Government's current position in relation to the claim by retired police officers in respect of a 3% abatement of salaries on retirement, gratuity and pensions?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, the Government has engaged in discussions with representatives of the affected individuals in respect of the GSD's refusal to entertain this claim while they were in office. Their views are now fully understood and no further meetings are required to clarify the position. The Government is currently refining its initial financial projections on this matter before communicating any potential outcome to the relevant parties as soon as we are able to, which we expect to be in the next financial year.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. In the next financial year, can I just ask, does he mean, he means presumably a financial year 2025-2026, I assume, but perhaps he will clarify when he is next on his feet. Can I just ask him to, for clarification on the position, is it then the position of the Government that the claim will be recognised and an offer is going to be made?

Or is it the position of the Government that having now been able to assess the matter, the claim would not be met?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, on the first point of clarification that the hon. Gentleman sought from me. I said financial year, not years, so that means the next one. And I said in my answer that we will be communicating any potential outcome as part of the view that we will take.

That leaves all potential options on the table based on the advice that we might receive in respect of this 3% abatement imposition which the GSD put in place and the claims of these individuals which they refused, Madam Speaker, which we are considering.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Well, let us put this into context, shall we? Because as I understand the claim, if there were refusals along the way, presumably this is a claim that goes back a long time and to the administration of the AACR, so presumably it would not have been met by first the GSLP, then the GSD, then the GSLP, and here we are. So that is the historical context.

Can I just take the Hon. Chief Minister a bit further back? Because a couple of years ago, my hon. Colleague, Mr. Clinton, asked about this and in the context of that answer, the Chief Minister said that they had been advised that the claims by the retired police officers, because there were two claims in play and he will understand that there were similar pension structures, as I understand it, by retired firefighters and retired police officers. The claim for the firefighters was met but the claim by the

retired police officers was not and in the context of that, my hon. Colleague, Mr. Clinton, asked and the Chief Minister gave the answer that he had been advised that the claims were not affordable. Is it the position, therefore, now that different advice has been received, and the Government is reflecting further on the matter and perhaps would meet the claim?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, my speaker, the historical context that the hon. Gentleman sets out is wrong. It is not that the AACR did not meet the claim, the GSLP did not meet the claim, the GSD did not meet the claim and now the GSLP/Liberals have not met the claim. That is not the position.

He is wrong. And I invite him to correct the record. The AACR entered into an agreement on parity and part of the agreement on parity, which was agreed by the individuals, was the abatement.

There was no claim to the GSLP because the GSLP abided by parity and at that time, I do not think there were any meaningful retirements and there were no claims against the GSLP. As I understand it, this raises its head for the first time in the late 1990s and the claim is first made to the GSD and the GSD say no. So, I invite him to accept that record because it is the record I have been provided with by those who dealt with those issues at the time.

Madam Speaker, in terms of what the response is going to be, I refer him to what I said before, that any potential outcome will be communicated to the relevant parties in the next financial year, and I am not going to be drawn on whether it will be positive, negative or neutral. Otherwise, I will be communicating to the House now that which I say I cannot communicate because the Government is still determining it and we are going to communicate next year.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, in relation to his invitation to me to correct the record, well, I was trying to describe things in shorthand and I was not doing so at length. If I were to do so at length, you'd have to describe many, many things. The point that I was trying to reflect was that this matter is not something of recent creation.

As I understand it, it has been explained to me by those affected by these claims. This goes back many years because of a historic 3% abatement which was then not introduced when people were of pensionable age. There is an inherent unfairness on that.

The Government recognised that in relation to firefighters. It did not do so in relation to police officers, retired police officers. We, on this side, do not understand why there is a material difference between those matters, between the treatment of the firefighters and the treatment of the retired police officers.

Can the Chief Minister accept that there is an inherent unfairness in dealing with both sets of essential services in a different way? And is that being considered in the context of the Government's position on the matter?

Hon. Chief Minister: All matters are being considered, Madam Speaker, including the possibility that the hon. Gentleman is completely wrong about the way that he poses his question.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q284/2025
Negotiations – EU Treaty

Clerk: Question 284, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, can the Chief Minister provide an update to the House on the progress of the negotiations exploring a possible treaty for a new relationship with the EU for Gibraltar?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, there continues to be contact at different levels between all relevant parties with the objective of concluding an agreement for a treaty between the United Kingdom and the European Union on Gibraltar's future relationship with the EU. All sides have stated that we remain firmly committed to a favourable outcome.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, that is a generic answer, of course and that has been the position of the Government. And indeed, you know, he expresses that with our support also.

Can he add anything of any material development since he last answered that question in this House? He met the Minister for Europe and last month, there have been other meetings in Gibraltar. As I understand it, the head of the Gibraltar desk may have been here as well recently.

Has there been material progress in relation to the issues that remain to be unblocked in the last few weeks?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, yes, ma'am.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Is he willing to provide any information to the House in respect of the progress of those matters and whether further meetings are planned at a political level as they were last year? I mean, he will recall that it is now 10 months since a high-profile meeting in Brussels involving the Chief Minister and the Foreign Secretaries of Spain and the United Kingdom and the European Commission. There is now a new Commission, albeit that perhaps the same people dealing with Gibraltar are still in post. But can he provide an update as to whether there are further meetings of a political nature that are planned in respect of the negotiations?

Hon. Chief Minister: I would be delighted to do so, Madam Speaker, but I am unable to do so. The hon. Gentleman is right that there was a meeting at Foreign Secretary level 10 months ago, but that was with Lord David Cameron, as Foreign Secretary. And there was a further meeting six months ago with the Rt. Hon. David Lammy as Foreign Secretary.

Madam Speaker, if I was able to say more, I would be delighted to say more. Nobody wants to set out in detail what will be agreed, what has been agreed and what is left to agree and what will be agreed than the Deputy Chief Minister and myself and indeed all other Members of the Cabinet when we have the opportunity of finalising arrangements. Or if we do not reach a final agreement, which I sincerely believe we will do, explain why we have not been able to reach a final agreement.

This is not something that we are keeping to ourselves because we do not want to share it with the community. We do not want any of this to be secret. Indeed, you cannot have a secret treaty once you have a treaty and agreement, it has to be public.

So it is just a question of ensuring that we assist the process of getting to that final treaty by not negotiating in public and by not saying things which might be seen by one side or the other as being inflammatory to their views or potential interests as much in Brussels as in the United Kingdom, in Spain or in Gibraltar. Many people have views on this. It is not just Gibraltar and it is not just Gibraltar and Spain.

There are many equities, as I have said before, and when one talks about Brussels, Madam Speaker, one is not talking just about the equities of the European Union as an institution and the Commission as the guardian of the treaties, but many of the Member states who have irons in the fire for reasons

that we cannot even potentially imagine, but where issues matter to them and the top table of negotiation in the European Council can be relevant.

So Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I cannot say more. I really, really wish that I could say more. It is almost five years ago, Madam Speaker, that I got up in front of the whole population of this great nation of ours and told them that I was going to pass a law for them to have to stay home.

Not something I ever expected to do when I became Chief Minister. Neither did I ever expect to say to the people of Gibraltar that the Deputy Chief Minister and I had been to meetings on international affairs of the people of Gibraltar and I could not tell them what we discussed and what we might be about to agree, other than the general parameters. It is not where I want to be.

It is not where the Deputy Chief Minister wants to be. It is not our comfort zone. We want people to know exactly what we have discussed, exactly what we are likely to be able to agree.

We want to see exactly what it is that is agreed, if it is agreed, or exactly why we have not been able to agree it if we are not able to agree it. That is what the people of Gibraltar deserve. That is what we are Elected for.

That is the sort of transparency that is important to this community. Not some of the sort of more technical aspects of transparency that hon. Members sometimes rabid on. This goes to the core of the fundamental beliefs of most, if not all, Gibraltarians and their desire to know what the future of their country is going to look like in the context of the relationship on immigration and free movement of goods with the European Union.

Because let us also be very clear, even the Foreign Secretaries of Spain, successively, since Mr Dastis, Mr Borrell, Ms Laia, and now Mr Alvarez, have said these discussions are not about sovereignty. And they have not said that at the table. They have said that publicly.

But Madam Speaker, we have to respect this thing that we call the discretion of the negotiation in order to be able to finalise the negotiation. Difficult though it may be.

I mean, going on television, Madam Speaker, and saying once again that you have made progress, that you are optimistic, but you cannot say where you've made progress, you cannot say where the final issues are, it is very difficult. It is easier to be able to say, actually, this is what's happened. This is the detail.

This is why we made this decision. This is why we made that decision. These things may look a little different to what we have been used to in the past. But this is completely sovereignty neutral. It is safe. It is secure. It is beneficial. That would be better. That would be easier.

Or say, we do not think this is safe and we do not think this is beneficial and that is why we have not done it. Or indeed, what is more complex. Although this is difficult, although this is hard, although this is different to what we have done in the past, it is nonetheless in a careful analysis set in the historical moment with Brexit and with what the alternative is, which is not what we are going through today.

What we see at the frontier of today is not the alternative to a treaty. We are not going to be always able to get into the European Union just sharing our ID cards and our passports if we do not have a treaty. The hammer will fall.

There will be the Schengen border code in full application. That thing, which the person we have called the rogue officer has once in a while done before being suspended for five months without pay, would become the norm and the measure has to be against that. Against the chaos that we saw. So this, which we present, is safe, secure and beneficial as an alternative to that, which is what no deal looks like.

Unless what has been put on the table is worse than that chaos, which we saw. That is the very difficult work that we are doing behind closed doors, keeping our colleagues informed, working very hard to ensure that all of the choices are difficult but properly made. And this is, Madam Speaker, and I can think of no better phrase than the Spanish phrase, always a choice when it comes to it of *Guatemala or Guatepeor*.

This is not easy choices when the time comes in this negotiation to say, oh, this magnificent option or this other magnificent option. It is, Madam Speaker, this manure show, I do not think I have breached any rules of the house with that phrase, or this manure show, which would one prefer? Which is the safest, most beneficial of the manure shows?

But Madam Speaker, as the Hon. Leader of the Opposition who has been Deputy Chief Minister knows, that is what Government usually is about. I mean, easy decisions are usually made when somebody wants to interact with the Government at the counter in which you interact with one of our fabulous Civil Servants. At number No 6 Convent Place, it is always this difficult option or that difficult option.

When you raise that to the international moment in the context of the United Kingdom withdrawing from the European Union and the position, the manure show, in which Gibraltar finds itself, those are the options that we are dealing with.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes. Well, if we get down to the nitty-gritty of analysing the manure, I think we will all have to consult the only zoologist in the room. We appreciate the difficulties here, of course, clearly.

This is an intricate negotiation and so on. Can I ask the Chief Minister, he is gone to Madrid recently. He was in Madrid. He had meetings with *Comisiones Obreras*, I believe it was. He is met Spanish politicians. I know he met Gabriel Rufián, who I have a great admiration to in terms of how outspoken he is in the political panorama in Spain.

Did he meet other political parties in Spain in the context of his visit to Madrid and under the umbrella of the negotiations?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, yes, ma'am.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. And did he do so on a wide basis, in other words, across the political spectrum of those parties who were happy to meet with him?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, yes, ma'am.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: In terms of the Spanish Government and the Spanish opposition?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, it would not be in Gibraltar's interest that I give more details at this stage.

Madam Speaker: All right. Before we move away from Chief Minister's question time, does the Hon. D J Bossino have any supplementaries on Question 276 other than Leanse Place?

Hon. D J Bossino: Well. There is one entry here.

Madam Speaker: I thought the hon. Member was going to say one question.

Hon. D J Bossino: Thank you. So the one entry, which is on the first page, it is the final entry. And I think one assumes that the reference there, although the question asked for Government departments or Government or GDC Departments, the categorisation used there does not quite do it.

But I think one would live with it. Where there is a reference to a Director General with an address at 202 Strict 103 Arabian Seas with a monthly rental, which is the highest there, of £4,550. Is one correct in assuming that is the Director General of the Gibraltar Health Authority?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the heading to that page.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I had two questions. I am just going to make, state them quickly both, if I may. Under Government Law Offices, under NatWest House, there are two entries.

They both have the same amount and the same dates. Is that also duplication or would it be a case of two leases in respect of different parts of the property?

Madam Speaker: Ask that question and then I will let you ask a second question.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I have been given that there is two, but it may be a duplication. I shall ask.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, we would be grateful if he did ask. And in relation to the Department of Education, St. Mary's School, in the column length of lease, it says 150 years. Can you just confirm whether that is accurate?

We had not understood that to be the case. We understood that there to be a term of a lease, which had a break clause. Cannot recall where the break clause was, which allowed the Government to then purchase it. But we certainly did not think the length of the lease was that long but perhaps he can clarify.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, there is definitely an option to purchase, I think from memory, but I will not be held to it, that it is after seven years. Yeah, but I am saying specifically that I cannot vouch for the accuracy of that. But I should check.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

HOUSING AND THE GIBRALTAR UNIVERSITY

Q155/2025

Location of the Site - Residents of Queen's Hotel

Clerk: Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.
Question 155, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, could the Government provide the exact location of the site on Engineers Lane to which it intends to relocate some of the residents of Queen's Hotel?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila): Madam Speaker, the Government is not in a position to confirm any intended relocation at this stage.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Sorry, can I just ask the Minister to clarify, when the hon. Lady says that the Government's not in a position to confirm the relocation, does she mean that she cannot confirm the identity of the location or that the relocation will not take place?

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, at the moment the relocation is being looked at.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. I understand from that answer that the relocation may not take place at all from that. I thought that the Government's position, as had been confirmed in public, was that the relocation would happen and that the sites were being looked at, but is she now saying a different thing?

Hon. P A Orfila: That is accurate, what you have just said, yes.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Sorry, I have asked the question, and I put two scenarios, so the hon. Lady needs to tell me which of those two scenarios is the accurate one.

Hon. P A Orfila: The one in which you said the Government had set out. We are in the process of, but we do not want to make mistakes with this, okay? We are doing it very carefully, so we get it right, which is why we have decided to really look at whether it is worth relocating some or everybody or doing it another way.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. Okay, that is what Peter Mandelson would call the third way, because what I said the Government had said was that the relocation would take place. The hon. Lady has got up to say that the Government's position is that it would take place maybe in part or not at all, which is almost all of them and that is why I am asking her to clarify it.

I take from her last answer, I think that she is saying that all options are on the table and despite having said before perhaps that the relocation would take place, the position is that all options are on the table, including that the relocation would not take place.

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, relocation has to take place.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see, that is progress. But the hon. Lady is now reconsidering where this would go. That is how I am understanding her answer, is that right?

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, that is correct.

Madam Speaker: Next question. Yes, sorry.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: A final one, Madam Speaker. Given that the site needs to be at some point cleared because there is going to be works on the site of where the current Queen's Hotel is, does the Government expect to take this decision within a particular timescale? Is it under pressure to clear the site or is it something that it feels no pressure of time on and will take its time?

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, the relocation will take place when there is a suitable place to be relocated to. We are not going to put pressure into it. We want to get things right. We do not want to be accused afterwards of just dumping people here or there. We want to get it right, OK? We are going to be relocating and there is no pressure as to we want to do it as quickly as we can. But there is definitely a relocation going to take place, yes.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q156-158/2025

Government Pensioner – Estates & Waiting Lists

Clerk: Question 156, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, could the Government provide the following information regarding Government pensioner estates broken down by estate? The number of wardens per estate, the hours shifts covered during weekdays, the hours and shifts covered during weekends, the training provided to wardens and the duties of the wardens.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 157 and 158.

Clerk: Question 157, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Please provide the number of people currently waiting for Government pensioner flats.

Clerk: Question 158, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: How many flats are there currently empty in all Government pensioner estates broken down by estates and the period of time that they have remained empty? Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila): Madam Speaker, answer to Question 156. There are two wardens per state. The working hours during the week are from 8am to 8pm. The working hours during weekends are from 7.30am to 1pm. In-house induction training is given to all wardens upon taking up their post, which includes but not limited to, dealing with tenant concerns, responding to emergencies, logging of incidents and reporting maintenance issues and breakages of facilities. Answer to Question 157.

At present, there are 265 Government tenants who have shown an interest in the pensioner exchange flat. And answer, in answer to Question 158, the total number of empty flats within Government pensioner estates is at the moment 5. These are as follows: One in Bishop Canilla House that has been unoccupied since February 25, which is this month, barely; Three in Charles Bruzon House, unoccupied since January 25, February 25 and one in October 24; One in Albert Risso House, unoccupied since September 24; and one flat in Seamaster Lodge, unoccupied since December 24. Those that appear vacant are in the process of being refurbished and are already earmarked.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Can I just ask, I think one supplementary on Question 156. The hon. Lady says there are two wardens per estate. In discussions with those who live there, have there been any concerns expressed as to whether that is a sufficient number to deal with all the matters of maintenance that are raised in respect of the estate?

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, I am in constant contact with the pensioners' blocks, very especially the pensioners' blocks because I do take a concern in their issues. I have not been told that they want another warden. Sometimes they do complain that the wardens do things as quickly as they do not want them to, but certainly two wardens is more than enough.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: And just to understand it, how it works, because obviously there is the four Government pensioner estates, if I can call them that way, although they are not really described as such, so you'd have eight wardens in effect and they are sourced presumably from the Government, they are public servants. Because it is eight of them, how is it when there are vacancies or absenteeism, on the day they are filled from other officers in the Government department, is that how it works?

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, normally there are a few that we have on standby from Government officers, from the Housing Works. It rarely happens, very rarely. And there are two per estate and we have tried asking if they would like to rotate, but they are quite happy and we feel it is the right thing to do to keep them there because then they are familiar with the people that live there and the people that live there feel a lot more protected, if you want to use a better word, when they know that they can relate to these particular wardens.

Madam Speaker: Any other supplementaries on Questions 157 and 158?

Hon. D J Bossino: Does the Hon. Minister, in respect of Question 157, where I think she said 265 Government tenants, had expressed a willingness to exchange their flats, their current flats, presumably for a Government pensioner flat. Does she have an idea as to how quickly, and I am hesitating because I can appreciate it is not going to be an easy question to answer and if she cannot, she cannot, does she have an idea as to how an aim, because she is often fond of stating her aims and setting out what it is that she wants to achieve. Does she have an aim in respect of meeting those demands and as to when those 265 Government tenants will be able to exchange the flats?

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, hopefully during the lifetime of this Parliament, you must bear in mind one thing, we are talking about pensioners, pensioners' flats. In order for a pensioner flat to become vacant, unfortunately, the pensioner has to be deceased. Fortunately, pensioners are living a lot longer and healthier lives, which means that sometimes the pensioners' flats do not come back as quickly as people on the waiting list may want them to, but thankfully they are living longer.

Hon. D J Bossino: And I appreciate that and given that reply by way of an answer and also given the answer she gave in respect of Question 158, how is she and her Government going to be able to meet that deadline of satisfying the requests for exchange of these 265 Government tenants within the lifetime of this Parliament? We keep on saying it, but there are only two and a half years left.

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, with a lot of hard work and initiative?

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, but will it require absolutely a lot of hard work and an initiative, absolutely, but will it also require, I suppose, does the Government have any current intention of building specialised flats to satisfy this particular need? I am conscious of the plans in respect of the pensioner flats, which is going to be meeting a different need in the Laguna estate plot, but in respect of this particular need, Government tenants, does the Government have any specific plans in relation to building something for these individuals?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman seems to have forgotten the answer I gave him a few moments ago in relation to Bob Peliza Mews.

Hon. D J Bossino: I see, it will be met in part by the construction of those particular flats, and from that, I am assuming that the Minister is equally as confident as the Chief Minister that that part of the Bob Peliza development will be complete during the course of the next two and a half years, despite

the issues which the Hon. Chief Minister raised in the context of the answers that I gave to me in relation to the warehouse.

Madam Speaker: I thought there was a... Was there a question there? Yes. Oh, sorry. All right, all right.

Hon. D J Bossino: Will be done within the next two and a half years.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, we gave him the answers as to completion of the blocks there. I gave him the answers in relation to pensioner flats, where planning requires... Not the planning process, but our planning requires a little more work to be done. But of course, it is different types of apartments that we are building, and there are also the ones at Chatham Counterguard or Chatham Views that are going to be provided so I am surprised the hon. Gentleman felt he needed to ask us that question, because he has that information

Hon. D J Bossino: I do not have, with a great respect to the Hon. Chief Minister, that information. I do not think it arises from the answer that I gave. But may I also add that this is something which is very much in the public interest. Is she able, and I appreciate that this aspect of policy is in effect being overseen by her Colleague, Sir Joe Bossano, but is the Hon. the Minister for Housing looking at the possibility of making available the Rooke Residential Home in order to meet this particular demand?

Hon. Chief Minister: Completely different, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. E J Reyes had a question.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In answer to Question 157, the Minister said there were 265 tenants willing to exchange. Are there any applicants, for example, current tenants of private rentals who have put their names down and would like a Government pension or flat? Are those included in that 265 or is that number in addition to the 265 who are willing to exchange?

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, they are included.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. D J Bossino had one last question.

Hon. D J Bossino: No, it is in respects of Question 158. I have no further supplementaries on Question 157. I do have one supplementary in respect of Question 158 and simply to raise with her the accuracy of the answer that the Hon. Minister provided.

We have done a quick count, and we get to six, but she said five and then she did the individual assignments in respect of the different blocks. We get to six, but maybe she can explain why we are mistaken.

Hon. P A Orfila: Sorry, Madam Speaker. The hon. Gentleman is correct. There are six, not five.

Madam Speaker: Next Question.

Q159/2025

Royal Sovereign House, Varyl Begg - Repainting

Clerk: Question 159, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, is there a plan to repaint Royal Sovereign House, Varyl Begg and if so, what will it cost?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila): Yes, ma'am. There is a plan to repaint Royal Sovereign House, Varyl Begg. There will be no further costs incurred to the taxpayer.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see, and how is it that there are no further cost to the taxpayer when it is being repainted by the contractor?

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, the contractor got the colour wrong.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, is it right that the information that we have had is, is it right that the block was painted yellow and that is the reason it is being repainted? Because it was next to a block that is being painted red, so there wasn't a desire to see red and yellow blocks alongside each other. Is that the reason?

Hon. P A Orfila: Madam Speaker, the red block was supposed to have been salmon, not red. When the other block was starting to be painted, I asked what colour it was going to be, and I was told it was lime green. When it got painted, it wasn't lime green, it was yellow.

Now, I got a lot of complaints about the red being placed next to the yellow. Maybe the hon. Member across the floor may be partial to the red and yellow, especially when placed next to each other. But generally, most Gibraltarians tend to avoid the red and yellow, and I heard my constituents.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, I would have allowed the hon. Member to sit down and let it rest there had she not given the unnecessary jibe that perhaps Members on this side were partial to the red and yellow. We are as impartial to the red and yellow as the Members on that side of the House. We are partial to the blue and yellow. We are also partial to the red and white. And perhaps the hon. Lady wants to correct the record, perhaps.

Hon. P A Orfila: Well, Madam Speaker, if the hon. Gentleman were to go for a walk about Varyl Begg right now, they may very well be surprised and very much in awe that at the moment it is yellow and blue. But unfortunately, that is going to be very short-lived. It will be blue.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I determined this was a good place to recess the House for a comfort break, although it was just getting exciting. But I do propose that we spend 15 minutes with a short comfort break before returning to finish the questions to the Hon. Minister for the Environment.

Madam Speaker: All right, we will take 15 minutes.

The House recessed at 4.45 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 5.00 p.m.

Clerk: Suspension of standing orders. The Hon. Chief Minister.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move under Standing Order 7.3 to suspend Standing Order 7.1 in order to proceed with the laying of documents on the table.

Madam Speaker: Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye) Those against? Carried.

Clerk: The Hon. Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the Heritage and Antiquities Advisory Council Parliamentary Report for 2024.

Madam Speaker: Order to lie.

EDUCATION, THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Q73/2025

St Martin's School - Extension

Clerk: Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change. Question 73, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker As per the GSLP Liberal Manifesto 2023, is the Government still committed to constructing an extension to St Martin's School? If so, could the Government provide an update on the progress of this project?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, yes, the Government is actively exploring all feasible options to extend the current St Martin's School.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: And would that be done, presumably, at the same site? And if so, has the Government reached a view on the extent of the extension? I mean, what capacity do they need to build the school to now?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Madam Speaker. At the moment, we are looking at the same site and we are looking at between 8 and 10 additional classrooms, which we feel should be able to satisfy the needs for the foreseeable future.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. And these would be classrooms of the same size as exist at the moment. Is that right? Because I suppose at St Martin's School, you do not have ordinary class sizes. They are different types of class sizes. So perhaps the hon. Member can comment on that aspect.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I have not seen the designs, but I would have thought, from what I know, they would be approximately the size that they are now, the size that the school requires.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. And then finally, in terms of timescale for this project to take place, can the hon. Member comment on that?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, my intention would be that the new facility will be available for September 2026.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q74-78/2025

**Introduction to Dyslexia – Parents and Children Programme
Schools Enrolled - British Dyslexia Association
Current Complement – LSAs, SNLSAs & SENCOs Trained to BDA Level 4**

Clerk: Question 74, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Could the Government provide an update to this House on the development of the Introduction to Dyslexia for Parents and Children programme as pledged in the 2023 GSLP Liberal Manifesto?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 75 to 78.

Clerk: Question 75, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Could the Government state how many schools have been enrolled in the BDA, British Dyslexia Association, Quality Mark programme to date?

Clerk: Question 76, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Could the Government state how many SENCOs within the current complement are trained to BDA Level 5? Could the Government kindly provide the following information? One, the total number of SENCOs currently employed and the total number of SENCOs currently trained to BDA Level 5.

Clerk: Question 77, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Could the Government state how many LSAs and SNLSAs within the current complement are trained to BDA Level 4? Could the Government kindly provide the following information? The total number of LSAs and SNLSAs currently employed and the total number of LSAs and SNLSAs currently trained to BDA Level 4.

Clerk: Question 78, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Could the Government state how many teachers within the current teaching complement are trained to BDA Level 4? Could the Government kindly provide the following

information? The total number of teaching staff currently employed and the total number of teaching staff currently trained to BDA Level 4.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister of Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, in relation to, in answer to Question 74, the programme will be in place for the next academic year.

There are no Government schools currently enrolled in the BDA Quality Mark programme. There are currently 13 SENCOs employed in a permanent capacity. Additionally, there are 3 assistants to SENCO and 1 SENCO stroke subject leader English employed in a permanent capacity.

There are currently no SENCOs trained to BDO Level 5. There are currently 364 SNLSA staff. None are currently trained to BDA Level 4.

And there are currently 635 teaching staff employed, of which there are currently 10 teaching staff trained to BDA Level 4.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I see. Can I just ask on Question 77, so the part that said the total number of LSAs and SNLSAs does, and the hon. Member has given us the number 364. Does he have a breakdown between LSAs and SNLSAs?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, they are all considered SNLSAs. It is the same grade.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: And given the commitment that there was in the manifesto, which the hon. Member says will be in place by the next academic year, presumably 2025-2026, that is what he is talking about. Is there then a programme for the teaching of SENCOs, LSAs, SNLSAs and teachers on BDA Level 5 and 4?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, there are a number of questions on dyslexia later on in the Order Paper. I think we need to remember that I am answering two lots of questions because I was not here at the last session. And some of what I am going to say I may need to repeat later.

There is continuous teaching and training on dyslexia, but not necessarily the BDA curriculum. The Educational Psychologists have other curricula, other methodologies, but I can confirm that there will be ongoing training for staff on dyslexia. It may just not be this precise qualification.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, I see. If there are other training, but not necessarily to BDA Level 4 or 5, how is the Government achieving any degree of quality control if it is not an established training scheme that is recognisable?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, it is recognised, but by the British Psychological Society as opposed to the British Dyslexia Association.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q79/2025
Commonwealth Park- Lifts Maintenance

Clerk: Question 79, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, can the Government confirm whether a maintenance programme is in place for the lifts located in Campion Park and Commonwealth Park? Furthermore, can the Government clarify who is responsible for the general day-to-day maintenance of these lifts?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister of Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, I can confirm that the lifts located at both Campion Park and Commonwealth Park are maintained under a lift maintenance service agreement with the Department of the Environment. General Lifts, which provides the maintenance services, is responsible for the preventative, corrective and emergency maintenance of the lifts under the service agreement. Madam Speaker, when I prepared the answer a month ago, the lift at Campion Park was not working.

The contractor had to order replacement parts, but I am pleased to say that these, between the time that the question was asked and now these were received and both lifts should have been in operation today, I am told that they were.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Can the Minister clarify who the contractor is? Because he is said it is an agreement with the Department of Environment, but without specifying which contractor.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Madam Speaker, I mentioned the name of the contractor at the start of my second paragraph, General Lifts.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Oh, I see, sorry. When I heard General Lifts, I thought that was some kind of unit within the Department of Environment. I see, so it is called General Lifts Limited or something like that and it is responsible for both Campion Park and Commonwealth Park. Can I ask the, sorry, I was assuming that, but he can correct. Can I ask the Minister, is the Government satisfied with the lifts at Campion Park and Commonwealth Park?

Not just their maintenance, but the fact that they seem regularly to be broken down. I mean, I pass the one in Commonwealth Park on a daily basis. There are times that it works, there are times that it does not work.

Very recently, I walked past it as I heard two mothers speak to each other. They were both having had buggies and one of them said, it rained a bit and it is not working again. I hear it regularly from people in that vicinity. So is the Government satisfied with the lifts themselves?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I pass through there very often as well and I do not hear it. I do not know how regular is regular. Lifts in outdoor locations are a challenge. I do not believe they are out of order every time it rains. Am I satisfied? Well, every time a lift is not working, I am clearly not satisfied.

But on the whole, other than when, as on this occasion, they have to order parts from outside Gibraltar and that is a problem we have in Gibraltar generally, where we do not have supplies of specialised equipment here because of our size. Other than those cases, the repairs are pretty quick. I wish they never went out of order, but they are out in the open air and obviously this kind of equipment is always at risk.

I would not say that it happens as frequently. It does happen, but I do not think it is as frequently as the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Well, I have not done a number count, and it would be probably helpful to do one. Really, I was asking more specifically whether the Government is satisfied or has received information from perhaps even the company doing the maintenance because is it a maintenance issue because they are being maintained in a way which unfortunately the lifts keep breaking down or is it

that there is an intrinsic issue? Has the Government received any information from the maintenance contractor that perhaps the lifts are not the best lifts for that kind of thing?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, Madam Speaker, we have not received any information nor any formal representation.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q80/2025

Environmental Agency – Data on Air Quality

Clerk: Question 80, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, does the Government or the Environmental Agency have any data on the current air quality at the land frontier? And if so, when was the last time readings on air pollution were taken? And how often are these tests carried out?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister of Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Yes, Madam Speaker, diffusion tube monitoring at the frontier for both NO₂ and VTECs, nitrogen dioxide and benzene, are included within the non-automatic monitoring network. And a survey using an AQ mesh pod, which is a different system, was carried out at the frontier between 27th September 2018 and 5th of February 2019 as an additional test.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister to please correct me if I am wrong, but my understanding is that we have a series of machines around Gibraltar, eight I believe there are a number located at different locations, but none of which are directly facing the land frontier. Can I ask why none of these machines are located here, given this is one of the areas in which we have the most traffic passing through Gibraltar?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, we have different air quality monitoring systems. We have three of the large monitors, which does the full range of atmospheric tests. One is at Bleak House, another one is at Rosia Road, and another one is now on Devil's Tower Road, having been moved from Witham's. And we have about 7 or 8 AQ mesh pods, which are smaller, and they are rapidly deployed whenever we have an area of particular concern, as happened at the frontier between September 2018 and February 2019, where there had been some representation from staff there.

We have the diffusion tube network, which covers the whole of Gibraltar, including the frontier. And I am very pleased to say that the readings do not fail the standards which are normally recommended for work purposes.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, and if I may, complaints have been raised to Members on this side of the House with respect to employees working at the land frontier. My understanding is that they tell me that the air quality, in particular during the early hours of the morning when there is a rush hour, seems to be a very poor quality. Whilst I appreciate that the readings may take an average recording throughout the day, may not indicate that the air quality measures are unsatisfactory, but may I ask the Hon. Minister and commit him to reviewing the situation, given the complaints which have been raised with us on this side of the House.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I have dealt with this matter in relation to Customs Officers who are my responsibility at my department. On one occasion we looked at different times during the day what the pollution was, and the conclusion was, as the hon. Gentleman has concluded, in the event that we are able to bring a treaty with a negotiated outcome, the whole problem will go away. I think we are almost there.

So, we would wait to see the outcome of those talks before delving any further into this. But every time we have delved, we have found that the rates of pollution are below that which is acceptable. Although when I have been there, I have found it noxious myself.

But that is not to say that the readings are not below what is dangerous. I mean, something can be smelly, but not dangerous. Although, you know, I would not like to see people operating in an environment which they are not comfortable in.

But we have dealt with this before. When we were in opposition, we were approached. When we were in government, we did something about it. And that led us to the conclusion that there was nothing more to do. But hopefully with a treaty, it all goes away.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, and if I may, so the Hon. Chief Minister has answered in the hypothetical insofar that if there is a treaty, that the problem will go away. So may I put to him in the reverse, if there is not a treaty, can I ask the Hon. Minister to commit to reviewing the matter and address the situation?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I gave the hon. Gentleman two options. I said, if there is a treaty, I told him what would happen. And I also, when he goes back and looks at the Hansard, said what would happen if there wasn't a treaty.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q81/2025

Prince Edward's Road - Emergency Works

Clerk: Question 81, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can the Minister provide details on the extent of the emergency work carried out on Prince Edward's Road earlier this month?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the emergency works at Prince Edward's Road, which were last month, clearly, were related to a burst water main. This required the closure of the road and the implementation of traffic diversions to allow AquaGib personnel to repair the pipe work, to restore supplies to its customers. Once the burst main was located, it was necessary to extend the potable water service interruption and increase the number of customers affected to be able to complete the repair.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, and if I may, from having scoured through the recent press releases with respect to emergency works carried out in Prince Edward's Road, I know that in the last few months, we have had at least six or seven instances where we have had temporary closures of this road due to emergency works. We are a bit concerned on this side of the House, and I may put to the

Hon. Minister, is there a procedure which is in place for investigating root causes of issues when we seem to have repeat emergency works happening in this area?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I do not recall that many, and I work very close by. Certainly there was inconvenience during the time of the burst water main that I have referred to. There has been some resurfacing done in the area, but obviously, there is a procedure.

If there is a regular problem in any particular area, then the relevant department, be it Technical Services or AquaGib will investigate and, in fact, there are another question on the order paper about the sewage system near Wellington Front, where there were repeated problems and there has been a repeated process of investigation and at this moment in time, as many people will know, there are works being carried out behind the Mackintosh Hall in order to repair.

As a result of the process, to understand what was happening there at the time, which led to the smells and so on in the area.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister, I referred to a recent interview given by a personnel from the Technical Services Department, which confirmed that there is a need for relining or part of the sewage piping in Linewall Road. He spoke about 90 to 100 metres of pipe relining that the Government proposes to get into. Is this relining connected to the issues that we see you finding at Prince Edward's Road? I just seek his clarification on that.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q82/2025

Grand Parade Car Park – Public Toilet Maintenance

Clerk: Question 82, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: What regular maintenance programme is in place for the public toilet at Grand Parade Car Park? And can the Minister confirm whether it has been broken and if so, for how long in 2024?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the automated toilet at Grand Parade car park was not open during 2024. There has been a programme in hand to change all automated toilets around Gibraltar into conventional toilets. This has been done in stages with the one at Grand Parade just having been converted. The switchboard was reprogrammed and the toilet is operational.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, is the Hon. Minister aware that on the basis of the data on the Government's website, the public toilet located at Grand Parade used to be the one that generated the most revenue? Would you not agree that given the popularity of this toilet and its location next to the Cable Car, which is a very big tourist hotspot, that it is not appropriate for such a toilet to not be working and out of service for such a long period of time? I believe it is already confirmed that it was not open for the whole of 2024.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, we are having and have been having a lot of problems with these toilets which were acquired for many thousands of pounds by the previous administration. And it is proving very costly to repair, which is why we have undertaken the programme of converting them from automated toilets to toilets that have a more simple mechanism for opening and closing. Sadly, the revenue, which was not that significant, will cease, but it was much more expensive to repair these toilets, which, as I say, were acquired previous to our coming into Office at a huge expense.

We have had to take this decision so that this does not happen again, because they will be continuously going out of order and the cost of repair was very great.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q83/2025

Grand Parade Car Park – Fines Issued Foreign-Registered Vehicles

Clerk: Question 83, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can the Minister provide details as to the number of fines issued at Grand Parade Car Park to foreign-registered vehicles in 2024, broken down by month?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Yes, Madam Speaker, the information is provided in the schedule that is making its way across the chamber.

Madam Speaker: All right, we will carry on with the next question and revert to this one presently.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 83

Month in 2024	Number of fines
January	52
February	62
March	77
April	112
May	154
June	73
July	166
August	116
September	84
October	83
November	42
December	13

Q84/2025

Licences Suspended - Section 36.1 of the Traffic Act 2005

Clerk: Question 84, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Can the Minister confirm how many licences have been suspended under section 36.1 of the Traffic Act 2005, broken down into the following years, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Yes, Madam Speaker, the following number of licences were suspended by the licencing authority under section 36(1) of the Transport Act: 2020, 1; 2021, 0; 2022, 0; 2023, 2; 2024, 6.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister, can he confirm what the procedure is from start to finish in suspending someone's licence under this section of the Traffic Act?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, this relates to the suspension of a driving licence if the driver is suffering from any physical or mental disease or disability, which is likely to cause the driving by him, and I am quoting from the law, of a motor vehicle, a source of danger to the public. Normally, these come as a result of reports from a doctor and in a lot of cases, this comes in the more elderly population, particularly when they have to re-sit a driving test, and it is now the Chief Examiner who considers those reports and then recommends to the Transport Commission that the licences should be suspended.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, my understanding is the same as that of the Hon. Minister, that it is the licencing authority's prerogative to police and issue suspension notices under this section. Can I ask the Hon. Minister whether he thinks that this process is proactive enough in policing this area?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member will have noticed, in fact, we all will have noticed that there has been an increase from 1, 0, 0 in 2020, 2021 and 2022. I took over in 2023 and then there were 2 and last year there were 6, precisely because I wanted to ask the licencing authority, the Chief Examiner, to keep a more watchful eye, if you like, and there were discussions with the GHA which have resulted in this slight change and increase in the number and we are in contact with the GHA so that if any doctor, normally it would be the GP, finds that there is this sort of concern, obviously they would need to inform the patient and get the patient's approval, but there is, I think, a greater awareness which is why we have seen an increase since I took over the transport portfolio in 2023.

Hon. G Origo: Can I get the Hon. Minister's clarification on that because I do not think he answered my question. Is he therefore confident that there is no cause for concern here with this section, not least because, as he says, namely concerns elderly residents who normally have physical or mental conditions which would prevent them from being able to drive.

Is he satisfied with the number of confirmations of suspensions that we had that there is no cause for concern?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Well, Madam Speaker, I cannot know whether this number reflects the number of people who actually have not got the ability to drive safely. I am hoping that the system does catch them. We keep on monitoring and as I say, there are ongoing discussions by the Chief Examiner to ensure that the information is provided as soon as it is identified.

But there are, of course, issues to do with medical confidentiality and so on that would qualify that. But certainly, we have made a lot of progress and the licencing authority and the Chief Examiner on whose recommendation this would be done is keeping a much more watchful eye than has been the case in the past.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, and if I may just make the comparison to the UK, as we frequently do when it comes to GHAs and standards in other areas to highlight what I think is a deficiency in this area. My understanding is that in the UK there is an authority known as a DVLA, the Vehicle Licencing Authority, and it is tasked with the responsibility of issuing guidance on how and when people who have notifiable medical conditions should surrender their licence. We do not have the equivalent authority here in Gibraltar.

In the UK, there is also legislation which makes it a criminal offence not to surrender your licence when a doctor notifies you with a notifiable medical condition. We do not have such legislation here in Gibraltar. With respect to the over 70s, my understanding is in Gibraltar they are required to take out tests once they reach of age and show medical evidence that they are fit to drive.

My understanding here is that these tests are now being done by Private Medical Practitioners. In light of all of this, would the Hon. Minister not agree with me that Section 36(1) in its current form is deficient and not able to police the roads in the manner as is done in the UK?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I would have to check some of the allegations that the hon. Member has made and I certainly will. We do have the DVLD which is our version of the DVLA and it is them and the Chief Examiner who is the person who supervises the DVLD and is the head of the DVLD who, as I say, has become very proactive recently on my recommendation in order to catch any of these issues that there may be. I will check all those facts and if there is any need for us to change our legislation, then I will certainly bring that to the House.

Indeed, I have just been told by the Hon. Chief Minister who has been in this House for longer than me that the legislation was actually presented by the previous administration and that the Opposition at the time voted against it. So, it may be that it is unsatisfactory. Therefore, I will look into it and if it is, I will improve it and I will report to this House in the debate on the Bill if it is in fact a Bill and not done by regulation as to how unsatisfactory the legislation that the GSD introduced was.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q85/2025
City Bus - Collision

Clerk: Question 85, the Hon G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Earlier this month, one of the City Bus vehicles was engaged in a collision on Winston Churchill Avenue. Can the Minister provide details as to the extent of the damage sustained? For instance, is the vehicle going to be operational in the future? And if so, what are the proposed costs of the repairs and has the cause of the accident been ascertained?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, City Bus is a privately owned entity and does no work nor offer any services to the Government, so I cannot comment or answer.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q88/2025
Wellington Front - Sewage

Clerk: Question 88, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Will the Minister ensure that the sewage leaking through the wall into Wellington Front by the ramp's vehicular entrance, which has suffered a number of leaks in recent months, directly affecting clubs and association users and passersby alike, is properly dealt with?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, yes, ma'am, this has already been dealt with, but is a natural consequence of the 16 years of lack of investment in sewage infrastructure in the time in office of the party the hon. Member currently sits with. I can confirm that the Technical Services Department, TSD for short, is actively addressing, mentioned it earlier, the issue of sewage leaking through the wall at Wellington Front. The primary source of the problem was identified, and extensive works were carried out on the main sewer during November and December last year to correct this.

The next phase of sewer relining is now commenced in the area directly behind the John Mackintosh Hall and is scheduled for completion in a few weeks by mid-March. As part of these works, a significant blockage behind John McIntosh Hall will be removed. Madam Speaker, I have seen photographs of the blockage, which I will share with whoever wants to see them, mainly caused by wipes, and it is absolutely astounding.

This blockage has been restricting flow in the main sewer and during heavy rainfall in particular, causes the sewer to back up along Lover's Lane. Unfortunately, this results in effluent breaching the existing manholes and surcharging the overflow system, manifesting as leaks along the wall of Wellington Front. Once the blockage is cleared and the liner is placed, it is expected that sewer flow will be significantly improved.

Further works are also planned over the coming months to address issues with several public drainage lines that connect into the main sewer. In addition, a comprehensive programme will be undertaken to repair and rehabilitate existing manholes along Lovers Lane. The House will appreciate that the location and depth of the over 100-year-old main sewer presents significant challenges, making the work both dangerous and technically complex.

Nevertheless, the TSD remains committed to resolving the issue. Upon completion of the relining works, TSD's infrastructure section will return to Wellington Front to carry out additional remedial works on the existing manholes and overflow system. The final phase should provide a long-term solution to the problem.

However, during the interim period, further issues at Wellington Front may arise, as flow in the main sewer will remain heavily restricted while the relining works are in progress.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker I will like to thank the Hon Minister for his lengthy reply and the TSD for all their work and also for the work they put in that as well. My question came about as a result of the leaks experienced in November and January this year [inaudible]. It seems the case of course.... Of course, there have not been enough works over the last 16 years, but you could say that there have not been enough works over the last 100 years, given the fact that Gibraltar has grown so much, and hence my line of questioning several months ago as to the general strategy for sewage

management. My question, Madam Speaker, is one of long-term strategy. We seem to be good at patching up when there is an issue and relining as and when required, but what strategy is in place for the long-term solution to our sewers, in particular, given the increased number of people we have living in Gibraltar and for the envisaged new builds that are coming?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I am quite shocked by the statement from the hon. Member. The amount of work that we are doing in our infrastructure, in the sewer infrastructure, and the extent of relining that we have done over the period that we have been in Government, compared to the amount that was spent in the period immediately preceding that, there is absolutely no comparison. The hon. Member must be aware of the continuing relining programme.

There will be places where problems arise, but there is absolutely no comparison, and absolutely the Technical Services Department has an ongoing programme, and we vote those funds here every year at budget time.

Madam Speaker: Any other supplementary questions?

Hon. C Sacarello: Yes, Madam Speaker, thank you. My follow-up question to that is, where is the plan for these works? Previously, the Minister offered to show them to me, but following up with emails, as I have, was met with silence. Are there any strategies in place, or would he be willing to share with the House, if not with me personally?

Hon. Chief Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker, we have shared with the House the strategy. The strategy from the first year that we were Elected was to row back from the huge difficulties that the party that the hon. Gentleman currently sits with created for Gibraltar by not having a strategy or a plan. I am not very confident with the hon. Gentleman's abilities, given the way that he has discharged his functions in this House since Elected.

But if I tell him that in 16 years, well, it is not as nasty as being called nasty and pathetic. In 16 years, they invested £200,000 a year in the sewer. And we found, when Elected, that the Chief Technical Officer and the whole of the Technical Services team were telling us, it is falling apart.

We have been telling them it requires an investment of at least half a million a year for the past 16 years. And in the past 13 years, 12 years, we have invested, therefore, as near as dammit as that million that we have been asked to invest. And we make the money available in this House, in public, and we explain it and we explain the plan.

So we have shared it with you. hon. Members should know that the budget debate is not just an opportunity to come here and embarrass the Government and call us every name under the sun because it is the sort of debate where you are not stopped in your speech as a matter of courtesy. It is an opportunity for the Government to set out to the community what it is that we are going to do with that money.

Successive Ministers for infrastructure in my Government have been setting out what they are doing with that money. I have been setting it out as Minister for Finance. I specifically took the House, I think, with him in it.

If not, it is public and one would have expected that as a Member of this House, he would have refreshed himself on the things that are now his shadow responsibility. We had been investing that £932,000 on average in the past years that we have been in Government, and they invested £200,000, that is the plan to make the investment in infrastructure that the Technical Services Department and the Chief Technical Officer were telling us was necessary in their time and is now double necessary in our time because they failed to make the investment. We have made more money available than Technical Services have actually spent in some years because this is very difficult work, and they programme work but then it takes time for all of the reasons that the Hon. Minister for the Environment has said because it is dangerous work.

People going into the sewer who are not from Technical Services Department, they are from a subcontractor, expose themselves to with the carefully designed work that the people that Technical Services have prepared. That is the plan, to follow the advice to do that which they failed to do.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I had like to thank the Hon. Chief Minister for his intervention and partisan history lesson but rather than give us figures, would the Government be able to provide the House with an actual strategy for the future proofing? Bearing in mind, this is something that we are handing on to future generations so rather than just patch up areas, what is the strategy for the safeguard delivery of a workable system given the growth of our nation for future generations and the present one?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, in words which came back to haunt but which are appropriate to the hon. Gentleman, I will say it to him perhaps a little bit more slowly and in a way that he can understand. Read my lips, read the Hansard. It is already there, not just in terms of the money.

When we explain what we are going to spend the money on, that explanation is the plan. Do the homework that the people of Gibraltar are paying you to do as a Member of this House and go to the sections of the Hansard that relate to this question for the time that we have been in Government and I would suggest respectfully to the hon. Gentleman the time that the party he currently sits with was in Government and he will see the plan. He is asking us for something he already has, and I must say Madam Speaker, with the excellent work done by successive Clerks, including the current one, it is all very easily accessible.

He can do it from his bedroom in the evening. He does not have to come here as we used to have to come here to and everyone used to have to come here because the internet did not exist to pick out the Hansard, you know, leaf through it. We have made it searchable to PDF.

He can search for the word sewer in respect of each Hansard. Indeed, Madam Speaker, if he listens to the things that as usual, our prescient knight and father of the House, Sir Joe has said recently about AI, he can ask Bing, Gemini, Deep Think etc and it'll tell him the answer. In fact, I can tell him.

I checked. So it is one AI question away from him being able to access from our budget speeches the numbers and the text of the plan for what the money is going to be used for, which is exactly the strategic plan that the hon. Gentleman is asking to please provide him with and he already has access to. Look, we have a responsibility with the spending of money in this House, including the spending on our salaries to ensure that we get value for money for the taxpayer.

What the hon. Gentleman, perhaps, I say rhetorically, consider that he needs to do that and see that that thing that he is asking for has already been debated in this House.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q89/2025

Private Number Plate Initiative - Revenue

Clerk: Question 89, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Following the Government's recent private number plate initiative, how much revenue has been raised to date from sales attributable to this venture?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister of Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, £1,546,500.

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Member for his reply. Would he be able to let us know what the total revenue derived from the GBC Open Day auction was in the end?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, Madam Speaker. I have answered the question that I have been asked. I do not have that information.

Hon. Chief Minister: Since the hon. Gentleman the total revenue from the GBC Open Day was zero. It was to the GBC Open Day. I understand it was in the region of £150,000, but it was zero to the Government. We gave it for nothing.

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you very much for that answer. Were all these transactions received via bank account transactions? Were any cash receipts on this?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I have been asked very clearly how much revenue has been raised. If the hon. Member wanted to know how much had been raised in different ways, then that should have been in the question and I would have provided that information. I do not have that information available. I have answered the question that I have been asked.

Madam Speaker: Sorry, before we move on to the Hon. D J Bossino, does the Hon. G Origo have any supplementaries in relation to Question 83?

Q83/2025

Grand Parade Car Park – Fines Issued Foreign-Registered Vehicles - Supplementary Questions

Hon. G Origo: I am grateful, Madam Speaker. By way of my first supplementary, can I ask the Hon. Minister with respect to the table that we have been provided, do these figures also include clamps or is it just fines?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Could the Clerk remind me the number of the question, Madam Speaker? Sorry? Question 83. Sorry, because I got a lot of questions here. This is the number of fines issued to foreign registered vehicles broken down by month at Grand Parade.

Hon. G Origo: Thank you. I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for that clarification. Can I ask, would you not agree with me that based on the number of fines and clamps that are being posed with respect to foreign registered vehicles in this area, does he not agree with me that the figures appear to be quite high? It is almost like if we are trying to trap tourists in order to squeeze out the pounds here.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I am pretty flabbergasted by the question. If we were not applying our law and we were not trying to deal with foreign vehicles parking where they should not be parking, I would have questions or comments telling me why are we not doing enough. Madam Speaker, there are vehicles that are parking in areas where they should not be parking and we have a duty to apply the law. Therefore, I do not want to comment any further.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, thank you. I appreciate what the Hon. Minister makes a point that this is a reaction to foreign registered vehicles parking spaces where they should not be. My understanding from the people that live in the area that the issue is predominantly caused because of the poor and lack of signage. I understand that in Grand Parade it is very confusing to ascertain which are zonal parking, which are free to park zones and which ones are pay and display. In light of the statistics provided, it is supportive of the fact that it may not be so clear for these foreign tourists to understand where they can and where they cannot park. Given the potential negative image this can give tourists from their wonderful visit Gibraltar experience, is it not in the Hon. Minister's plans to address the signage issue in this area?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I am glad that the hon. Member is not suggesting that we should have a free for all parking for all visitors because then I am sure there would be representations in the opposite direction to the ones that he is making. Madam Speaker, the residents of that area are my constituents and they have in fact told me that they feel that the signage is perhaps confusing and the signage is being reviewed.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. D J Bossino have a question or has he been gazumped?

Hon. D J Bossino: I mean, in terms of the review, and I think my hon. Learned friend Mr Origo makes an absolutely valid point. It is not that we have a quarrel with the enforcement. What we have an issue with is that it is not properly signed.

So I would ask the Hon. Minister as to what are we now, February? You know, the peak season, according to these fines would start in April. With this fine information would start a significant hike in the month of April and it carries on to May, then it slightly dips in June and it clearly goes up in July and August.

So can he give an indication to this House that there will be proper, clear and unambiguous signage at Grand Parade in advance of at least the month of April, which must be, that must be the reason. The reason for that must be on account that it is a holiday month.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, what I can say is that there will be different signs by the month of April.

Madam Speaker: Yes, the Hon. R. M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just following on from this train of thought, I believe at least half of Grand Parade is being resurfaced at the moment. Would the Minister not agree that this would be a good opportunity to, if there was going to be a rearrangement of the parking zones, rather than having it to be painted twice, that to do it once in the way that makes sense, this would be an opportunity to do it now?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, it is already painted. It was done very quickly. I think I have got another question on that later on, but it is not so much the painting on the ground that people have complained to me about. It is more the signs and how they define where you can and cannot park.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q90/2025

Harbour Views - Remedial Works

Clerk: Question 90, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: What remedial works, if any, are being carried out to the storm drain system in the area of Harbour Views?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister of Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the Technical Services Department is aware of a problem which is affecting the surface water drainage system within the Harbour Views housing estate. This is a problem with their internal system and is not related to the external public drainage network to which it ultimately connects. Nevertheless, Technical Services has provided the Management Committee of the estate with advice on several occasions and will continue to do so as and when this is requested.

The department is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the public drainage network in the area outside the estate and carries out cleaning and maintenance works as and when this is required.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I first of all declare a vested interest as a homeowner in Harbour Views. I have no reason to doubt the veracity of the Minister's questions.

Can I advise him to make sure that a copy of his answer is delivered to the Harbour Views Management Committee, specifically its chairman, who stated in the meeting of the homeowner that the problem lies with Technical Services. That is why this water was remaining in the car park area there. Like I said, we have known each other for well beyond half a century.

We beat the Chief Minister and my Colleagues' school record because we started sharing school and making each other laugh from the age of seven. And to make matters worse for our beloved Christian brothers, we are even in the same house and we are well known for our footballing and other sporting skills with the fraternity. But, you know, perhaps the Minister in a coherent manner could inform the chairman of Harbour Views, you know, that if he is going to put the blame on Government, to make sure their answers are correct and it need be like you, like the Minister was saying now, re-offer the services of Technical Services in respect of advice and so on.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I know the chairman very well. We often converse and I would be very happy to be approached by him if he wants to challenge what the Technical Services department have told me. But I am absolutely certain that they will make themselves available to provide advice as I have stated in my answer.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q91/2025

Moorish Castle - Historic Integrity

Clerk: Question 91, The Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is the Government satisfied that the historic integrity of Moorish Castle's outer keep has been maintained and protected? Answered the Hon. the Minister of Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister of Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the outer keep is not included within the scope of the current works. However, its conservation and potential future interventions will be carefully assessed, studied and discussed once the restoration of the inner keep is complete. The Government's heritage professionals and their teams are fully satisfied that the historic integrity of the outer keep has been maintained and protected.

In addition, they are eager to highlight the extensive work currently being carried out within the inner keep. This ongoing restoration not only adheres to the highest international conservation standards, but is also set to revolutionise the visitor experience, significantly elevating Gibraltar's heritage offering.

Hon. D J Bossino: The answer given by the Minister does not address the one issue which has come to my attention and it relates to a particular structure which I am told on very good authority has been, it is a metal structure, has been screwed on to that wall and it basically covers the full height and extent of the wall and I am told forms part of the construction work being carried out at Road to the Lions, not at Moorish Castle. That is the information that I have.

I was absolutely shocked and alarmed by what I saw and I was given this information a few months ago, but I am told that the state of affairs remains the same, in fact, it is a goods lift. I have taken a note, and I have been told it is a goods lift. So can I ask the Hon. Minister to look into this and to make sure that, does he have any comments to make in respect of the facts as I have put them to him?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, Madam Speaker. I am not aware of the structure that the hon. Member says is there. Obviously, I will have it looked into by my archaeologist right away.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is he, given the serious nature of, I mean, I have seen this myself. He can take my word for it. He need not take my word for it and I would ask him this and he says he will make enquiries.

But it is actually, as I said before, very, shocking the significant infringement that there has been on a very important site. So is he not concerned that he has not been advised of this? That neither the Heritage Trust or the Advisory Council has not advised him of this very obvious potential in respect of one of our prized and important, if not the most prized and important heritage structures in this place?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, if everything that the hon. Member says is true, then clearly that is concerning. What also concerns me is given the hon. Member's declared interest in heritage, which he wants to make us believe every time we meet here, that if he is known about this for months, he has not raised it directly with me before. And if it was a problem, then we would have dealt with it.

Hon. D J Bossino: That comment is absolutely, totally irrelevant and does not assist the Hon. Minister. The Hon. Minister tells us on many, many occasions when he gives answers in this House, that he has all the structures in place, that he has this Council which advises him, that he, as a result of questions that I posed in the last Parliament, at last he is filing these annual reports. And yet, despite all these things, does he not realise, does he not appreciate that there is something wrong in the system?

The Minister always says that there is no issue in respect of the departments for which he is responsible. But in fact, the opposite is absolutely correct. There is a massive issue.

So, does he not accept that despite the legislation that he passes through, despite the reports, despite the supposed reliance that he places on Advisory Councils and Statutory Bodies and all the rest of it, there is a problem, there is an endemic problem in the things that he has political responsibility for in this community?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, well, apart from the fact that I am sure there is another way of doing question time, which might enable the hon. Gentleman to garner some political support, without him pretending to be on the last days of the planet with the level of upset that he seems to work himself up to in respect of every question and on every issue, which I would commend to him, but it is a matter of him, there does appear to be a very big problem with the system. With the whole of the system, even the parliamentary system, because we have a Member for Opposition on heritage matters, who is telling us that he has known for months that there is an issue which is potentially hugely damaging, that is to say, it is no longer hugely damaging, it is potentially hugely damaging, if correct, who has not brought to the attention of the relevant Minister, either in a phone call, in a letter, in a press release, or in an earlier question, this allegedly, potentially hugely damaging issue. So it is not just the alleged structure that the Hon. Minister has referred to the house, it is the whole democratic system that seems to be failing our heritage. It is not the archaeologist and the structure there, it is also him referring it to us.

It is almost as if, Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman were wishing that the whole of the damage is done, so that then he can say, look at the damage that has been done by the failure of your system, and I knew it was happening. And now I am telling you after it happened. So, we do not accept, Madam Speaker, because we have learned from them, and if they do it, it must be right.

We do not accept from them what they are telling us, because they do not accept from us what we are telling them. So we cannot accept that this thing that he has said is a huge potential problem has happened until we see it. He will allow us to be as doubting Thomas as he is, Madam Speaker.

So, when he shows us the evidence of the thing that he says, or when, as the Hon. Minister has said, our people have gone to check it out, we will see whether it is the huge potential problem that he has said it is or not. And then we will determine whether or not any of our systems have failed. He will know that on this side of the house, we have never suggested that we are infallible.

It was never me that pretended to speak from St Peter's chair or any of my Ministers. But we will see, Madam Speaker, and we will take into consideration any evidence he might care to bring to our attention when evidence is brought to our attention by those who are employed by us to bring these matters to our attention and then determine whether it is huge, whether it is potential, whether anything has gone wrong, whether the hon. Gentleman is perhaps potentially, hugely overreacting.

Madam Speaker: There is a supplementary, yes, but I do not want to debate.

Hon. D J Bossino: The reason why I react in this way, the reason why I react in this way is because I would have expected, and this is a fundamental and very crucial point, I would have expected for the Minister for Heritage to have stood up in this House by way of an answer, which was very specifically pointed in respect of the historic integrity of the Moorish Castle's outer keep, to have said confidently, no, I have given a licence, I am aware of it, and these are the reasons why I have allowed this to happen.

What is shocking to me is that he does not even know. So can I ask him this, given the importance, and it is not for me to tell him, it is for me to have been satisfied by him that everything was hunky-dory, when in fact it is not, or there is a potential that it is not. I use those words because I am allowing the Hon. Minister to come up and persuade us on this side of the house that everything has been done properly, but this raises very serious concerns.

Can I ask him to suggest to him that once he establishes the correct position, that he writes to me, if I can put it in these terms, he writes to me and tells me what the position is. Can I ask him to at least do that? Because I am very concerned and I am even more concerned as a result of the answers that we have had today from both Ministers in the Government.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I have no intention of writing to the hon. Member. The hon. Member, I think, stands out among the Members of the Opposition in his unfriendliness towards the Government, because there have been many circumstances and many instances when other Members around him, probably absolutely everyone else on that side of the House, has detected a problem and because they have a relationship with me and because they care about the things that they see, they have got in touch with me by letter, by email, by WhatsApp, by phone call and we have resolved them.

The hon. Member just wants to let things run, let things run and then try and have a go at the work that my team does and the extraordinary work that my team does. I mean, I suppose that if ever he sees the Moorish castle being demolished, he will wait until it is just total rubble before he decides to bring a question three months later. Madam Speaker, if the hon. Member would like to write to me giving the details of the concerns that he has on this thing that he has seen, then I will get it dealt with and I always reply to letters when they are reasonably structured and presented.

Madam Speaker: The Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the Minister will be aware, under the Heritage and Antiquities Act, the Moorish castle complex is protected, which includes the inner keep, blind arches, the outer walls, towers, gatehouse and of course the Tower of Homage. Will the Minister undertake to apply the full penalties under this Act to whoever, if there is such an infringement on the integrity of the walls?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, it is not for a Minister to apply a penalty. That is not my role. We are the legislators. We do not execute the law. The process will be followed, but it is not for me to impose a penalty.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, I fully appreciate I am not asking him to personally. But you did say that. Maybe I should rephrase the way you asked him to undertake to impose the penalty. Okay, I shall follow the Chief Minister's advice. Will you make sure that the relevant parties do undertake to make sure the relevant penalties are enforced? See, I would never pass the bar exam. But perhaps I should get up.

Hon. Chief Minister: If I could for one moment assume that the hon. Gentleman was not intending to lay a trap for the Government and was simply seeking to express a sentiment that if there had been a breach of these rules, that the Government would seek that such a breach should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, right? Rather than make the Government, the judge, the jury and the executioner then, of course, if there is any truth whatsoever to what we have been told by the hon. the Shadow Minister for Everything, then the Hon. Mr Clinton can be assured that the Government would be seeking that such appropriate follow-up slash prosecution, if appropriate, would be pursued.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q92/2025

Moorish Castle - Companies Involved and the Works

Clerk: Question 92, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: please provide details of all the companies involved and the works related to the Moorish Castle to include their function.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister of Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, although this work is being carried out for the Gibraltar National Museum and not for the Government, I have the information as we clear the works given the protected nature of the site. As a result, I can tell the House that the following entities are involved in the ongoing works at the Moorish Castle, each fulfilling a specific role in the project. The Ministry for Heritage, representing His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar through the Government archaeologists, overseeing all heritage related matters.

The Gibraltar National Museum, managing the site on behalf of the Government, providing supervision and expert heritage advice. Fortress Attractions, appointed operator subcontractor for managing the works and facilities once completed, which is subcontracting the following. That is, Fortress Attractions is subcontracting the following.

Koala Construction, main contractor undertaking the restoration works under the guidance of the Government archaeologists and the Gibraltar National Museum. Carduus, project management team responsible for overseeing budgeting, resource allocation and site safety. DMA Gibraltar Limited Engineers, engineering consultants advising on all structural matters in collaboration with heritage professionals.

GC Architects, architectural firm engaged in designing the future aesthetic of the visitor experience. Pula Fuka Creative Agency, lead entity responsible for developing and delivering the creative aspects of the visitor experience. AMA Mechanical Electrical Designers.

GreenArc, vegetation clearance under the supervision of the Department of the Environment. XL Scaffolding, Czech Anglo Productions, safety solutions. This multidisciplinary team is ensuring that the restoration and development of the Moorish Castle adhere to best practises in heritage conservation while enhancing the site for public engagement and tourism.

Hon. D J Bossino: So that we understand on this side of the house the basic company structure. The list of companies that the Hon., the Minister has just provided as he has explained it are in effect fall under Fortress Attractions Limited, which was the, I think, is the company also responsible for the Northern Defences, which was the subject of press release exchanges with us about four or five months ago. And I would ask him, I am putting this to him, and I formulate it in the way of a question so that the hon. Member confirm that my understanding is correct.

Then, further up the tree, there would be some form of relationship between, as he put it, the Gibraltar National Museum who has, as I understand it, overall supervision of this site because it is, as he put it again, being done by them. The Gibraltar National Museum, I assume, is not or could be rather a business name and I imagine there must be a corporate entity and I imagine it is Knightsfield Holdings Limited. But beyond that, is there some form of instruction relationship between the Gibraltar Government whose site this ultimately is and the Gibraltar National Museum? and in that context, may I ask...

Madam Speaker: That is enough for one question.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, there is a contractual relationship to run the Gibraltar National Museum, which is actually a statutory body within the Heritage and Antiquities Act. And as I said, the Ministry for Heritage, through the Government archaeologist, oversees all heritage-related matters and there are regular meetings. In fact, there are at least monthly meetings with myself on a number of projects, including this one. But the main supervision and overseeing, as I said in my original answer, is provided by the Government archaeologists.

Hon. D J Bossino: There is one aspect of the facts as I put them to him, which I do not think he is either confirmed or otherwise. The contractual relationship is therefore between the Gibraltar Government and the Gibraltar National Museum, which he has described as a statutory body. Is that the position?

Oh, Knightsfield. Sorry, Knightsfield Holdings Limited, which he has said is a statutory body? Which aspects of his answer was he referring to when he said that X, whatever it is, was a statutory body? I did not quite understand what he said.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, the matter, Madam Speaker, is exactly as we inherited from them. The contractual relationship is between the Government and Knightsfield Holdings, as is a matter of public record. That is to say, the law, the Gibraltar National Museum, is a statutory body.

Knightsfield run that for the Government under contract, which is something that we inherited from the GSD. And the hon. Member will recall that he often refers us to what he calls the golden legacy of the GSD. This was one of the strings, Madam Speaker, which we inherited from them.

Yes, we did. We inherited this from them. They might have inherited it from us as well, but we inherited it from them.

They renegotiated the contract. And when we were Elected in 2011, we had the new contract between the Government of Gibraltar and Knightsfield Holdings, which included the running of the Gibraltar National Museum.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I accept that. I am just asking the hon. Member to clarify precisely because of that, because this is not a legacy issue of the GSD. I am sure he accepts in the way that he is now described the matter. This was originally a contract entered into by the first GSLP administration, which then expired, was renegotiated, and a new contract was entered into. I am sure he accepts that.

Hon. Chief Minister: I do accept that, Madam Speaker. They were, as he says, new, renegotiated arrangements. It was a new contract. That is to say, we inherited that contract from them. This aspect of it has not changed. But this aspect of it has not changed.

What the hon. Gentleman is asking, we, the Government, Madam Speaker. He might ask who's them. Them, the party that they represent in this House, Madam Speaker. The party of which, when he was a Member of this parliament with them, he was the Deputy Leader of and the Deputy Chief Minister of. And I believe in that time, Madam Speaker, they renegotiated this contract.

And we, the GSLP/Liberal administration since 2011, inherited that part of it from them. That is to say, the bit the Hon. Mr Bossino is asking about was already negotiated and agreed when we, 2011 GSLP/Liberals, entered into Government in a contract that had been done, redone by the GSD administration of 96 to 2011.

Madam Speaker: Let's try and keep it to supplementaries that are relevant. Yes, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I usually try to keep my questions brief. If I may ask the Minister, in terms of all the entities that he is listed in response to my hon. Friend's Question 92, which of those would hold the heritage licence? Who is responsible under the Heritage Act?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, yes, the heritage licence is held by Fortress Attractions, which is the contractor to the National Museum and subcontracts the other entities.

Hon. D J Bossino: I do not entirely accept the history lesson that the Chief Minister has given us, but be that as it may, be that as it may, because it is not totally accurate, but be that as it may, because in fact, there was a statutory agent.

Madam Speaker: All right, I am going to keep the hon. Member to questions because both sides have given history lessons, and I had like to focus onto supplementaries.

Hon. D J Bossino: In respect of the contractual relationship between the Gibraltar Government and Knightsfield Holdings Limited insofar as this project is concerned, which is a subject matter of the question, can he confirm, or otherwise, whether this particular development has been done under, within the price tag that is, I think, made public in the budget session of about 1.5 million pounds. Is it within that budget or is extra money being provided by the Gibraltar Government to this particular company to carry out these specific works?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, it is not within that budget, but it is not being provided by the Gibraltar Government.

Hon. D J Bossino: Who is it being provided by then? The Hon. Minister says that there is a contractual relationship between Gibraltar Government and Knightsfield. He takes us down that particular route. Now, in relation to this particular project, the Hon. Minister is saying that it is not a cost. So what contractual relationship is there between the Government and Fortress Attraction, sorry, Knightsfield Holdings Limited in respect of this particular project? Where's the money coming from?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I explained this in the House before, that it is private investment that is being brought in and there are contractual arrangements, but it is not Government money that is being forked out. I have explained that if the hon. Member looks at Hansard, he will be able to see that. I have explained this in this House before.

Hon. D J Bossino: Is the Hon. Minister able to say where this private investment is coming from? Where this money is coming from?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, Madam Speaker.

Hon. D J Bossino: In relation to the licencing point made by my hon. Friend, Mr Clinton, where in answer to that specific question, the Hon. Minister says that it is Fortress Attractions Limited is the beneficiary of the heritage licence. Can he clarify this point? Because in the paper which has been laid today, which is the Heritage and Antiquities Advisory Council Parliamentary Report of 2024, there is a list of heritage licences which have been issued through the Heritage and Antiquities Advisory Council.

I imagine is the abbreviation there at the top of HAC. And it has a number 1077. It says Moorish Castle, issued on September 2024.

And it says that the beneficiary or the licensee is Mr Peter Cabezutto. So there is no company name and it is actually given to an individual who indeed is very closely connected.

Madam Speaker: I will remind the hon. Member that people should not be named unless it is absolutely necessary.

Hon. D J Bossino: It is referred to in a report which has been laid before the Parliament. It is actually a part of the record and this will be published in Hansard.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, that person is a Managing Director of Fortress Attractions Limited. The licence, as I recall, was given to them. The name will have appeared because perhaps that is the person who signed the application. Okay, if we assume, I mean, once again, this is a bit of a mess.

Hon. D J Bossino: Okay, if we assume, I mean, once again, this is a bit of a mess. If we assume, if we assume, if we assume that the answer which the Minister gave to my hon. Friend is to be correct and accurate, will he not agree with me that the record insofar as this document, which is now before this Parliament, it is an official record laid only a few, half an hour ago, should be corrected to reflect the name of the corporate entity as opposed to the individual? And whilst we are at it, could I also ask him to check the other, the other, the other details where, for example, you have Northern Defences goes to Mr. Patrick Cabezzuto. I imagine that is the, that is the, it should be the same company because they are doing that project as well.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, the company directors have personal liability in their companies and it would have been signed in the names. But, but I think that makes absolutely no sense to, to, to try and, and, and distinguish between these.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, if I can give assistance to the House, Madam Speaker, if I can give assistance to the hon. Gentleman, given what he is trying to do, which is not generous. Andrew Lord represents the Friends of Gibraltar, Heritage Trust. But it is not Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Trust, it is Andrew Lord.

I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman only wants to pick at the one that he says is close to us and he is close to us, but not to any others.

Hon. Chief Minister: With Lord Airy's battery, heritage licence being in the name of Andrew Lord, although it is not Andrew Lord who is doing it. It is the Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Trust.

Hon. D J Bossino: He is not appreciated that the point he is making is absolutely a wrong point. It is a completely wrong point. It is the question arose as a result of the answer the Hon. Minister gave to my hon. Friend as to who the beneficiary of the heritage licence was. And the answer was, it is this corporate entity. Once here, we have a completely different picture. It says that it is not a corporate entity, but an individual. I have not said it.

Madam Speaker: Enough, we are going to move on. Next question.

Q93-94/2025
Schools - Total Number of Pupils

Clerk: Question 93, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, what was the total number of pupils in first schools, middle schools and secondary schools at 31st December 2024?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 94.

Clerk: Question 94, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: How many pupils with special needs were there at first schools, middle schools and secondary schools at 31st December 2024?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, information is provided in the schedule that is making its way across the chamber.

Madam Speaker: All right, we will move on and revert to this for supplementary.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 94

ANSWER TO QUESTION 93

Lower Primary School	Governors Meadow Lower Primary	216
	Notre Dame Lower Primary	314
	St Bernard's Lower Primary	113
	St Joseph's Lower Primary	276
	St Mary's Lower Primary	138
	St Paul's Lower Primary	291
Upper Primary School	Bishop Fitzgerald Upper Primary	473
	St Anne's Upper Primary	431
	St Bernard's Upper Primary	318
	St Joseph's Upper Primary	414
Secondary Schools	Bayside	1305
	Westside	1348
	Gibraltar College	248

ANSWER TO QUESTION 94

	Number of children on SEN register - Dec 2024	
Lower Primary aged pupils	527	This includes St Martin's Lower Primary aged children but excludes pre-pre Early Birds Nursery
Lower Primary aged pupils PLUS pre-pre Early Birds Nursery pupils at St Martins School	543	This includes the pre-pre Early Birds Nursery children who are not of a Lower Primary age

	Number of children on SEN register - Dec 2024	
Upper Primary aged pupils	1016	This includes St Martin's Upper Primary aged children

	Number of children on SEN register - Dec 2024	
Secondary aged pupils	1231	This includes St Martin's Secondary aged children

160/2025

St. Martin's School for Early Birds Nursery - Temporary Site

Clerk: Question 160, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. On behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, could the Government state where it intends to locate the temporary site to accommodate the additional classes needed for St. Martin's School for Early Birds Nursery?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the Government will make an announcement about the site when we are ready to do so.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, I see but of course, we are in the last, what is it, four months of the academic year. I am sure people want to know where it is going to go. When does the Government think it is going to make such an announcement?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, very soon.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, I was just slightly perplexed. It is not my question. It is my hon. Colleague Mrs. Sanchez's question, but rather perplexed as to why there is a level of caginess on it because presumably the Government is aware, or is it that the Government is not sure where it is going to locate it? If it is sure, why is it not something it is willing to say?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, there are discussions going on at the moment to see how we are going to progress with this. And I do not think it would be in the interests of the children who are going to benefit from it that we reveal the site right now. But we are close to being able to do so.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I had like to ask just finally, will the site be available for the next academic year? So are they willing, are they at least willing to confirm that it will be available as from September 25?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to confirm that it will be available as from September.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q161/2025

SNLSAs - Demonstration

Clerk: Question 161, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Could the Government state whether it has reached an agreement with SNLSAs regarding the concerns raised through their respective union and during the demonstration held earlier this month?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, negotiations are proceeding.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I assumed from that that the answer to the question was no, you have not reached agreement because negotiations are ensuing. Does the Minister want to add anything else, more, to give us a sense of whether matters are progressing or not?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, Madam Speaker, I do not think that would be correct. The negotiations are being led by the Industrial Relations Department and when you are negotiating, you do not want to make public statements because obviously that could have an effect on the outcome.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Is the Government at least sympathetic and willing to say in the House as to the concerns expressed by SNLSAs to the Government?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I am not going to get involved in the discussion any further because these are points that are clearly part of the negotiations. The Government is very pleased of the work that SNLSAs do but that is something that has been the case certainly for as long as I have been in Government, but I am not going to make any comment at all which would in any way affect the negotiations.

Madam Speaker: Next Question.

Q162-163/2025

Cable Car Station - Project Works to Commence/Costs

Clerk: Question 162, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, does the Government have any information as to when we can expect the Cable Car station project works to commence?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister of Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 163.

Clerk: Question 163, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Can the Government confirm the cost of the repairs carried out to the cable car and what entity was contributed?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister of Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, as one would have expected the hon. Member or the Leader of the Opposition to be aware, this is a project run by a private company and I am therefore unable to answer.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the Hon. Minister pointing out the obvious, I suppose, in relation to Question 163 but in respect of Question 162 I wanted to ask some questions with respect to how this project is going to be carried out. So if I may, because I do understand he sits on the DPC and therefore must have some view on how this project is going to be undertaken. My understanding is that part of this project requires materials and debris from the site to be carried down in trucks via the Nature Reserve.

Does the Minister consider that this is still the most viable option as I note that they considered also installing a pulley on the east side which would have been less damaging to the environment?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, that is not a logical supplementary to Question 162, I am afraid to say. It says, does the Government have any information as to when we can expect the Cable Car station project works to commence? And the Government does not have that information.

There is no leeway there to talk about how the works are going to be carried out. But in any case, the method statements were provided and discussed publicly at planning, I believe on more than one occasion and therefore it should be in the public domain. But as I say, it is not a logical supplementary to this question.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, thank you, if I may try one more time. As I stated earlier, the project is going to be carried out in a particular way, which in my view and I believe in the Hon. Minister's view, he raised concern when having sat on the DPC panel as to the possible methods of moving about the debris. Can I put it to him whether he is supportive of this project being carried out in this way?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, in which way? It is a very big project. There are many different aspects of it so I cannot really answer that question.

Hon. G Origo: If I may assist the Hon. Minister, I am referring to the waste management that is going to be undertaken when building this project. My understanding, having seen his interview, is that this project may take around 21 months to construct and that will involve the waste management having trucks going down and up the nature reserve for these 21 months. This would be damaging to wildlife and also have an environmental impact. So can I ask the Hon. Minister, is he supportive of this project being done in this way?

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, the only thing I can say on behalf of the Government is that the methodology has been approved by the DPC, the DPC, the Independent Statutory Body, and in making the application for that permission, the applicant was represented by the hon. Gentleman's law firm.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q164/2025

St Joseph's School - Drop-Off Zone

Clerk: Question 164, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, since its implementation earlier this month, is the Government satisfied with its changes to the drop-off zone at St Joseph's School and have these modifications alleviated the situation and improved traffic flow?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, yes, ma'am. The only alteration to the current system was minor to bring forward the timings for the drop-off to be clear from 8.30 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. This now allows Gibraltar Parking Management Services Limited to remove the persistent offenders in time for the drop-off that starts in earnest at 8.30. This has allowed for the complete drop-off area to be clear of vehicles in time and has improved the situation for families dropping off their children. Before this change, just applying fixed penalty notices did not resolve the problem as the vehicles remained in place, reducing the parking area for drop-off. The no left turn is also being removed.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for his answer. I appreciate that these alterations to the drop-off zone may take some time before they are understood by the residents and before we can actually see whether or not they had a meaningful impact in alleviating traffic flow. But I just wanted to seek clarification on the latter end of what his statement was saying.

I recall having brought to the attention of the Hon. Minister an issue that residents were experiencing in the area as they dropped off their kids in the school when they finished the route of the drop-off zone that was a security or type of traffic warden that would prevent them going southbound down North Pavilion Road and instead force them to join the traffic congestion going down Scud Hill. Is it the case that he stated earlier that that has been addressed?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Madam Speaker, I recall the conversation. The hon. Member is one of the ones who does reach out when there is a concern. That is why I added that, although that wasn't part of this particular process, I thought it was relevant. That has been a long-standing instruction, I am told from the RGP from years ago. But in reviewing this and following our conversation, it did not seem to have any logic. So that has been removed.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q165/2025
Scud Hill - Footpath

Clerk: Question 165, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Does the Government have any plans to reduce the size of the footpath at the bottom of Scud Hill, which runs adjacent to Cumberland Road?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, no ma'am.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister, why not? Concerns have been raised to Members on this side of the House from the tenants that live in the area.

In particular, there is a bottleneck junction when you get to the bottom of Scud Hill Road and there are parking bays on the other side. The complaints that have been raised to us are that the cars are frequently crashed and smashed into and there is very limited space for vehicles to pass. So much so,

when the resurfacing took place just only a few weeks ago, the truck that was carrying out the resurfacing got stuck and could not go through these vehicles.

I think the same would be true if the emergency services, the fire brigade or a large police van were to go through this area. Can I then ask the Hon. Minister to assess the situation and if he agrees with me that this bottleneck causes a hazard that he will address the situation, not least because the roads have been recently resurfaced.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, the problem would be resolved if the parking was removed, not the pavement. But Madam Speaker, what I want to add, because again, I have received representation, they are my constituents as well, and I have asked the traffic team to look at how we can improve the situation in that area as a whole, not just specifically looking at the question of the footpath. We have carried out quite a number of improvements in the area, as the hon. Member will be aware, by the Central Hall, further up the hill opposite the Schomberg area, and I have asked the team to look at that and see whether there is anything we can do to improve and remove that problem.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, whilst I am not normally in support of prioritising cars over pedestrians, in this instance, having looked at the matter myself, I went over this weekend, the bus stop at the bottom of Cumberland Road has a small staircase that brings you onto this pavement. Then this pavement runs 20 metres up Scud Hill and stops at a park. It does not go anywhere else and therefore, serves no purpose for the pedestrians that are using it.

I say that on the basis that people who get off the bus stop in Cumberland Road also have access to the same park on Cumberland Road, and therefore the residents have pointed out to me, say that this pedestrianised pathway serves no purpose. Given the concerns that it has in damaging their cars, and given the potential it has to block emergency vehicles, can I ask the Hon. Minister and invite him to assess the situation once again?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Well, Speaker, there may well be other better solutions than the one the hon. Member is suggesting, and I have said I have asked the excellent transport team to look at the whole area.

Hon. D J Bossino: If, of all the solutions that the Hon. Minister's department and team are looking at, does it, can he, is he, is the Hon. Minister saying that it will not include, the reduction in size of the pavement that my hon. friend is referring to? In other words, if you are going into the direction of traffic, the one on the left, which is huge and ginormous, and should not have been constructed that way or built that way in the first place, because there is a significant pavement which is more commonly used and much more useful for individuals on the right. So the question is very clear, very specific. Is he saying, given the answer he gave, that there are no plans to reduce the size, that the things that he is considering will not include the reduction of the size of that particular pavement?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, yes, indeed, that is a hypothetical question. I have already said, Madam Speaker, that the transport team is looking at the whole of that area for an integral solution for the whole of the area. I repeat, I have an excellent team and there are other issues that have been raised and the changes that we will bring about will be not as a result of the questions asked here or the Hon. Mr. Bossino's intervention, but it will be as a result of my response to my wonderful constituents with whom I meet regularly and who have raised issues with me which have been tackled.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Adjournment

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, I am afraid to say that the Hon. Minister is going to be standing in for me this evening at a hugely important event at the Convent in honour of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and he needs to be out of his dapper suit into his even more dapper black tie in the next 50 minutes in order not to keep His Excellency waiting. So, I am afraid I am going to have to move the adjournment to tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

Madam Speaker: All right, I now propose the question which is that this House to now adjourn to tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. I now put the question which is that this House to now adjourn to tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye) Those against? Passed.

This House will now adjourn to tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

The House adjourned at 6.40 p.m.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 10.00 a.m. – 12.10 p.m.

Gibraltar, Friday, 28th February 2025

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 10.00 a.m.

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

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

Questions for Oral Answer

EDUCATION, THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Q93-4/2024

Schools –

**Number of pupils; Pupils with special needs –
Supplementary Questions**

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament Friday the 28th of February 2025. Answers to oral questions continued.

5 **Madam Speaker:** All right let us begin with taking supplementary to Question 94 from the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

10 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I will take supplementaries to 93 and 94 together if I may.

15 **Madam Speaker:** Yes, the hon. Member is quite right.

20 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** May I say as I rise that I am so pleased today to see a whopping majority on our side. It is a rare event, so I thought I would celebrate. Can I ask the hon. Member on 93 and 94, and in case anyone is tuning in now and was not tuning in yesterday, I asked the hon. Member to give us statistics on the number of pupils in schools and then the number of pupils in special needs.

25 The reason I asked the hon. Member this question at 31 December 2024 is because those statistics were not available online. What was available online was the close of statistics to, or at least to 2023 in terms of the total number of pupils and the total number of pupils in 2023 was 5,858 and the number of special needs was a fairly high number.

30 Now, the hon. Member has given us the statistics which suggest, I am trying to find the sheet and making sure that I am working from the correct sheet, the answer he's given us is that there's 5,858 in total, and that works out to around, and the special needs are around, just bear with me because I have got the right statistics. When I worked out the percentages, the percentage of special needs children in our school is around 38% if you work it out in terms of the number of pupils that there are. Now, can I just ask the hon. Member how these statistics are calculated because it just seems like a high number.

35 We have had these exchanges in part before, but this time I framed the question very specifically to deal with the number of pupils rather than a collection of special needs because

there may be pupils that have a number of special needs, and I appreciate that when you're trying to collate statistics, there might be an element of double counting. That is why I framed my question very clearly this time in terms of how many pupils are there and how many pupils with special needs. Now, when you correlate the statistics in terms of the numbers that the hon. Member has given me, it looks like the number of pupils that have special needs in Gibraltar is in excess of 30%.

That seems an extremely high number, well out of sync with the UK. I mean, in the UK, 13% of pupils have special needs. So, can I ask the hon. Member to comment because is it either that the statistics, the answers that he's given me are not really per pupil, and therefore it is the correlation of statistics that is wrong, or is it that we have an issue in Gibraltar that we need to discuss?

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, they may have a whopping majority in quantity, but certainly not in quality. Madam Speaker, I totally understand the, the supplementary posed by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the concern that he has expressed. These figures have been provided to me in answer to the question, so I believe that they do refer to number of pupils.

The fact that it appears that we have over 30% of pupils identified with, as we now call them, supported educational needs seems to be a reality, but we must remember that this embraces a wide range of supported needs, and they could be what perhaps in layman's terms could be quite mild needs to the more specific needs requiring greater intervention and support. I am not sure that the percentages are directly comparable. I do not know how the UK works out their percentages, or works out how they define supported needs, and if the methodology is different, or if the way they collate the statistics is different, then the percentages clearly are not comparable.

It is no secret, and we have discussed this across the floor of this House many times in the past, that the number of children that are being deemed to have these needs has increased. I think it is a reflection of a number of things. The hon. Member will recall that we commissioned and published a report, I think it was last year, which looked at some of the possible causes of this, but it seems to me that it is a reflection certainly of the situation as the professionals that assess these needs have provided me.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Well, can I ask the hon. Member to perhaps have a further discussion, because if I just give him the concern that I have, so if there are 5,828 pupils, and there are 2,239 children with special needs, that is 38%. In the other statistic that he gave me; it would be even higher. Now, unless we are calculating things completely differently, it just does not seem to me that a simple gloss-over explanation would work.

I think we need to perhaps understand it a bit more because I appreciate the dichotomy in the way that these things are described, whether it is supported needs or special educational needs, but there are statistics available on what is at least in the UK Government site called special educational needs, which I think is the same thing, and it talks about there being, and there is a very clear chart that talks about an increase of special educational, supported educational needs, and a correlation between the student population growing, and the concern in England is that it is grown from 11% to 13%, but how can it be that in Gibraltar it is 40% of students with special educational needs, and if the hon. Member is going to take the position that I've been given this information, and it must be correct, well then, I think, does he agree with me that it then engages the discussion of why are our students requiring so many more needs than the UK average?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I do not think that my reply could be described as glossing over. I think I gave quite an extensive reply. Madam Speaker, I will certainly go back to the officials who prepared this answer in case they have not interpreted the question in the way that the hon. Member intended it to be interpreted, and I will write to him to clarify that, and I am very happy for him to remind me next week if he has not received a reply before, and as I said

earlier, because of the fact that we had seen an increase in these needs, we commissioned a report which we published last year which covered some of those points, and I will remind him of those in my reply to him when I've clarified this with the officials who prepared the answer.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, I would be grateful for that, because I was actually hoping that the hon. Member would get up and say there was a simpler explanation, perhaps, because from where I sit, I look at it and I think there's two possible explanations for this. Either the statistics that the hon. Member has given me in answer to my question are calculated on a completely different basis and there's an element of double counting, and if so, that would be a reasonable explanation. It wouldn't give me an accurate answer, so I would still ask him to provide me an accurate answer, but at least it would be one explanation.

The other possible explanation, which is that in Gibraltar, for some reason, our students need much more special educational needs, supported needs, than they do in England, well above the UK average by a significant number, that would give us higher concern, and that is why I repeat that, and I am sure the hon. Member agrees, does he agree, that if it were the second issue, it would be a matter of concern and it would be a matter that I am sure across the floor of the House we would agree would need special enquiry in Gibraltar, not just to understand the trend of the increase in special educational needs, but why these things are happening in a much more detailed way than the study that has been commissioned before.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, the increase in support of special needs is a matter of concern anyway, and this has been said publicly in this House and elsewhere and resulted in the report that was commissioned. I think, Madam Speaker, there is another third option as to the possibilities, is that our threshold for defining supported needs may be different to the UK, but we are speculating here, I have undertaken to go back to the officials to look at the data and to give a comprehensive reply to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q189/2025
Motorcycle driving test –
A2 licence for motorbikes between 125cc and 400cc

Clerk: Question 189, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, is it possible to undertake a motorcycle driving test in Gibraltar for an A2 licence for motorbikes between 125cc and 400cc?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, yes, it is.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Okay, I will be rushing down there afterwards with my 250cc. That is not the reason I asked for the question, but the reason is this, I will just explain to the hon. Member the dilemma which has been put to me, that exists.

There are different classifications of licences, from AM to A, and A is the sort of biggest type of motorbikes, A1 being the 50, what would normally be the 50cc, but it is up to 125cc. When you consult the, that is the licence category, so you can, and as I understand it, and with the A motorcycle licence, it is motorcycles that are above 600cc and that, in effect, the A2 licence ranges

from 125cc right through to 600cc. When you consult on the Government website, on the DLVA website, and indeed on the test vehicle site, the tests, it says, for A2 are only available for motorcycles with a cubic capacity of at least 400cc and an engine power, etc. So that suggests, I am told, that the issue arises in this way, that the way that it is described, you can get a test for an A2 licence if you have a motorbike between 400 and 600cc, because it says very clearly at least 400cc, leaving a lacuna of motorcycles that cannot be tested for A2 licences between 125 and 400. If the Minister is not aware of that lacuna, that has been put to me, has raised concerns from a number of people, can he please look into it?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I have the regulations in front of me now. It may be that it is a law that certainly I've inherited. I will need to look into this.

My officials tell me that it is possible to grant, to do a driving test for this, but if the hon. Member has raised concerns and I am not briefed on that detail, then certainly I will take it back and reply accordingly.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, and I would be grateful if he did that, because I am told that it is not only affecting motorcycle dealerships, it is also affecting people who are buying bikes, people who have engaged with the DLVA. I have not on a personal basis, I am just repeating the issue and raising the concerns, and therefore it would be very helpful if he agrees that the matter be looked into one way or the other, and it is either a misunderstanding or genuinely there is a correction to be made.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Madam Speaker, I am surprised if there is a big issue because when there are big issues, they normally come to me from members of the public and so on, and this is not something that has been identified to me. I think that yesterday in answer to questions from the Hon. Mr. Origo, there were references to the legislation which we inherited in relation to vehicle licencing, and I undertook to take a review. I have already today asked my officials to do a whole review of the licencing legislations, so apart from those points that were made yesterday and today, I am sure we will pick up anything else that is inconsistent, but I will clarify this particular point.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q190/2025
Bus service –
Extension of hours

Clerk: Question 190, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, are there plans to expand the bus service after 9pm on Sundays to Thursdays?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, not at this stage, although the bus service is under continuous review with the aim to improve it further.

180 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can I ask, not at this stage, why? Is it a cost issue or because the Government thinks that there does not need to be a bus service after 9pm on Sundays to Thursdays?

185 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** It is a bit of both, Madam Speaker. There would be a considerable cost, and we have to balance the benefits against the cost. The night service is not that heavily used, even at weekends, and therefore we fear that we might go into the whole cost of the exercise, and it would not be used sufficiently for the cost-benefit balance to be in the right direction.

190 We did do this over the Christmas and New Year period with considerable success, but that tends to be a time where people may be drinking more, may be more mobile at those times of the evening but even then, there was not such a high usage except on key days. Therefore, it is something that we are reviewing.

We are willing to consider it if we feel it is going to be tremendously beneficial. I would love to have it, absolutely love to have it, but we have to balance the cost against the benefits that we would derive.

195 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Member says it would be a considerable cost. How much would it cost?

200 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I could not give the specific figures because it would depend on which routes were open in the evening, how frequently they would go. This is an exercise in itself but considering that there would be a considerable cost in the overtime of drivers, it would be something that would be quite expensive. I have the figures, I do not recall them right now, of what it costs over the Christmas period, and it was considerable.

205 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So, an extension to provide a bus service after 9pm on Sundays to Thursdays has not actually been costed.

210 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** We have the ability to provide costs for every specific route and every specific driver, but we have to carry out an analysis, and I have said in my answer that we are reviewing the bus service as a whole, we have to carry out an analysis of which routes we could justify keeping on that late at night. Any cost which is not justified is a cost, as I am sure the hon. Member's opposite, who do not like us spending too much taxpayers' money, would question. Therefore, we have to analyse it completely before we take that decision.

215 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, I understand that, and of course it is all a value judgement exercise, and it is about value for money, but I was trying to enquire because the hon. Member said in his answer to my original supplementary, which is it is an issue not just of perhaps the service, the demand itself, but also it is about cost, considerable cost. So, I was trying to assess whether the Government has actually got a cost but it looks like, in fact, the Government has not done a costing of it, it is just making a judgement call, I guess, on the possibility that it would be expensive, and really doing it against that backdrop, because there is no specific cost.

225 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** That is not a logical way of describing it. We have to assess, first of all, the needs that the community has for that kind of service. We have to assess what uptake there would be.

230 We have to look at what routes we would want to present, and how frequently those routes would have to be worked. Therefore, until we have carried out that analysis, which I have said we are doing because we are reviewing the whole bus service, I cannot give him a cost, because it may be one bus every hour in one route, or it could be four buses an hour in every route and until we have that analysis, it would be disingenuous of me to just give a cost, just to pull a figure out of my pocket, in order to satisfy the question that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is asking. I

am not going to give a figure, we are analysing the whole bus service, and when the time comes, if we decide to go forward with an evening bus service, I am hoping that the Opposition will not question why we are incurring that cost.

235 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I really was not asking the hon. Member to pluck a figure from his pocket, just to satisfy me. I was trying to probe as to whether there was any assessment behind the considerable cost headline that he put out there, and the answer to that is clearly not, because there has not been a costing, and it is being judged against a review of the bus service, and that is fine. Can I ask, can he give us a bit more information on when he thinks that review of the bus
240 service will be concluded and is it looking at an extension of routes, sorry, of timings on every single of these routes, or is it just specific routes that might be more popular, and so on?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Speaker, not a direct supplementary, but I am happy to answer. We are looking at the whole of the bus service, including the possibility of evening buses, including the
245 introduction of new routes, and including the extension of some of the existing routes. It is a general exercise which will have its cost implications, which have to tie up with the possibility of an evening bus service, and therefore it would be too simplistic to just try and give a figure for that, because we have to look at the whole programme that we are looking into.

250 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q166/2025
Personal light electric transports/bicycles –
Accidents

255 **Clerk:** Question 166, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can the Government confirm how many accidents were reported in 2024 involving, (i) personal light electric transports, and (ii) bicycles?

260 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister of Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Royal Gibraltar Police that the number, of traffic incidents logged by them in the calendar year 2024, involving personal light electric transport and bicycles, are as
265 follows. Personal light electric transport, 14, bicycles, 13.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister whether he considers that we have done enough by way of adequately protecting these vulnerable road users in light of the statistics provided?
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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member will get to know when he is here for a bit longer that whenever I am asked am I doing enough, the answer is always going to be no, because I always want to do more. Having said that, we are very conscious of the need to increase safety for all road users, however they are using the roads, and hence our recently published
275 review of the STTPP, on which there are questions further down, so we continue constantly to review how we can improve safety on our roads.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, and I commend the Hon. Minister for striving towards always continuously improving, and that is admirable. If I may just take the supplementary down a bit

280 further, whilst it may not seem obvious, my understanding is that some of these bicycles, in particular e-bikes, can often be modified and reach quite high speeds. Looking at the statistics provided, my understanding is that when these vehicles get into accidents, they habitually crash into other road users such as cars or motorcycles.

285 Is it the Government's intention to mandate a requirement for these methods of transport to have insurances like other road users in Gibraltar?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I must add that, happily, none of the instances that the police have reported to me, according to them, resulted in any significant injury. Madam Speaker, we are looking at the question of insurance. It is not simple, but this is certainly being looked into.

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Hon. G Origo: Finally, Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon. Minister having confirmed that he is looking into the issue of insurances. By way of a separate point, many concerns or complaints have been raised on this side of the House, and we can see sometimes the same being reposted on social media, how some of these transport users, in particular the personal light electric transports, often what appears to be flouts some of the highway code rules. In particular, they cross red lights, jump from pedestrian to road and back into pedestrians.

295 This may or may not be some of the reasons why these accidents may be occurring. So, can I put to the Hon. Minister whether the Government has any plans for these types of transport users to carry out some kind of theory or practical exam so as to ensure that they are also aware of the highway code and therefore operate their vehicles correctly as do other road users?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, as with everything else, enforcement is important and the enforcement of these laws are down to the Royal Gibraltar Police, and I know for a fact that there are people who are fined for such infractions. Madam Speaker, we are actually in the process of preparing some guidelines which we want to publish for personal light electric transport users, and we are looking at the possibility of offering some kind of online training which would be more accessible. So yes, absolutely, we are looking at that.

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Hon. G Origo: And by way of final point, on that issue, is he saying that he is considering issuing some type of guidance test which will be chosen by the individuals to take on a voluntary basis, or is this going to be mandated for those people who are going to be using these personal electronic vehicles on a road?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, we have not taken a decision on that.

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Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q167/2025
Bicycle parking app –
Roll out

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Clerk: Question 167, the Hon. G Origo.

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Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can the Minister confirm when the bicycle parking app will be rolled out?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, there is no date as yet.

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Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister, is the app in the process of development or has that not even started?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, there have been instructions given and it is in the process of development. One of the reasons why it has not been developed yet is that we are adding more and more bicycle parking, and it is going to be out of the day very, very quickly, but they are working on it.

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Hon. G Origo: By way of final supplementary, on the point on the parking base, one issue that has been raised on this side is that it appears sometimes many drivers of these e-scooters, particularly the ones which are rented, are being used to leave them in these parking bays. I do not know if the Hon. Minister is aware, but sometimes these e-scooters have a central locking system. They're placed where the parking bicycle bays are and therefore prevents other bicycle users from being able to use those bays. Has this been raised with the Hon. Minister and if it has, is he considering a way on how to deal with this issue?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, again, it is not a logical supplementary, but I can answer that this point has not been raised with me. I am happy to discuss with the hon. Member, see if there is anything that I can take up, particularly with the provider of these scooters.

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Madam Speaker: The Hon. D J Bossino had a question.

Hon. D J Bossino: The development of the app, is that being done in-house or is it being farmed out to a private entity?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: At the moment it is being dealt with in-house.

Hon. D J Bossino: Given that the Hon. Minister prefaces his answer with the words at the moment, does that belie an intention on his Department's part to farm it out at some point in the future or is it something that is being considered?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: No, Madam Speaker, I was just stating the fact at this point in time it is being developed in-house.

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Hon. D J Bossino: The Minister will understand that, again, he qualifies his answer on that basis, which suggests that there is a possibility that in the future it may go private. Is that within the realms of possibilities as far as the decision-making process in respect to this particular app is concerned?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, there are several options open. It can be fully developed in-house by our Digital Services. Sometimes they have a lot of work, and some work is then given to a private entity that works with Digital Services and IT&LD.

At this point in time, we have not reached that step. I think we can complete it in-house, but if we can't, then we may have to engage somebody else if there are other priorities which may be greater than the bicycle parking app.

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Hon. D J Bossino: If I may, Madam Speaker, in the event that, as the Hon. Minister has explained, a decision is made that it has to be done on a private basis, can he advise whether this particular project would be going out to tender?

380 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, this is totally speculative.

Madam Speaker: Hypothetical question. If this happened, would that happen is a hypothetical question.

385 **Madam Speaker:** Any other supplementary? Next question.

Q168/2025

**Grand Parade Parking –
Accommodating nearby residents**

390 **Clerk:** Question 168, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Has the Government done anything to accommodate residents who live nearby and relied on the parking spaces at Grand Parade whilst resurfacing works have been ongoing?

395 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the resurfacing works at Grand Parade were carried out over a three-day period, commencing on 12 February and completed and released fully back for public use on the evening of 14 February. The actual resurfacing work took two days, with the repainting taking a further day to complete. It must be noted that just about half of the parking spaces were released back to the public a bit earlier, on Thursday 13 February, and the remaining spaces a day later.

400 We must acknowledge, Madam Speaker, that these types of works caused some inconvenience, but this was kept to an absolute minimum. In order to assist residents in the area further, all parking restrictions within Alameda Estate for cleaning purposes were suspended while the works at Grand Parade were ongoing.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, whilst I appreciate that these works were done very quickly, as stated by the Hon. Minister, I must note that whilst at the same time the resurfacing works were taking place, we also had the repairs to the cable car, as was noted yesterday, which also took a considerable amount of parking bays. We also learnt yesterday that at times, in peak periods, we also lose tens, if not hundreds, of parking space to tourists who do not adequately park in the correct spaces, and normally these are taken up zonal parking from the residents in the area. Would the Hon. Minister not have thought it appropriate to allow a concession of some kind to these residents to park in perhaps the next nearest zonal area whilst these works were ongoing? I say that in light of the fact that, as he is well aware, some people were affected by these parking restrictions, and it does have a cost effect on these persons who are unable to find parking in the region of £300. So, could I put to the Hon. Minister that perhaps when resurfacing works of this kind take place, that he does provide these kinds of concessions, in particular to the assistance of the residents?

410 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the concession that was requested was the non-implementation of parking restrictions within the whole of the area, so that people did not have to move their cars, and as I explained, it was over in a couple of days. I was in touch with residents, and they were in fact grateful that we had made that concession. The fact that the cable car did their works, private works, was a coincidence.

425 I think that overall, the residents of that estate are very grateful that we have resurfaced half of Grand Parade, they were calling out for this, and we have been able to deliver this.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

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Q169/2025
Devil's Tower Road –
Traffic congestion

Clerk: Question 169, the Hon. G Origo.

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Hon. G Origo: Given the recent traffic congestion experiences of earlier this month at Devil's Tower Road, what options are the Government considering in order to alleviate traffic flow issues in this area?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

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Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the option of opening the runway crossing is the main measure that provides for alleviating traffic in Devil's Tower Road when it becomes necessary. Because of the Kingsway Tunnel, this currently happens only in exceptional circumstances, such as the recent fire at the former Coviran premises.

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Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, and if I may, on the point the Hon. Minister makes with respect to the opening of the runway, my understanding is that this is MOD property. So, may I ask the Hon. Minister where he has been given any guarantees by the MOD that as and when we need to reopen the runway, that they will allow this to do so? Because as he well knows, the recent fire that took place and the accident also a few weeks ago that took place in the Kingsway Tunnel did cause a bit of a traffic havoc in Devil's Tower Road and it was not only until a couple of hours later that the runway was opened. So, does the Hon. Minister have any guarantees from the MOD that they would be able to open the runway more swiftly in order to alleviate these traffic concerns?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, the MOD has always cooperated when they have asked, they have been asked to make this available. So, I do not see that there is a problem. The specific detail of what happened on that day I am not aware of, but they have never indicated that they would not allow the traffic to resume.

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Madam Speaker: Yes, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you very much. It is Friday after all. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just following up from my hon. Friend's questioning, I think what we are asking on this side of the House is, Madam Speaker, will there be a delay in the future as there was this time? What was the delay attributable to?

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Madam Speaker: In terms of the question, will there be a delay in the future? I am not going to allow that, but I will give the hon. Member the opportunity to rephrase that.

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Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you. I was rephrasing it with a second limb anyway, so I will just stick to that. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The delay that took place was apparently two hours. Was that attributable to having to negotiate with the MOD, or was that a delay in decision-making of local services?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, the question was, what options is the Government considering in order to alleviate? I have said that the option is there. If the hon. Member had asked the question, why was there a delay, then I would have had the answer to that but I do not envisage any problem in the future, and that is what answers the question that I have been asked.

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Hon. C Sacarello: So, would the Hon. Minister, following perhaps a period of time to find out, be happy emailing us with the details as to the delay?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I would ask the hon. Member to email me to ask me the question and then I will reply as I always do.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Given, if I may, given that the question was posed on the basis of what options in the plural, are the Government considering in order to alleviate traffic flow in these particular circumstances, is there anything, from what I gather from what the Hon. Minister has said, is there anything beyond the runway access point which the Government is considering to address any potential events happening of this nature in the future? Are there other options?

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In effect, what the Minister is saying is that they are only considering that one option as a measure to alleviate traffic congestion. Is that the case?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I really do not understand the hon. Member's logic sometimes. We used to have Devil's Tower Road and the runway and no tunnel. Now we have Devil's Tower Road and the tunnel and the runway.

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So, what else does he want us to provide? A flyover, a helicopter shuttle service with a Chinook that can carry the cars. I do not really know what more the hon. Member would want us to do.

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We have the option, when there is an emergency such as the fire in Coviran, or an accident in the tunnel, to open the runway. How many alternative routes are we expected to have? I honestly think that it is a numb question really, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

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Q170/2025
Road markings –
Maintenance

Clerk: Question 170, the Hon. G Origo.

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Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can the Government confirm what entities are contracted for the regular maintenance of existing road markings in the following years, 2022, 2023 and 2024?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

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Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, there is an existing contract for all road markings in Gibraltar which is held by the paint shop Mar Company Ltd. All road markings in the years 2022, 2023 and 2024 were therefore carried out by the paint shop Mar Company Ltd.

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Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister what the process which was deployed in order to award these contracts? Were they put out to tender at the time? From my understanding and research, I have not seen any press releases or tender notices which were put available in recent years for these road markings.

525 So, I ask the Hon. Minister whether he is aware or not if this was publicly put out to tender, because I understand that the highway section of the Technical Services Department is the one whose responsibility is to engage in these contracting works. So, I just wanted to understand a bit of the process that was engaged to award this.

530 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Member would have to ask former Members of the Government opposite as the contract was entered into in 2009.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

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Q171-3/2025

STTP –

Net zero emissions goal; Review of recommendations; Entity that carried out the review and cost

Clerk: Question 171, the Hon. G Origo.

540 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, under the STTP, the Government announced an ambitious goal of net zero emissions for the transport sector. Does the Minister still consider this achievable?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister of Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

545 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 172 and 173.

Clerk: Question 172, the Hon. G Origo.

550 **Hon. G Origo:** Is the Government satisfied with the progress made under the STTP given the number of recommendations the review highlighted which still require analysis before implementation?

Clerk: Question 173, the Hon. G Origo.

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Hon. G Origo: Can the Government provide details on the recently reviewed STTP, who carried out this review and at what cost?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister of Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

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Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the Climate Change Act 2019 sets ambitious targets for emissions reductions, aligning Gibraltar's goals with global efforts to combat climate change. The Government remains fully committed to these targets, recognising that while achieving net zero emissions for the transport sector is by no means easy or easily attainable, it is a challenge we are determined to meet. To support this commitment, the Government has established a net zero delivery body to assist in driving and coordinating efforts towards meeting the goals.

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We continue to pursue this goal through measures that mirror the efforts of other forward-thinking communities across the globe, including promoting active travel such as walking and cycling, expanding renewable energy usage, improvements to public transport, rolling out electrical vehicle infrastructure and trialling alternative, more environmentally friendly fuels such as hydro-treated vegetable oil or HVO. The Government remains steadfast in doing its part,

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following best practises and adhering to the highest emissions standards, for example with our Euro 6 standard bus fleet and fully electric postal delivery service, ensuring that our policies contribute meaningfully to a sustainable and environmentally responsible future for Gibraltar.

The Government is satisfied with the progress made to date under the Sustainable Traffic, Transport and Parking Plan. The 2025 review highlights that significant strides have been achieved, while of course also acknowledging that more remains to be done. We remain fully committed to working through the targets set out in the plan and advancing further improvements.

The aim of the review was also to guide the next steps in our ongoing efforts to enhance Gibraltar's transport network. It is also important to note that the STTPP is a live, dynamic document, with objectives that evolve in response to technological advancements and changes in society's needs. Furthermore, the STTPP has a longer lifespan than the seven years that have elapsed, with its vision extending to 2027 and beyond, reflecting its role as a continuous, long-term strategy for sustainable transport development.

The review of the STTPP was conducted in-house by the Ministry of Transport's technical team, utilising existing resources and expertise within the department. As a result, the review was completed at no additional cost to Government. The technical team consists of officers qualified in environmental science, transport planning and construction project management.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker and if I may take my supplementaries in turn.

I will start with Question 171. May I put to the Hon. Minister, with respect to attaining zero emission targets in respect of the transport sector, I note that in recent answers to questions the answers provided served to highlight the vehicle registration in Gibraltar seems to be on the rise. If I may be critical, in this respect, the STTPP plan in its original form was aiming, as one of its objectives, to reduce the number of cars on the road. It appears to be that vehicle registration is still on the up.

How is it that if vehicle registrations are still on the rise, and they are largely compromised of petrol and or hybrid electric vehicles, that the Government proposes to reach this net zero target?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I have made very clear that it is a challenge and I think that the figures that I have provided in the past have shown that the increase in hybrid vehicles is considerable and that already reduces emissions and the electrical vehicles are still lagging behind, but the hon. Member will see some initiatives coming very soon, which are expected to boost that.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may now go to Question 172, which concerns the satisfaction of the Government with respect to the STTP. May I ask the Hon. Minister what has been done with respect to, and I narrow my question to, improvements on traffic issues at junctions and access to city centre improvements? These were two main themes and features of the original STTP of 2017.

Having read the 2025 review, I have gone to the sections which considered the original measures and the updates and what I can see that the person who has carried out this review has done a wonderful job of using a thesaurus to find synonyms to explain how nothing has been done in respect to these areas for the past eight years. I can give some examples, with respect to Coral Road, the measures that were proposed, the updaters, this requires a study.

With respect to Glacis and Bayside Road, this necessitates comprehensive study. With respect to reversal of traffic flow, examination of the impact needs to be carried out. Other synonyms such as exploration of feasibility necessitating further analysis for the study required exploration.

Can the Hon. Minister not agree with me that all these words, synonyms, serve to highlight that nothing has been done in respect of these two specific issues, which I drew at the start of my question? (**Hon. D J Bossino:** Here, here here.)

625 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I am surprised at the hon. Member's criticism of the diligent officers of the transport team who have prepared this plan. Obviously, other people saying here, here, I am disappointed that other Members of the Opposition clearly are disrespecting the hard work that has gone into this. I am sure that the vocabulary of these excellent officers does not require them to refer to a thesaurus in order to compile a report.

630 Madam Speaker, I have already said it is work in progress. We are satisfied with progress. We have to do more.

The report clearly sets out where we have moved forward and where we still have work to do. And I have nothing further to add. I am glad that the hon. Member has read it. I hope he will keep on reading it and see how he ticks off all these different things as we progress them over the coming years.

635 **Hon. G Origo:** Finally, Madam Speaker, if I may take us to Question 173, which concerns the recently reviewed STTPP and I think the Hon. Minister confirmed that this review was done in-house. My understanding was that the original STTPP in 2017 was done by a combination of in-house and expert consultation.

640 I believe a firm, Mott Macdonald, was used at the time for this review at a considerable cost to Government. Is it now the Hon. Minister saying that we have the necessary in-house experience in order to not require expert consultation in this area, given that the review was done in-house?

645 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Absolutely, yes, ma'am.

650 **Hon. G Origo:** Then if I may put to the Hon. Minister, why have we not used experts on this occasion? What was the rationale for having used them in the first instance given that he is of the opinion that we have the necessary expertise in-house, why not have done it in-house in the first place and not have this cost to Government?

655 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, very simply, the expertise of our team has increased, more people have come into it and they have developed, like good public officials develop, and they now have the ability, as they have shown in this and in other work that my ministry has published and will continue to publish, that they have the expertise and the ability to do it using local Gibraltarian resources and without having to pay large amounts to external agencies.

On occasion, when we do not have that expertise, we have to do it, and it is the correct thing to do but when we do have the expertise, we have a responsibility to use them and use taxpayers' money without having to dish out money to external agencies.

660 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q174/2025
Keightley Tunnel –
Car crash

665 **Clerk:** Question 174, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Given the recent accident involving a car crash with the concrete blocks in Keightley Tunnel, does the Government have any plans to make the pedestrian walkway safer?

670 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, there are medium-term plans to provide a raised walkway but the Government in addition is carrying out a review of the tunnel to see whether a quicker solution can be found.

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Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q175/2025

**Upper town escalator –
Maintenance persistent issues**

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Clerk: Question 175, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: What is the Government doing to resolve the persistent issues with the Upper Town Escalator?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the defects and their causes have been assessed, remedial works costed, and it is hoped to carry these out in the coming financial year if the House votes the necessary funds.

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Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may, and I am grateful to the Minister for his answers, that consideration of how to reintroduce this escalator is being considered, because my understanding is from complaints that have been raised to us is that this escalator has been in-operational for quite some time. If I may refer to the original press release issued in 2013 when this escalator was introduced, the press release stated that this escalator was to be operational at all times with a view to increase accessibility for tourists and residents in the area. In response to the concerns which relate to the reasons for breaking down the escalator, some of which concern vandalism and others water ingress, the then Hon. Minister Balban at the time and now bicycle mayor of Gibraltar commented that a long-term maintenance programme was going to be put in place.

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From my analysis, I have not seen whether this maintenance programme has already been developed, so can I ask the Hon. Minister whether such a maintenance plan has now been finalised?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, well, as I say with the proviso that I gave in my original answer, the repairs are carried out, then there will be a continual maintenance programme.

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Hon. G Origo: May I ask, Madam Speaker, has the Hon. Minister given consideration on how to deal with the water ingress issues which are affecting the escalator? My understanding is this escalator is out in the public air and is susceptible to rain on every other given occasion. So, is the Hon. Minister considering how to address this issue? Are we going to cover it with a roof or something of the kind?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, the water protection is one of the key features and there are sections of it, I believe, without having all the plans here in front of me, that they will be covered.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

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Q176/2025

**Apes den –
Rockfall**

Clerk: Question 176, the Hon. G Origo.

725 **Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government provide details on the results of the assessment carried out by the Technical Services following a rockfall by the road of Apes den?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, Environment and Climate Change.

730 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, the rockfall occurred on the 3rd of February 2025, following very heavy rain falling throughout the previous night and during the early afternoon. The rockfall was assessed by the Technical Services Department and was determined to be very minor in nature. The road was nevertheless closed as a precautionary measure for a period of 24 hours after which it was reopened.

735 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, whilst I respectfully understand that the Hon. Minister has pointed out that the rockfall on this occasion was a minor one and it is one which is habitually caused by excessive rainfall, can I ask, because I do not think he addressed the point in his answer, whether he has been able to address the issue and in effect done anything to prevent rockfalls of this nature happening in this area in particular, not least because it is a very popular tourist hotspot and it also houses many of our local macaques.

745 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the Technical Services Department did not consider there was a requirement to take any further action. In other areas there has been action taken, like the providing of wooden beams to stop the rocks or the stones. Usually what happens with the rains in the upper rock, it is not large rocks, it is smaller stones. Obviously, we need to prevent that happening, but that was not considered necessary by the Technical Services Department on this occasion.

750 **Hon. G Origo:** So can I take it from the Hon. Minister that he is satisfied that in respect of this particular road, Apes Den, that such a concern should not be one that is going to reoccur in the future, based on the answers he's given, that there are no further recommendations or necessary works to help alleviate the situation in the area?

755 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** The Technical Services team was satisfied that there was no immediate danger. That does not mean that there would never ever be a single stone falling off the side of the slope on that particular area, but the Technical Services team was satisfied.

760 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q177/2025

**Historical sites –
Interpretation panels**

765 **Clerk:** Question 177 of the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Can the Government confirm who has been contracted to install the 28 new interpretation panels at various historical sites, and at what cost?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, MAD Maintenance, in conjunction with Cubic Stone Publishers, have been contracted to design, print, manufacture and install the new interpretation panels. Of these, 20 have been funded by the Government at a total cost of £32,940 and eight have been funded by the Parasol Foundation at no cost to the taxpayer.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, and if I may, the Hon. Minister said that there is a contract in place with MAD Maintenance for the installation of these panels. Can I ask whether this contract also includes the maintenance of these panels or was it just for the installation?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: The installation, Madam Speaker, the maintenance would be done in-house.

Hon. G Origo: Can I ask the Hon. Minister whether he is aware if these interpretation panels can be found online and are they advertised anywhere else apart from the physical panels which are located around Gibraltar?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, they are accessible online on the Heritage website.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the Hon. Minister's confirmation. I did manage to come across these interpretation panels on the Heritage website but one thing that led to my confusion and after several attempts of trying to locate the correct version, it is my experience that having looked at the Heritage websites that these interpretation panels were predominantly reposted and restated in Spanish and not in English. I, on my third attempt and having looked at the website, found that there is a very small link halfway through the page which will take you to the interpretation panel in which it is reposted in English but the predominant message on the interpretation panels are reposted in Spanish.

So, may I ask the Hon. Minister why this is the case? Not least because, as he well stated, these panels are being reposted on the Gibraltar Government's website.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member clearly knew the answer to the question he asked and therefore I put it to him that he should not have asked it. He knew that they were available online. It appears from what he's telling me that the link may go first to the Spanish version rather than the English version.

That will be a glitch that can very easily be resolved and if that is the case, we will check it out and we will make sure that the link first goes to the English one. There is nothing wrong in having a version in Spanish. In fact, if we could have it in other languages, we would but obviously, there would be cost in translating but I will make sure that the link first goes to the English version.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may, the point in having asked my question wasn't trying to elucidate a trap for the Hon. Minister. From my experience, as I was looking at the website, it was difficult for me to having found the English version without having tried to enlarge the picture. So, the purpose of my question was trying to elucidate whether I was actually on the right website because it was not my understanding that this would have been something that the Hon. Minister would have supported having a Spanish translation to dominate the front cover of the page.

In my experience, I thought maybe I wasn't looking in the right area. It has been confirmed that I was in the right page, and I expect that the Hon. Minister will have time to consider and look

whether we can restate it in different languages and if I may urge that the first one is reposted in English.

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Madam Speaker: Did the Hon. Minister have anything to add?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I do not think that was a question. I thought it was an explanation as to why he had asked the question, which I accept.

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Madam Speaker: The Hon. C... The Hon R M Clinton, my initials today are not functioning!

Hon. R M Clinton: Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I may ask the Minister, he mentioned that eight of the panels have been sponsored by the Parasol Foundation. May I ask how that arose specifically because although I am aware of the Parasol Foundation providing monies for certain other projects, I was not aware that there was some kind of involvement in interpretation signs. I am just trying to understand why there is an involvement of the Parasol Foundation in this particular project.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, the Parasol Foundation does a lot of good work for Gibraltar and clearly has an interest in its heritage, given their contribution, for example, in this building. So therefore, I am not surprised that they have supported this. I could not tell the hon. Member exactly. I am just trying to see whether in my list... Ah, yes, I can tell which are funded by the Parasol Foundation. Yes, they have funded a number, of course, a number of them on the Upper Rock and considering that they funded the Mediterranean Steps and Charles V Wall, it was consistent and therefore, they felt that this actually went to almost as a follow-on from their original sponsorship of those projects.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, I am sorry for not having picked up on this earlier. Can I just, by way of clarification, ask the Hon. Minister whether this project was put up to tender? If so, how many applicants were there?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I do not have that information here. I believe it went through the quote system.

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Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q178/2025

Gibraltar Bus Company Drivers Working Group – Selection of members

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Clerk: Question 178, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Can the Government confirm how the members of the Gibraltar Bus Company Drivers Working Group were selected?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister of Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the group members were selected by the drivers themselves who approached the Ministry and Gibraltar Bus Company Limited Management as they wanted to address various

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issues encountered and wanted to find solutions. General meetings of all the drivers will also be held regularly to ensure all views are expressed and taken into account.

870 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister how many members form part of this working group?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: The extended working group, which is all the drivers, is all the drivers. I think we're talking about 50 or so... The group that approached management to set up the more intimate working group, which will represent the others, I believe from my attendance at their
875 first meeting was seven or eight, but I am working from memory.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may, I am grateful that the Hon. Minister as confirmed that the members of the group were selected by the employees of the Bus Company because concerns were raised on this side of the House that perhaps the members of the working group were not
880 very representative across the board but I suppose I have the Hon. Minister's assurances that they had selected the Members themselves. So, this point must have been dealt with.

But we have a separate point to understand that once the working group is designated to look at how to improve the conditions for the bus drivers themselves, can I ask the Hon. Minister how the working group is reconciling the interests of the drivers and also that of public service users,
885 who I think also should be informed and part of this conversation?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, we have an excellent group of drivers who are very committed to the public service. Clearly, when you have so many, there may be one or two that perhaps are not up to the standard. I am not referring to any specific cases. They are all very
890 responsible. We have some very good reports on the drivers. They are looking like any other employee would be looking at their own conditions and it is in our interest to improve the conditions because if you have good working conditions and the staff is happy, clearly the service they are going to provide is better. I do not think there is a conflict between the two.

895 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q179/2025

Dogs –

Registration statistics as at 31st December 2024

900 **Clerk:** Question 179, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: How many registered dogs were there in Gibraltar as at the 31st of December 2024?

905 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, the number of registered dogs as at 31st December 2024 was 4,580.

910 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister my understanding and he may correct me if I am wrong, is that dog owners in Gibraltar are required to register their dogs when they acquire them. Can I put to the Hon. Minister, how is the Government ensuring that all new dog owners are complying with this mandatory licencing requirements?

915 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Yes, Madam Speaker, by regular, what we call dog patrols, where dog owners who are seen walking dogs are asked to provide their information and they are checked. In cases where it is found that the dogs are not regularised, then action will be taken. Normally, it is the Environmental Protection and Research Unit and sometimes it is the Environmental Agency, there are patrols who check that.

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Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister, how often these checks are carried out? From my research, I could see that one instance in 2022 with 149 checks were carried out, 15 fines were issued, representing a 10% non-registration.

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I think I have answered a question regarding the number of patrols in the not-too-distant past. I should ask the hon. Member to check Hansard. It is done on a regular basis.

Hon. G Origo: Can I ask the Hon. Minister, whether he is happy that this system is adequately working to regulate in this area? As I understand, many concerns have been raised in the past that many seem not to be complying with these licencing requirements and then what happens is that this then renders the DNA sampling mechanism that we have futile because in one hand, we have people who are not registering their dogs and then when their dogs commit dog fouling, they are unable to be fined because they are not in the register.

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935 How is this fair for those persons who then go and register the dogs? And on the unfortunate occasion where the dog does commit some dog fouling, they get fined for having complied with the rules.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: I am not taking that, Madam Speaker, as an implication that people should try and avoid the system. Madam Speaker, the law is there. People are required to do it.

940 We expect people to be law-abiding. If they are not law-abiding, the normal process is that you carry out checks and if you are caught, then you are fined or warned depending on the circumstances of the case. The checks are carried out on a regular basis and I wish everybody would just go ahead and register them regularly, but what we can do is we legislate, and the enforcers enforce.

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Hon. G Origo: By way of a final supplementary point, may I ask you, Hon. Minister, whether the Government is considering any other measures other than these spot checks?

950 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, it is very difficult to determine what else could be done in the same way that if you do not renew your MOT, for example, you may or may not be caught, although we have improved that actually tremendously, but it is very difficult in the case of dogs to ensure. At the moment, the method that we are using is the one that I have explained.

955 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may, following on that point with the comparison to the MOT, in that instance, for example, if I do not renew my MOT, I will not be able to get private insurance for my vehicle. One would prevent me from doing the other, which would lead to them having no insurance and committing further infractions. Perhaps one way of looking at this is introducing a mechanism where if registered owners go to, for example, the RSPCA, that one of the things that they do is check if the dog is registered or not.

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Member is referring to the Gibraltar Veterinary Clinic, which used to house the RSPCA, and they have a database, so it could be checked against them, but I would have to find the dog and go and ask them whether that particular dog is registered. It is not my job to do that or the hon. Member's job to do that. We have the enforcers who do that and go out on regular patrols and challenge and will find a repeated offender could

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well have sanctions which would be higher or could well perhaps not be allowed to register the dog again. I mean, there are all these different things, but the hon. Member's main thrust of the question is how do we determine whether a particular dog is registered? The answer is not by asking the dog, but by asking the person who has control of the dog at that particular time. It could be that there have been complaints from other laws on noise of barking dogs, and then if the Environmental Agency is required to attend at premises, then as a corollary of that, they would ask for the dog's registration, and then that could also be proceeded with. So, there are a range of possibilities.

Madam Speaker: Next question, we have had five.

Q180/2025

**Wastewater treatment plant –
Negotiation with preferred bidder**

Clerk: Question 180, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Can the Government provide an update on the negotiation with the preferred bidder for the construction of the Wastewater Treatment Plant?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister of Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, discussions and assessments are ongoing with the preferred bidder for the construction of the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, and if I may refer to the Hon. Minister, a few last year, if my memory serves me correctly, I note I put a similar question to the Hon. Minister in which he confirmed that an advanced work contract was being developed and should be coming out in the coming months. It is now two years since this company was designated the preferred bidder, and eight months since the Hon. Minister gave his last reply. Can I ask the Hon. Minister how far he thinks we are from concluding the negotiations?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, negotiations are very complex, as I have said here before. I have to keep a certain distance from this because it is a tender process, and the discussions are being led by the tender board and I am not part of the tender board.

I am told when I have asked for an update that they are sorting out just a few technical details in order to be able to proceed but I am not involved in the detailed negotiations, and it would not be correct for me to be involved in the detailed negotiations because it is an independent tender board.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, may I put to the Hon. Minister, would he not agree with me that it is somewhat difficult to convince members of the public to go green, to recycle, to reduce waste, protect the environment, when on actual fact the Government, and critically if I may, is not leading by example, not least because we continue to pump raw sewage in our oceans and we have been in a negotiation stage where they prefer a bidder for the better part of two years. Can I put it in those terms to the Hon. Minister whether he can do everything in his power to try and expedite the negotiation process, not least because then we are trying on the one hand to convince the public to go more green, but yet on its behalf, it is not doing everything it can to comply with its obligations.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I do not agree with the first part of the hon. Member's statement and his assessment of that situation. As for the second part, absolutely, I am doing everything in my power to urge a conclusion by the tender board of the discussions.

1020 **Hon. G Origo:** If I may finally, is the Hon. Minister able to disclose part of the issues which are holding up this negotiation, because I know that there has been some time in which this preferred bidder has been engaged in the negotiation process. Is it a matter of costing or is it related to more technical issues with respect to the construction of the plants, for instance?

1025 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, in very broad terms, there are commercial and technical issues under discussion, but as I have said, I am not involved in the discussions it is being dealt with by the independent tender board. If I were involved directly, I would be criticised by the Members opposite for interfering with an independent tender.

1030 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q181/2025
Northern Morocco/Tangier Chamber of Commerce –
Meetings scheduled

1035 **Clerk:** Question 181, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can the Minister confirm whether any further meetings have been scheduled with both the Northern Morocco's and Tangier's Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services, together with the details of the possible commercial links which were discussed?

1040 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, I will start with my prepared answer, but as I have just come back from Morocco, I am going to add one or two things that are, very recent. The contacts resulted in a delegation from the Ministry of Tourism attending a travel trade fair in Tetouan in December last year. Contacts continue via my office and that of the Gibraltar-Morocco Business Association, with which we work very closely.

1045 Several initiatives are also under discussion, all of which carry the support of my department. Madam Speaker, I can say that apart from the work that we have done over the last couple of days, or the beginning of this week, which were directly related to academic links between the Gibraltar University and the university base at Tetouan, there are a number of other initiatives going forward, and there are meetings being set up with the directors of Tangier Med, which as we know, is that large port just across the strait, and other enquiries from businesses in Gibraltar that are being channelled through my office to continue contacts with different entities in Morocco.

1055 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may ask the Hon. Minister, by way of supplementary, he commented that they are looking at commercial links, which in answers that he gave, concerned educational commercial links. Having referred to some of the press releases, I noticed that some of the discussions with these groups were considering and reminiscing about the days in which closer links were had in the past, including one which involves daily ferries and regular trips. May I ask the Hon. Minister whether it is in the Government's plans to introduce daily ferries to Morocco or Tangier, as was envisaged in these discussions?

1065 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, this subject was dealt with at length by the Chief Minister at a recent meeting of the House. I have nothing further to add on that.

1070 **Hon. D J Bossino:** If I may, the Hon. Minister refers to a number of businesses, as I understood it, which have approached, I think he used the word channelling these requests. Can he give us some insight as to the nature of those businesses that are approaching his department for this particular purpose and I hope that the question is logical enough for the Hon. Member to answer.

1075 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I congratulate the Member opposite for the logical question that he has asked, and I am, very happy to attempt to answer it. Madam Speaker, clearly, I have to answer in very broad terms. I cannot discuss anything that might in any way indicate the commercial nature.

1080 They are related to transport, they are related to goods, they are related to establishing businesses on both sides of the straits. I do not think I should go any further because they are commercially sensitive, but because the hon. Member has been so healthfully logical, I am happy to give him more detail behind your Chair.

1085 **Hon. D J Bossino:** May I also ask, piques my curiosity and interest, because the Hon. Minister in his response made a reference to the most recent visit to Morocco, which was linked to, in fact, I think that was the cause in his absence in the earlier part of this particular meeting of the House, in relation to the University of Tetouan. Can I ask why he was accompanied by the Minister for Housing, in respect to which I do not see any immediate relevance? Oh, she is the Minister for the University, is that the case?

Okay, I've had the answer from my hon. Colleague. Clearly, there was no logic in that question.

1090 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** For the purpose of Hansard, the hon. Member should note that the Hon. Patricia Orfila is also Minister for the University of Gibraltar and was critical in being present during that visit. The hon. Member may, in fact, wish to ask in a future session of Parliament for a list of the people I met that is already being compiled, and I look forward to reading it in the Chamber.

1095 **Madam Speaker:** The Hon. G Origo have a question.

1100 **Hon. G Origo:** Grateful, Madam Speaker, and I am sorry, I may have missed it when the Hon. Minister gave his first answer. Part of my question asks whether any further meetings have been scheduled. I do not know whether, in his answer, the Hon. Minister confirmed whether any dates are planned in the future, or are these further meetings going to be carried out on an ad hoc basis?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: There is no set date. The Muslim community is now going into Ramadan, so obviously it will not be within the next month, but sometime after that.

1105 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q182/2025
Vocational/BTEC courses –
Breakdown of costs

1110 **Clerk:** Question 182, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide a detailed breakdown showing how much has been paid to whom in respect of all costs incurred in this current academic year related to the delivery

1115 and provision of vocational and or BTEC courses for students registered at Bayside School, Westside School or Gibraltar College?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

1120 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, the information is provided in the schedule that I have handed over. The hon. Member should note that this refers only to those vocational courses that are run by external providers, as costs for the other courses in all three of our secondaries are embedded in the running costs of these institutions.

1125 **Madam Speaker:** All right, we'll move on to the next question and revert to the schedule in due course.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 182

Academic year 2004-2025 (September 24 to date)

		Music Instructor	PT Instructor	CVQ BTEC Performance fees	Equipment
Gibraltar Academy of Music and Performing Arts	Full time Tutor for BTEC Music Performance Sept 24	£2,558.00	£324.00	£2,520.00	-
Gibraltar Academy of Music and Performing Arts	Full time Tutor for BTEC Music Performance Oct 24	£2,558.00	£594.00	-	-
Gibraltar Academy of Music and Performing Arts	Full time Tutor for BTEC Music Performance Nov 24	£2,558.00	£594.00	-	-
Gibraltar Academy of Music and Performing Arts	Full time Tutor for BTEC Music Performance Dec 24	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar Academy of Music and Performing Arts	Full time Tutor for BTEC Music Performance Jan 25	-	-	-	-
Gibraltar Academy of Music and Performing Arts	Full time Tutor for BTEC Music Performance Feb 25	-	-	-	-

Mayfair on Main	Vocational Hair & Beauty Course Sept 24	£ 2,914.07	Monthly course fee
Mayfair on Main	Vocational Hair & Beauty Course Oct 24	£ 2,914.07	Monthly course fee
Mayfair on Main	Supply of equipment for vocational courses Oct 24	£ 2,196.82	This is paid annually one off fee
Mayfair on Main	Vocational Hair & Beauty Course Nov 24	£ 2,914.07	Monthly course fee
Mayfair on Main	Vocational Hair & Beauty Course Dec 24	£ 2,914.07	Monthly course fee
Mayfair on Main	Vocational Hair & Beauty Course Jan 25	£ 2,914.07	Monthly course fee
Mayfair on Main	Vocational Hair & Beauty Course Feb 25	£ -	to be processed
Mayfair on Main	Vocational Hair & Beauty Course Mar 25	£ -	not received

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Q183/2025
British Dyslexia Association –
Annual reviews/inspection of schools

Clerk: Question 183, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1135 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Given Government's commitment to conduct annual reviews or inspections of schools by the British Dyslexia Association, why have none been carried out in the last three academic years?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

1140 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, the schools do not apply the British Dyslexia Association reviews or inspections as they follow the methodology of the British Psychological Society under the guidance of our educational psychologists.

1145 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I believe there was an agreement and understanding that a selection of schools would be sort of have a review, perhaps an inspection is a bit too strong a word on selective schools on an annual basis that was arranged with the British Gibraltar branch or group in respect to dyslexia.

1150 I have asked a previous question which was converted to written answer were Minister said that none had been carried out in the last three academic years. Maybe I have got some of my details wrong.

Has any type of review or inspection by either the British Dyslexia Association or by other groups that the Minister is referring to now, have those been carried out in the last three years or has nothing at all been actively happening in the last three years?

1155 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I gave answers yesterday in relation to how many tests have been done and so on. I answered to some of the questions that ran over from the January session. Absolutely, what is happening now is that thanks to the representations of the Gibraltar Dyslexia Association, dyslexia assessments are now down standard, and they are embedded within the work of the educational psychologists.

1160 The approach of the British Psychological Society, which is a professional body, is slightly different to the British Dyslexia Association and the psychologists have chosen to carry out assessments based on the recommendations of the society. But I can assure the hon. Member that dyslexia assessment and dealing with dyslexia is totally embedded in our schools under the supervision of the educational psychologists.

1165 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I am extremely grateful for that explanation. Yes, and it is good news to hear. As the Minister has been saying, these sort of testing's and so on have been carried out.

1170 Despite all that good work being done, which I take is being done in-house, so we call it locally by local based psychologists, educational experts and so on, has there been any input, any reviews, any sort of inspections, if you want to use again that word, carried out by a body like from the United Kingdom coming into Gibraltar to help or to assist or even guide those who are conducting all these schools here locally? Has anything of that happened in the last three years?

1175 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** I do not believe specifically, but I think that once again, we have developed local expertise. We have UK trained educational psychologists who are very competent. Teachers are very aware of the issues regarding dyslexia and how to deal with dyslexia and are very aware as to how to diagnose dyslexia, how to deal and support children with dyslexia and they are UK trained. I believe that we are in a good place in relation to dyslexia.

1180 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, and may I perhaps, I can finish off with this. I know that in schools, we have got local schools have in-services and as and when the Director of Education and so on, as and when she feels certain areas need to be honed upon or updated and so on to ensure the teachers are as up to date as possible, then the subject of dyslexia is brought in. Has there been an element as well of those local, let us say the educational advisors and so on, or the educational psychologists, have they been able to have access to attend courses in the United Kingdom so that

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they are as up to date as possible with the ever-developing problem of dyslexia, which we tend to be equally sharing with the United Kingdom?

1190 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, if any of the educational psychologists or any of the teachers feel that there is a course that they could benefit from, then that facility would be made. I do not recall any specific courses in the last couple of years, I may be wrong, but certainly if it were felt that it would be useful and a good way of spending taxpayers' money, then those courses would be supported.

1195 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q184/2025
Safety helmets –
Compulsory use for the protection of children

1200 **Clerk:** Question 184, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Will Government consider legislating for the compulsory use of safety helmets to ensure the protection of children when riding their bicycles on our roads?

1205 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, legislation to that effect is being drafted and is at an advanced stage.

1210 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for that reply and I am very happy to hear that legislation for the compulsory use, I assume, of helmets is being drafted and is at an advanced stage. Could the Minister please confirm if that is just for children or if that is for adults as well?

1215 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I answered the question which related to the protection of children. So that is my answer. Madam Speaker, will Governments consider legislating for the use of safety helmets to ensure the protection of children when riding their bicycles and I have said, we are drafting legislation to that effect. So clearly, we are talking about children.

1220 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I won't pursue that line of questioning despite a very basic question. So, the reason I brought this up is following several incidents that have been reported to me, and I have also experienced ourselves with youngsters on the roads and we have seen increasing numbers of them in groups driving around rather recklessly and without helmets.

1225 So, I did a little bit of research, including a report from Headway, which has been peer reviewed by the British Medical Association, Association of Paediatric Emergency Medicine, etc., in which it states that a cycle helmet can reduce the risk of serious head injury by almost 70% and fatal head injury by 65%. Would the Minister be able to confirm, just for the record, if the intended legislation, which is at an advanced stage, is for the compulsory use for children up to the age of
1230 18?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I am glad to see that the hon. Member supports this initiative. It is controversial, but I can say that I am discussing this with the Sustainable Transport Action Group. In fact, I was due to have a meeting with them today.

1235 It depends on what time we finish here, whether I will have, or we postpone it. At the moment, we're looking at 16 as the age, but this is subject to discussion, which is why we have not quite published it yet.

1240 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you very much for that extra information. With regards to your comment on controversial, I see it as no more controversial than wearing seatbelts was back in the day and skiing helmets as well. Nowadays, everyone wears ski helmets to ski before no one ever did.

1245 Similarly, even when legislation for seatbelts was imposed in Spain before Gibraltar, people used to reach the border and take their seatbelts off to say they were very uncomfortable, but now people wear them as a matter of course. So surely this is just a matter of shifting culture, shifting approach, and hopefully in time the right decisions would be made. Would the Hon. Minister agree with me that that is the right direction of travel to take?

1250 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I have said that we are drafting legislation. We are discussing it with the group. The fact that it is controversial is a fact.

It does not mean that I believe that it is rightly controversial or not. I am just saying that it is a subject. The whole question of bicycle helmets is controversial, but nevertheless, we are working in that direction.

1255 **Madam Speaker:** The Hon. R M Clinton had a question.

1260 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Sorry. Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Minister may recall that his predecessor who is now the erstwhile mayor of bicycling in Gibraltar, or cycling, I do not know what the correct term is, was actually against the introduction of helmets on bicycles on the basis that it would discourage cycling.

Now, personally, I congratulate the Minister that he is drafting legislation. I think it probably is a common-sense approach but can I ask the Minister, given his predecessor's determination that it was contrary to the promotion of cycling, what is it that has prompted the Minister's department to draft this legislation?

1265 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I cannot answer for what the department did in my predecessor's time. This has been assessed in discussion with the Sustainable Transport Action Group, and this is the direction in which the Government is now proceeding.

1270 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q185/2025

Car parks and Public areas – Assessing performance of contracted third parties

1275 **Clerk:** Question 185, the Hon. C Sacarello.

1280 **Hon. C Sacarello:** What value does the Government place on the monitoring, reviewing, and assessing the performance of the third parties it has contracted with on matters directly affecting the public, such as: car parks; the cleaning of public areas; including the cemetery; schools' maintenance; and the like? Could the Hon. Minister detail this Government's policy on performance monitoring in this area?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment, and Climate Change.

1285 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, a great deal. There is constant and continuous review of performance in relation to all contracted services. In some cases, such as cleansing and planted areas, there is an officer whose specific role is the monitoring of those contracts.

1290 In other cases, the monitoring is done by departmental officials through on-site visits, meetings, etc. The frequency of these meetings varies and can be weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, or at greater intervals depending on the service and the performance.

1295 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, thank you to the Minister for that reply. Could the Minister confirm if each and every contract carries with it KPIs, Key Performance Indicators, that govern their performance over the period?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Many contracts do. It would not be applicable to all contracts. Some contracts do not, but many of them do.

1300 Certainly, whether there are KPIs specifically listed, there will be schedules which set out very clearly the duties and responsibilities of the contractors, and those are monitored.

1305 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you for that. Finally, just one question on the officers. I think you referred to them as the officers to monitor. How many monitoring officers are there, and are there different ones for different sectors?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I specifically mentioned two. We have a cleansing superintendent who monitors the cleaning contracts, and we have an officer who is a Planted Areas Officer who monitors the planted areas, the horticultural contracts. The other contracts are monitored by the desk officers in those particular areas in different departments.

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Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q186/2025
Senegal programme –
Nature of the quote

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Clerk: Question 186, the Hon. R M Clinton.

1320 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Madam Speaker, can the Government advise further to its Press Release 71 of 2025, what is the nature of the quote Senegal programme as regards the recycling of textiles?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

1325 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, the Senegal programme is managed through the Eco Park. The textiles are received and sorted, and what is not acceptable for recycling is turned into rags for cleaning slops in ships and used in garages. Recyclable textiles, once sanitised and disinfected, are sent to Senegal for reuse.

1330 Upon arrival, approximately 50% of the textiles are given to local shops and businesses to resell. This is part of an outreach programme to help families generate business and become self-sustainable and above the poverty line. The remaining 50% of the textiles are given directly to charities for those who cannot afford to clothe themselves.

The Eco Park closely monitors the whole process and receives documentary confirmation of the end use of the textiles.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, grateful to the Minister for his answer. It certainly sounds like an interesting programme. I have seen documentaries about how textiles are recycled. They have actual, depending on the nature, whether the garment can actually be reused. The buttons are separated, and obviously there is use made of the textiles, which obviously we would not like to see ending up in landfill sites because these still have a continuing use but can I ask the Minister, in terms of logistics, how will this get to Senegal?

I mean, will there be a regular shipment every month, every so many months? Is there an intention, is the Minister aware as to whether any statistics will be made available in terms of, I do not know how this is measured in terms of volume or tonnage of textiles? It would be interesting from an ecological point of view just to see how Gibraltar is progressing in terms of textile recycling.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, this would go by ship to Senegal and yes, we would be requesting information and statistics.

Hon. R M Clinton: One last question, Madam Speaker, if I may. In terms of the cost of the shipment, the programme, this will be met by Eco Park itself. Will there be any cost to the Government?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Madam Speaker, there will be a cost as there is for every waste stream. There is a cost depending on tonnage.

Hon. R M Clinton: Sorry, Madam Speaker, would the Minister be able to share with the House an approximation of what that cost is expected to be? I imagine there will be a contract.

There will obviously be an arrangement between Eco Park and Senegal. The Government, I guess, will have a contract with Eco Park. Is that correct and can the Minister give some indication of what the incremental cost might be per tonne?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, there will be contracts. There may already be between the Eco Park and the Government in order to deal with these textiles. I would need to have notice of the cost.

Madam Speaker: All right, before we proceed on to the next questioner, let us take any supplementaries to Question 182.

Hon. E J Reyes: I am very grateful, Madam Speaker. I do have a couple of minor queries that I hope will have very logical answers. In the Minister's schedule, when it comes in respect of the cost for the vocational hair and beauty course, he listed there on the two last lines, in respect of the month of February, there is sort of a dash that says to be processed. I take it that that is because it is a sort of, let us call it the treasury system and the payment has been made and therefore the Minister has not listed there and then in respect of the March, we are not receiving, yes, because the March, March in itself proper does not start until tomorrow. Can I start with that first part there, just a confirmation that it is in the system and therefore that is why the Minister has not chosen to give us a figure until the actual payment is made.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes, Madam Speaker. This is the February invoice. It will have been received, and it will be in the system, but the money has not gone out yet, which is why there is no sum there and, there would not have been an invoice for March yet.

Hon. E J Reyes: Yes, Madam Speaker, I got that. Therefore, following exactly that same logic, when it comes to the Gibraltar Academy of Music and Performing Arts, when we come to September, October, November, I even see the same payment is made there monthly, yet

1385 December 24, January 25, February 25, all we have is a dash. So, there is no explanation useful like the one given at the bottom, where it says to be processed or not received. It just dashes there and on the extreme right-hand side, in respect of equipment, again, it is just a dash.

Whereas for the hair, we saw that October 24, there was a payment made for equipment with even a helpful note. This is paid annually on a one-off fee.

1390 So why is there a dash and no other explanations? I know the Minister sort of relied on his civil servants to provide the information, but he could have been a bit more insistent because it does not quite complete the picture of what we asked for when we gave notice of questions.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, no equipment is paid. So therefore, we could even do without that column.

1395 I believe the answer may be, subject to my confirming it, that the invoices are presented in a quarterly basis, which is why there may be three months missing. So, if it is quarterly basis, then the first three months of the academic year, September, October, November, will have come through but the rest of the academic year, it may not have come through yet. I would have to confirm that, but that seems to me the likely explanation.

Hon. E J Reyes: Yes, I am grateful. We will keep it as we accept that it is a likely explanation, but we will keep on pressing the Minister. Maybe one day he does have the full explanation.

1405 The breakdown clarifies, in respect of the music performance, it clarifies the payment made for the music instructor PT, one takes to be a part-time instructor. But the CVQ BTEC performance fees, can I get a clarification? Is that in respect of the registration, because it happens in the month of September, is that in respect of the registration of the student, or is it because a performance has taken place, and therefore we pay fees, like one pays fees for performing rights and so on.

1410 I may have a very vivid imagination, but I am not sure whether it is in respect of performance rights that one has to pay for registration of students.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Member knows that he alluded to our friendship yesterday, that he does not have to keep on pressing me for answers. I normally will give him the answers, but he can keep on reminding me that I accept, but pressing is no, there is no need for that. It is a perfectly legitimate question, which will have a perfectly logical explanation. My word of the day, logical.

Madam Speaker, those are in fact registration fees, for the course, so that explains that particular entry.

1420 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, I do not want to waste any more time. I am very grateful for those answers, and I think we have clarified as much as we can today. Just a small comment to ask, Minister.

1425 Please do not delete that column of equipment, because although there is nothing there, if one looks in the past, in the previous year, there have been expenses. In fact, it follows suit, and verifies what the Minister said, that was a one-off purchase, which we hope would have a good lifespan, but it could well happen, you know, it has happened with all musical equipment, and so there may be some breaks and so on. So therefore, I would rather have a column, that instead of a dash, the Treasury could have filled in the figure zero, and therefore it keeps a better and accurate record.

1430 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the question is, can we keep the column? The answer is yes, ma'am.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1435

Q187-188/2025

Upper Rock –

Entities receiving a proportion of entrance fees; Fee increase date

Clerk: Question 187, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1440 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Please provide a full list of the entities, and or individuals that receive, or will receive a proportion of the entrance fees, to the Upper Rock, to include in respect of which sites, and details of the amounts.

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

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Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 188.

Clerk: Question 188, the Hon. D J Bossino.

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Hon. D J Bossino: When is it expected that the fees for the Nature Reserve will increase?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

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Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes): Madam Speaker, in relation to Question 187, as there are active discussions, with several of these entities, it would not be appropriate, to provide details here at this stage.

In answer to Question 188, on the 1st of April.

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Hon. D J Bossino: I must say that I am slightly disappointed, with the answer, because the Hon. Minister, did provide some information, in his interview to GBC, when the World War II tunnel, recently refurbished site, was opened on the 4th of February. When he said that the Government pays, I mean, he rarely does this, so he must have been thinking, as he was speaking, I mean, I think he was getting a bit nervous, proportion of the Upper Rocks entrance fees, to, to, and then he goes off on a tangent as a contractual fee. So, which then, and then he goes on to say, which actually means, it is not a taxpayer's money, it is a tourist money, that is coming into Gibraltar and being used to improve our facilities.

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What is preventing him at this stage? He says that they are in negotiations, but can I ask him, at what stage does he think he will be in a position to provide, what will be very important information, to this House and to the public, where he seemed poised, to provide this information, to the general public in the GBC interview, but then obviously resisted the temptation.

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, poised, because it is information, that I will very happily, put into the public domain, at the correct time. The hon. Member will realise, that if we are talking to a number of entities, who replied to a call for expression of interest, and dealing with the details as to how we are engaging them, it would not be in anybody's interest, least alone the public interest, for us to publicly say, what we are discussing, with each different entity, because they're going to compare and contrast and therefore, once the negotiations are completed, we will very happily, share that information.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Perhaps the Minister can assist. The Hon. Minister refers to the expressions of interest. Is he referring to the expressions of interest, which again was a subject of some controversy, in respect of the upper rock?

So, in other words, is the answer to this question dependent on when the Hon. Minister will make an announcement, as to the successful party, as respects to that particular EOI?

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes.

Hon. D J Bossino: However, this is something that, perhaps requires a bit more time, and maybe a discussion with him.

1490 The way I understood, the way he had answered the question, was that for example, in respect of either the World War II tunnels, or indeed the Moorish Castle, were yesterday he said, that that was the beneficiary, of private investment, and not taxpayers' money. Is it the case that these, and these are being run, presumably, well they are being run, we know for a fact, by different companies. One is Wright Tech Limited, for example, and the other one is, I cannot remember the name at the moment, well the Gibraltar Museum, and then Fortress Attractions, and the rest of it.

1495 Is it the case that these entities, is that the expectation, does not need to tell me, what they will receive, but is it the case, and that must be a logical conclusion that one arrives at from reading his full interview, is it the case, that they will be expecting to receive a proportion of the nature reserve entrance fees in order to make good their investments, in respect of these sites?

1500 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Well Speaker, I really think that, if I were to answer that question, because it is not as simple as it has been put, I would be crossing the barrier between being safe in commercial negotiations and being unsafe, so therefore Madam Speaker, I will not provide further information, of these particular negotiations.

Hon. D J Bossino: I hear what the Minister, is saying, and I understand, why one should not, need not push further, and I think he has said, in respect of the EOI, that all the full details, will come through, once that is announced, and he is nodding his head, but I would be grateful, if you would confirm my understanding of this. In respect of what I understand, from the information, that I have received, is the case in respect, of the collecting company, which is presumably, on contracts from the Government, assigned the task of collecting the entrance fees, when you access the Upper Rock, can he provide information, as to which company that is, the information that I have, and I have been shown a screenshot of a payment that is made by tourists, and it shows a company, an entity shall we put it, with a name Java Gibraltar, does he have, sorry Jura, I keep on saying Java, it is Jura Gibraltar, can he say whether that is correct, and whether this is a locally registered company, because the searches that we have carried out, suggest that it is not.

1510 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I have been asked, in the questions supplied, at the correct time, to provide a full list of entities and or individuals, that will receive, or receive, or will receive a proportion, of the entrance fees, I have said that I would not answer that because there are current negotiations. I do not see any relevance there to the question that the hon. Member has just asked by way of supplementary, and when the fees are going to be increased, and therefore I do not think that that is an acceptable supplementary.

1525 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, with the greatest respect to the Hon. Minister, the question related to entrance fees. His more legitimate reply would have been, I do not have that information in front of me and I wasn't prepared by way of expected supplementary, but the question does relate to entrance fees, and all I am asking him to do, is to confirm which entity, company, or other arrangement, is responsible for the receipt of entrance fees which is in fact, the subject matter of this question in the Order Paper. So, that argument, and that point is simply not available to the Hon. Minister.

1530 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I am afraid I do not agree. I think what the Hon. Member is referring to, is the management of the ticketing system, which is a completely different issue, to the substance of the questions that have been asked.

Hon. D J Bossino: Whichever entity manages the ticketing system, is presumably, also a beneficiary of the entrance fees, is it not? Therefore, I think it is a relevant question, but if the Hon. Minister, if I can assist him, if the Hon. Minister, is suggesting, that I need to ask a separate question and he will provide the answers, then I will do so, in the next session of the House. Maybe that resolves the current situation.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Member, should ask a specific question, at the appropriate way.

Madam Speaker: Yes, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, in relation to Question 188 about the increase in nature fees, and I appreciate the Minister may argue that, perhaps I should table a specific question on it, but we have had discussion in the past about the walking fees up to the upper rock, and I just had a quick search I think a walking fee now is about £25 for an adult, which will include access, to all the sites, but I have actually witnessed families who have parked their cars near Lathbury Barracks, a family of four or five, with children, who then reach, the Jew's Gate ticket office, and effectively get asked for over £100, when there is no way they can reach all the various sites in the time they have, in an hour, they cannot reach, you know, the upper galleries, they are unlikely to go, up to the top of the rock, I mean, has the Minister considered whether there can be, just a pure walking ticket, where people can pay a reduced fee, just to enjoy the environments of the upper rock, without going into the sites?

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Yes ma'am, we are actually reviewing the possibility of introducing, different types of tickets.

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, I had a supplementary, in respect to Question 188. The Hon. Minister, I think the response was that, there would be an increase in April, as I understand the regime, and I think it is set out in subsidiary legislation, there is an operator fee, and another, I do not know what it is termed, can he, is he able to indicate to this House, by which amount it is expected that those fees will increase in April, as he said. I think currently, the two operator rates is £13, and for others, it is £19.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker the operator rate at the moment is £13, and for independent travellers it is £25 pounds, not £19, and on the 1st of April, these are due to go up, to £17, and £30.

Hon. D J Bossino: That is quite a significant hike, I think in both respects, but is he able to give an account, as to what reaction, or otherwise has been, from the tour operators if I can put it in those broad terms, I am not suggesting it is just the tour operator rates of those who may be impacted by that particular increase, but actually generally, I mean to operate, presumably taxi drivers, has there been any, are they, are they fine with this?

Is it going to have an impact on the business, because clearly, if the underlying cost goes up, then the service that they provide, would have to go up, and then, that has the potential, I would have thought, of making the access to the nature reserve less attractive. It may defeat the purpose, that the hon. Member, wants to achieve.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, whenever a cost to you goes up, you are not going to be happy, and therefore, there have been representations from some of the operators, we are in active conversation with them. In fact, we were going to be meeting this morning at 11, where we were going to present all the improvements, coming to the Upper Rock, which, I believe justify, the increases. However, this has always been the position of the operators, in the past, whenever

1590 the fees have increased, and they have always been concerned that there is going to be a drop in
sales, and the figures show that there is not a drop in sales. In fact, sales, continue to steadily
increase, as the product, continues to improve. Clearly, they are going to be concerned, but I think
they need not worry, that the product that we will be offering, will be such, and in comparison to
other destinations elsewhere in the world, I think we will remain highly competitive but as I say,
1595 Madam Speaker, the meeting I was going to hold, with all of them today, has had to be postponed,
because we were sitting here.

Hon. D J Bossino: Presumably, the meeting would have been simply, a venue in which the Hon.
Minister would have imparted to them that the increase will happen, irrespective. The hon.
1600 Member will not be persuaded otherwise he has already said that there will be an increase and
he has, I think, has he indicated by which amount the increases is going to take effect. Now,
beyond April, is the Minister contemplating, and I will explain to him why I am asking this, is the
Minister contemplating increasing it further, is it within his plans? Because, again, at the tail end
of this segment, of his interview, with GBC, he says, there was a question on fees, and the question
1605 was, are they going up in effect? She said, they are there for the time being, we may, depending
on how we see things, increase it a little bit more, and then I will think we shall leave it at that for
a while. So, does that explanation apply to the April increase, that the Hon. Minister is referring
to, or does it also apply to other increases, increases that he may be considering, beyond April?

I have heard of a date in the region of sort of September that the Hon. Minister may be
1610 considering to hike the fees further.

Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, we have to remember, that these are, charges to non-
locals, and non-residents. Local residents will continue to access the sites free of charge. I think
that distinction has to be made, to avoid any confusion.

I think it is important, we have an incredible product in Gibraltar, where we are investing even
1615 more, which will improve even more, and I think it is important that we should maximise how we
monetise it and therefore, if we are able, to attract external money, not taxpayers' money, money
from people coming to Gibraltar, which we can then dedicate to continuous improvements, then
therefore that is a name that we should all share. Therefore, we are considering a further increase
1620 in September, but as I explained in the interview, I am happy to explain, here again, if there is a
concern in the industry that the current increase, will mean that, that our figures will drop, I
suspect that is not correct, then perhaps we have to consider whether we increase in September,
or we will increase by a little bit, or we defer to next April, and that is the kind of information that
we have to have, before we make a final decision, on any further increases. We do not want to,
1625 and we will not put the cost of our tourist product, beyond the range that my hon. Friend will be
able to sell, as he is doing so extraordinarily well throughout the world, but we have to remember,
we have a product that people want to enjoy, that people want to come to Gibraltar, that they
are willing to pay, and therefore that is good income, and legitimate income, that will help the
community as a whole.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Anyway, I mean his hon. Friend, to his right, is very ably assisted by a very
effective CEO clearly, and we can and will indeed make, a value judgement, as to whether, what
the Hon. Minister postulates as a very positive thing, the you know, extracting from the nature
reserve fees, this investment, such that we can have an improvement, I mean we will have a view,
1635 and a judgement call in relation to that, but given that he has already indicated that there is a
possibility, he has said in the affirmative, when I put it to him, that there is a possibility, that there
will, there could be increases in September, but he will need to speak to the operators, on the rest
of it, but he has not pitched it, at any particular level, and there is still a question mark, as to
whether he will, or whether he not. Does he not appreciate, that that can have also in itself
1640 inherently, a damaging effect in terms of the marketing opportunities, and marketing efforts of
these tour operators because they are have to sell these tours, now, if not before, but they are

doing so, with the uncertainty, as to whether there will be an increase, which they will have to pass on, to the potential purchasers, of those tickets, so does he not appreciate, that that in itself, also raises a significant difficulty, for those individuals, and businesses operating in this area.

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Hon. Prof. J E Cortes: Madam Speaker, I can see his point, but I do not necessarily agree with it, because of the way in which we have come to the position in which we are now. Madam Speaker, and the reason why we have not gone firm on a September increase, is because we have discussed with the operators, and we have decided that, whereas we have thought, that we were

1650 definitely going, to have an increase in September, that out of deference to them, and to their concerns, we will continue to discuss it, and look at it jointly, and the other thing is that, and the operators know, that any operators, that have already pre-booked, at an existing lower rate, those rates will be accepted, until such time, as those bookings run out, and they are aware of that. Clearly if they have already sold tickets, we are not going to suddenly increase it, but they will

1655 have to show us, legitimately, that these have been pre-booked in some way, but we are in fact, the message I am trying to get across here, Madam Speaker, is that we are actually, in active discussion with all the operators, in order to ensure that the product improves, that the cost is realistic and does not prejudice the business, I think at the end of the exercise they will be very happy with the way that these things develop.

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Madam Speaker: All right, I am going to allow one more supplementary, I think we have exhausted this topic, enough. I know that the Hon. C Sacarello had asked, to ask a question, and so has the Hon. D J Bossino, so I will allow you to discuss, as to who is going to ask the question.

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Hon. D J Bossino: The Hon. the Minister always claims that he is not a politician, but actually, listening to him and after so many years, I think he very much is, everything is fine, everything is hunky-dory, he is going to be speaking, so but I get, on this side of the house, a completely different story, and a completely different...

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Madam Speaker: A question, otherwise, I am going to give the floor to, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. D J Bossino: The Hon. the Minister, and I alluded to it, I think in one of the supplementaries, the Hon. the Minister, in yesterday's session, referred to the context of the Moorish Castle, that it would not result, in any expenditure, to...

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Madam Speaker: I am not going to revert to yesterday's supplementaries, or a question, on any of yesterday's questions, or supplementary, so strictly in relation to this.

Hon. D J Bossino: Absolutely, Madam Speaker, and it relates to this, and it relates to the entrance fees, and the potential beneficiaries of those entrance fees. Is it the case, can he answer this, in terms which will not prejudice the negotiations that he is referring to? Can he say, when he said yesterday, that the investment is out with the...

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In other words, there will not be a reliance in respect of that particular project on Government, on taxpayers' money, and he said, the Hon. Minister said, there would be, as a result of investment. Can he say that the investment, is in effect, exclusively going to be drawn from the entrance fees because, again, the logical explanation that one arrives at, from the answers that he gave to GBC back in February, where he said, these things are happening in the Upper Rock, we are seeing an improvement, and you know what? This is brilliant, because a taxpayer, is not paying a penny and it is all coming from the entrance fees, therefore, it is being paid by tourist money. So, using that logic, and I would apply it to the answer he gave yesterday in respect of the Moorish Castle, I simply ask him, to answer the point I have just made.

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1695 **Hon. Prof. J E Cortes:** First of all, I do not know whether to take the hon. Member's, recognition, that I am finally a politician as a compliment. I think I will take it as a compliment, and it might mean, I do not know whether he is going to like what I hear, that I might stay in politics longer than I thought, and longer that he might wish for me to stay in, but there we go, that is a separate issue altogether, which we can discuss some other time.

1700 Madam Speaker, I think this would be, dangerously close, to discussing issues, in relation to the contracts, that I have already said, I am not going to, dwell on any further.

Madam Speaker: All right, is that the end of the questions?

Questions for Written Answer

1705 **Clerk:** Answers to Written Questions, the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J Garcia): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table the answers to Written Questions W30, to W48 of 2025 inclusive.

Adjournment

Clerk: The Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

1715 **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J Garcia):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move at this house do now adjourn *sine die*.

Madam Speaker: I now propose the question, which is at this house do now adjourn *sine die*. I now put the question, which is at this house do now adjourn *sine die*. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Passed.

1720 This house will now adjourn, *sine die*.

The House adjourned at 12.10 p.m.