



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

**AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.01 p.m. – 8.55 p.m.**

**Gibraltar, Wednesday, 21st May 2025**

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# The Gibraltar Parliament

*The Parliament met at 3.01 p.m.*

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

[ACTING CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: K Balban Esq *in attendance*]

## PRAYER

*Madam Speaker*

## Order of the Day

### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**Acting Clerk:** Meeting of Parliament, Wednesday, 21st of May 2025. Order of Proceedings.  
(i) Oath of Allegiance. (ii) Confirmation of Minutes. - the minutes of the Fifteenth meeting of the Fifteenth Parliament, which was held on the 19th, 20th and 26th of March, 2025.

5      **Madam Speaker:** May I sign the minutes as correct?

**Members:** Aye.

*Madam Speaker signed the Minutes.*

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### COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

#### Hansard production by the Parliament Team

15      **Acting Clerk:** (iii) Communications from the Chair.

**Madam Speaker:** Before we begin, I would just like to take a moment to recognize the exceptional work carried out by the Parliamentary team over the last eight weeks or so. As many of you will know, the Isle of Man previously provided us with Hansard services, but they have now  
20      ceased to do so. The service they were providing did not enable us to keep records current, and as a result, Hansard was months behind any given session.

Since taking on this responsibility, the team has worked tirelessly to clear a backlog of five months' worth of records. They have ensured that every Hansard, including that of the March Parliamentary session, is now uploaded and available for public access. Their work has been  
25      dedicated and exemplary.



Looking forward, the team will be delivering Hansard records in-house, published promptly after each Parliamentary session. This will make Hansard available ahead of the next meeting, providing invaluable support to Government departments, media, the public and ensuring transparency and efficiency in our proceedings. On behalf of this House, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Parliamentary team for their dedication, professionalism and hard work in maintaining the high standards of our Parliamentary process.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, can I, on behalf of no doubt all Members on both sides of the House, add our gratitude to the expression you have made of the views, of the dedication of the Members of the team. I have always thought that Hansard is the most important tool for every Member of this House and every Member of the public, to the extent that in some of my more competitive moments with Members opposite and when I have felt that they are misrepresenting something I have said, I have always told them that there is a *chivatito* that reminds us all of what we have said and that *chivatito* is Hansard and it is particularly helpful to all of us in that respect. Madam Speaker, without a team that is dedicated to getting it out, whether it is in the old days when this was done on a manual typewriter or today when we have other tools to assist us, we would not have that benefit and therefore I join you on behalf of all Members of the House in thanking Members for their dedication and commitment and for having done so, as far as I understand, without charging a penny of overtime.

So thank you from all Members.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, certainly on behalf of Members on this side of the House I associate myself with the remarks of Madam Speaker and indeed the Chief Minister. I was not aware that this change was happening. I did notice because I did look at Hansard recently that suddenly the consolidated version of Hansard had appeared, which I thought was a great thing and I was not aware that this had happened.

So my congratulations also to the in-house team, the Parliamentary staff for doing that and the assurance that we will get that going forward and that it is being managed in-house, which is a great thing so that we do not need to outsource things that we can do here in Gibraltar if possible. I am grateful.

#### PAPERS TO BE LAID

**Clerk:** (iv) Petitions, (v) announcements, (vi) papers to be laid.  
The Hon. the Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** I have the honor to lay on the table, pursuant to section 12 of the Public Finance Borrowing Powers Act, the revolving credit line facility for £75 million sterling from Gibraltar International Bank as lender to his Majesty's Government of Gibraltar as borrower, dated 31 March 2025, and the Income Tax Allowances, Deductions and Exemptions Amendment No. 2 Rules for 2025.

**Madam Speaker:** Ordered to lie.

**Acting Clerk:** The Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I have the honor to lay on the table the Gibraltar Health Authority audited accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2014 and the Gibraltar Health Authority audited accounts of the financial year ended 31 March 2015.

**Madam Speaker:** Ordered to lie.

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## Questions for Oral Answer

### HEALTH, CARE AND BUSINESS.

**Q420/2025**

**Respite Services –  
Waiting Times**

**Acting Clerk:** (vii) Reports of committees, (viii) answers to oral questions. Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Question 420, the Hon. A Sanchez.

85

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide the exact figures for the following: (a) The number of individuals and families currently waiting to be assessed for respite services; and (b) The number of individuals and families who have been assessed as requiring respite services and are currently awaiting the provision of such services? Could this information also be broken down by children's services and adult services?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the Government can confirm the following figures related to the provision of respite services under learning disability services. Individuals and families currently waiting to be assessed for respite services: children 3; adults 0. Individuals and families assessed as requiring respite services and currently awaiting provision: children 8; adults 1.

95

At present, 31 children and 16 adults, one funded by a children's respite, are actively receiving respite services. Of these, 8 children and 5 adults have requested an increase in their current respite allocation.

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**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, grateful for that answer. Would the Hon. Minister have the average waiting time for an assessment to be conducted and the average waiting time for when the assessment is completed to when the family or the individual receives the service?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker. As I have often said, if the question were put, I would happily answer the question.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker, but it is a supplementary that seems logical and would arise from the question that has been posed. Does she have no further information regarding the average waiting times from the figures that she has been provided?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Lady is asking for averages, which is a factual question. If you want a factual answer, I can only provide that with notice of the question. Therefore, as I have said on numerous occasions, if the hon. Lady were to provide me with notice of the question, I would happily answer the question.

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**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, given that the question relates to waiting times and individuals and families that are waiting to be assessed, and once they have been assessed, individuals or families that are waiting to receive such services. If there are delays, would the Minister be able to elaborate on any contributing factors that may be contributing or playing a part in these delays?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, there are some families that are waiting to be assessed and the wait is there just because either the facility, as the hon. Lady is aware, a tender went out last year for respite services. The conditions of the tender were not met by any of the parties that tendered. All of this is public information, as the hon. Lady is aware.

I had a meeting with the parents of the children that were requesting respite and we are currently looking at options as to how we can increase the number of children that are receiving respite. Therefore, those discussions are ongoing and we hope to have a solution in place very soon.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** The Hon. Minister says that she does not have the average waiting times, but given that she has given a number of individuals and families who have been assessed and are waiting, does she have a breakdown of how long those people have been waiting, specifically, either by case or generically?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** I am quite happy to read out the question that was posed. The question that was posed relates to the number of individuals and families waiting to be assessed and the number of individuals who have been assessed. I was asked for a breakdown between children's services and adult services.

As I have said on numerous occasions in this House, if any information is required of me, I am very happy to provide the information, but I am not going to stand here and make up figures. If the hon. Gentleman wants me to provide the information, I am very happy to do so, as I have asserted on numerous occasions, but I would need notice of the question.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I am certainly not asking the hon. Lady to make up figures, but certainly, when I was on that side of the House, you would get questions from the Opposition and you would prepare the answer, but also anticipate obvious supplementaries. When the hon. Lady, to my right, has asked about individuals who have been waiting, it is a natural and obvious supplementary to ask how long they have been waiting. Without asking the hon. Lady to invent figures, I would have thought that perhaps her officials, if not her, would have asked the obvious supplementary, but she is saying that she does not have it, if that is the case, and she has no further supplementary, which is supplemental information.

Is that her position, that she has no further information from her officials that could assist in gleaning the answer to that question?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** I have a very clear job to do and I am very clear in my mind what that job is to do. That job is to sort out the issues that people actually have, not to guess or anticipate the questions, which might arise from the hon. Members opposite. I have been asked a very specific question and I have answered the question that is put in front of me.

Now, if there is further information that is requested of me, as indeed there are another 105 questions that have been asked of me, I am very happy to go through each one of those questions and give an answer to each one of those questions. However, if a question is put to me, I would appreciate if notice could be given of the question.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** May I ask a question?

**Madam Speaker:** No, we have dealt with this enough. Next question.

**Q421/2025  
Care Agency –  
Policies**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 421, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** In relation to the following Care Agency policies: lone worker policy; sickness policy; absence management policy; dress code uniform and use of identification policy; record keeping and clamp files policy; social media; social networking policy for staff; and safeguarding children and at-risk adults policy; Could the Government clarify the following: (a) the exact date on which each policy was most recently updated and signed off as updated; (b) the exact date on which each policy was last updated and signed off as updated prior to the most recent version; and (c) whether the current most recently updated versions of these policies apply to entities or workers providing services to the Care Agency?

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

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

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 421**

POLICY NAME	DATE ON WHICH POLICY WAS MOST RECENTLY UPDATED	DATE ON WHICH POLICY WAS UPDATED PRIOR TO MOST RECENT VERSION	TO WHOM THE POLICY APPLIES
Lone Working Policy	30th April 2025	Mar-23	All staff as well as full time and part-time staff as well as sessional/subcontracted staff
Sickness Policy/Absence Management Policy	30th April 2025	5th March 2015	All employees of the Care Agency
Dress Code and Uniform Policy and Use of Identification	30th April 2025	Sep-23	All employees, subcontracted staff, volunteer workers and trainees employed in any area of the Care Agency
Record Keeping and Client Files Policy	30th April 2025	15th August 2013	All employees including those seconded or employed via other agencies and/or organisations
Social Media/Social Networking Policy for Staff	30th April 2025	Apr-16	All Care Agency employees, casual workers, agency staff, contractors, consultants, self-employed people, apprentices, trainees and those on work placements, who work for the Agency
Safeguarding Children and At-Risk Adults Policy	30th April 2025	The newly created policy, based on existing processes and procedures, aims to streamline internal reporting. It incorporates flowcharts to enhance clarity around roles and responsibilities for all audiences, ensuring alignment with the safeguarding training offered by the Care Agency	All employees of the Care Agency, including those seconded or employed via other agencies and/or organisations.

**Madam Speaker:** All right, I will give the hon. Member time to consider the schedule and we will move on to the next question.

**Q422/2025**  
**GHA/ERS –**  
**Recording of ERS Residents**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 422, the Hon. A Sanchez.

200      **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state what the policy of the GHA/ERS is regarding the recording of ERS residents?

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

205      **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the policy is that no recording should take place other than in keeping with the relevant GHA policy document.

210      **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, grateful for that answer and could the Hon. Minister elaborate on what the GHA policy is regarding the recording of residents.

215      **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, there is a very detailed policy document on precisely this issue.

**Madam Speaker:** Any other supplementary.

220      **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, in relation to this policy and the recording of ERS residents, and I ask this question of the Minister because it is a question that has been, a concern that has been raised with us on a number of occasions, in relation to a video that was widely circulated of an individual who appeared in one of the ERS wards, seemingly providing entertainment to the residents of a ward and still questions as to whether the person should have been in that ward, shouldn't have been in that ward, but the point is that ERS residents appear on that video. My question is, can the Minister confirm whether the policy in this occasion was breached, on whether those residents, the residents of that ERS facility consented to (a) being recorded and (b) to that video being circulated or disseminated.

225      **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the residents do appear in numerous videos with or without the consent, but the policy was breached at this visit and it is currently being investigated by the GHA.

230      **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister be able to elaborate on or share details as to who took the video, were the residents aware that the video was being taken, and have the relatives of the residents been contacted and informed that their relatives have appeared in such video and the policy has been breached?

235      **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I would like to clarify my previous comment. It would, it is alleged that the policy has been breached and the matter is therefore under investigation, but as the hon. Lady knows, if there is a matter that is under investigation it would be entirely inappropriate for me to comment further on that matter.

240      **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q423/2025**  
**ERS –**  
**Place of Worship**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 423, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government outline whether there is currently a designated place of worship in each of the Elderly Residential Services (ERS) facilities providing details of these areas where available? If any such facilities do not currently have a designated place of worship available, could the Government provide details of which ERS locations are affected and how long these areas have not been available for?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the places of worship, facilities and schedules in the ERS facilities are as follows. In Bella Vista, the priests and servers attend every Tuesday for Mass and Holy Communion in the activities area of each floor. In Hillside, the priests and servers attend every Tuesday for the distribution of Holy Communion in the activities area of each floor.

In the John Mackintosh Home, the priests and servers attend every Thursday for Mass and Holy Communion in the activities area of each floor. In John Cochrane Ward, priests used to attend once a week on Sundays, given the ward's location inside SPH. This was stopped during COVID in order to reduce footfall in the hospital.

The service has not resumed since COVID, but the GHA is liaising with the priest in order to resume the service. In Mount Alvernia, priests and servers attend on a weekly basis for the distribution of Holy Communion in the activities area and on each floor. Initial talks with the local clergy in collaboration with the Friends of Mount Alvernia to reinstate observation of Holy Days and Sunday Mass are actively being held.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker. These are services that take place once a week. However, in terms of places of worship, is there no location, designated area or place of worship in any of these facilities where residents can go visit and spend some time if they feel that they need to or they wish to do so?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as the hon. Lady may be aware, there was a small chapel in Mount Alvernia and as I actually answered in my question, initial talks with the local clergy in collaboration with the Friends of Mount Alvernia are actively being held to reinstate Sunday Mass there.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Is the chapel at Mount Alvernia closed or is it being used for something else?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** The small chapel in Mount Alvernia is currently not in use.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So, is it closed or is it being used for something else?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** To my knowledge, it is not being used for anything else.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is the Hon. Minister making efforts to ensure that of all the days of the week that the Hon. Minister refers to, the most important one for those of the Catholic faith who are to receive Holy Communion is in fact Sunday and if in fact believers of that faith will believe that if you do not participate in the Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion on that day, you are in a

state of mortal sin. On that basis, can I ask the Minister whether she is making efforts and her department is making efforts to ensure that Sunday services and Sunday Masses are available in all these institutions?

295 I understand that my hon. Friend proposes this question on the back of an opinion piece, which appeared recently in the Gibraltar Chronicle in which complaints were made on behalf of the author's grandfather in relation to this specific issue.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** I am not making efforts to reinstate Sunday Masses. It is not my role to do so. I know the Friends of Mount Alvernia are indeed in communication with the clergy in order to reinstate Mass in Mount Alvernia as I have previously stated.

I am unsure what the status is of the Mass in other areas. If there were a calling for Mass on Sundays, I am sure that the different homes would arrange it. To me, this is the first that I have heard that anyone is calling out for services in any institution on a Sunday.

305

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q424/2025**  
**ERS –**  
**Security Measures**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 424, the Hon. A Sanchez.

310 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state what security measures and protocols are in place across all ERS facilities, including the John Cochrane Ward, to ensure the safety of all ERS residents?

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

315

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, John Cochrane Ward, like all wards in the hospital, is protected by a number of security measures and protocols designed to ensure a safe environment for all patients, staff and visitors as follows. There is on-site security personnel. There are four OSG security guards, which are stationed at the hospital's main entrance, A&E, the basement and 1-0 patrol providing continuous oversight and access control for the premises.

320 Controlled access, so access to John Cochrane Ward and other wards is restricted and managed by ward staff. All ward entrances are equipped with magnetic locking systems, ensuring that only authorised individuals can enter. There are regulated visiting hours, so the public access is further limited through designated visiting hours, reducing the risk of unauthorised entry.

325 John Mackintosh Wing has an OSG security guard on-site from eight to eight with three visits during the night. Bella Vista has an OSG security guard from 8am to midnight. Hillside has an OSG security guard from 12 midday to 8pm, Monday to Friday and 8 to 8 weekends with three visits during the night.

330 Ocean views has 24 hours OSG security on-site. We have CCTV in all four buildings and Hillside CCTV is currently undergoing repairs with IFS, the maintenance company, and should be up and running by next week. In addition, all staff members are aware that the safety of our patients and residents is their primary responsibility.

335 **Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker. Again, I refer to the same video that was circulated because we have received many concerns about this. It is still unclear

whether the individual that was apparently or allegedly providing entertainment in what seems to be an ERS facility or ward was actually meant to be in this ward.

340 This has obviously raised concerns with the people that have come to us as to the security measures within these wards and how effective they are. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps elaborate on whether in fact this person was authorised to be in the ward providing entertainment or doing what the person is seen to be doing in the video at that time?

345 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I have no issue in repeating myself and indeed, if we were to do that for 105 questions we are going to be here for a very long time. The matter is currently under investigation and it is therefore inappropriate for me to comment any further on the matter.

350 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate this but for individuals that are concerned about the security measures within these ERS facilities and who indeed have relatives in these facilities that are now hearing the security measures that the Hon. Minister is detailing, I wonder if the Hon. Minister could provide some assurance or some more detail as to whether in fact the person should have been in that ward or whether in fact the person should not have been in that ward and was not authorised and it is being dealt with and the person responsible for what happened and this matter will be investigated properly and things will be put in place so that this does not happen again, at least at the very least.

360 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, for any patient's family who are concerned, I have outlined the security measures, and I would wish to ensure those families that those security measures are maintained. For all of those family members who are concerned, I would once again reiterate what I have said on two occasions already.

The matter is under investigation by the GHA and it is therefore inappropriate for me to comment any further. However, as I have said and the hon. Lady has just asked me the same question again, the matter is under investigation by the GHA.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

#### Q425/2025

#### ERS/Government-Owned Company/Agency – Non-Contractual Allowances

370

**Acting Clerk:** Question 425, the Hon. A Sanchez.

375 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide an updated list of non-contractual allowances awarded to individuals employed by ERS or by any other Government-Owned company or agency who have been seconded to or are working within ERS? Could the information be broken down by financial year 2023-24 and 2024-25 to present date to include for each case the type of allowance and the amount awarded and the grade of the individual in receipt of the allowance? For the purposes of clarity, this should include responsibility allowances, additional duties, allowances and any other form of remuneration that is not linked to shift patterns or agenda for change conditions of service.

380

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

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



**ANSWER TO QUESTION 425**

**FY 23/24**

Nil

**FY 24/25**

Grade Desc	Responsibility Allowance	Additional Duties	Loss of Earnings	UC F/T Official	Union Convenor	Additional Medical Specialities	1 Additional PA	Dementia Day Hospital	Physician Cover Ocean Views
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	-	7,212.52	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GDC - GRADE 1	-	8,962.56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Madam Speaker:** It is a very brief schedule so I wonder whether the hon. Member is in a position to ask any supplementaries now? The hon. Member requires time I will happily grant it. I ask on the off chance because it seems a short schedule.

No supplementaries? I do not need to return to this? All right, next question.

**Q426/2025  
ERS Facility—  
Update Mount Alvernia**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 426, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** As of 1 May 2025, could the Government provide an update on whether it plans to retain the Mount Alvernia site for its current use as an ERS facility or whether it intends to relocate the residents of Mount Alvernia to a different location?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the Government has no plans to change the use of Mount Alvernia as an Elderly Residential Services facility.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker, could the Hon. Minister clarify whether the Government intends to relocate the residents of Mount Alvernia to a different location? Can she answer that point specifically?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I have said specifically, the Government has no plans to change the use of Mount Alvernia. It will remain as an Elderly Residential facility.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Lady will detect that there are two distinct questions. (1) What is the use of Mount Alvernia? (2) Does the Government intend to relocate the residents?

The Government could compatibly retain Mount Alvernia as an elderly facility for a specific purpose or specific sector of elderly citizens and yet seek to relocate the residents that are currently there. The hon. Lady will recall that there was a questionnaire given to residents of Mount Alvernia at some point, I do not know the precise date, but the hon. Father of the House answered the question at the time and very few residents at the time expressed the desire to be

relocated to the new Rooke Residential Home. Therefore, asking a very precise question, it was put down on the order paper, so we would be grateful if the hon. Lady could give us an answer on the future of the residents currently at Mount Alvernia.

Will they be staying there?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, at this stage the Government has no intention to relocate the residents of Mount Alvernia to a different location.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, at this stage adds a nuance that wasn't in the original answer, so can I ask the hon. Lady, is it the Government's position that it will revisit in future the concept of asking residents again whether they wish to be relocated to the Rooke Residential Home?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, at this stage there are no plans to do it. At this stage, any time hereafter, any plans can change. We are looking at the CMHT; we are looking at things that were changing in the CMHT in that context.

At this stage, there are no plans to do it. In addition, at this stage, the Government does not intend to relocate the residents of Mount Alvernia. Therefore, I will limit myself to saying that and insist that at this stage there are no plans to relocate the residents of Mount Alvernia.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q427/2025**  
**ERS Facilities & Care Manager –**  
**Purchases**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 427, the Hon A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state what purchases were requested and made by the ERS Facilities Manager and or ERS Care Manager, whether in an acting or permanent capacity for furniture, IT equipment and office equipment during the period from July 2024 to December 2024, providing a breakdown of each item by description and cost?

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

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

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 427**

Mount Alvernia Furniture, IT Equipment & Office Equipment Purchases from July 2024 to December 2024		
Date	Description	Total Cost £
31/07/2024	4 Monitors 2x Facilities Manager 2x Care Manager	1,000.00
31/07/2024	Bamboo wooden blinds - Facilities Manager	199.00
07/08/2024	Executive Office chair for Facilities manager	345.00
03/09/2024	3 x Surface Pros Facilities & ERS Manager & Clinical Lead	4,240.50
25/10/2024	Executive Officer chair for Nurses office	297.00
25/11/2024	Laptop for Procurement Officer acting	279.00

460 **Madam Speaker:** All right, we will move on to the next question and revert to this later.

**Q428-30/2025**  
**ERS –**  
**Safeguarding Alerts**

465 **Acting Clerk:** Question 428, the Hon A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state how many safeguarding alerts have been raised in relation to Elderly Residential facilities and Elderly Residential Services, including those involving subcontracted entities during the period from the 1st of May 2023 to the 1st of May 2025, what the nature of these safeguarding alerts has been, the date of each safeguarding alert and how they have been investigated and or resolved?

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

475 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 429 and 430.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 429, the Hon A Sanchez.

480 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state how many safeguarding alerts have been raised in relation to the Care Agency and all its related services, including those involving subcontracted entities during the period from the 1st of May 2023 to the 1st of May 2025, what the nature of these safeguarding alerts has been, the date of each safeguarding alert and how they have been investigated and or resolved?

485 **Acting Clerk:** Question 430, the Hon A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state how many safeguarding alerts have been raised in relation to domiciliary care and home support services, including those involving subcontracted entities during the period from the 1st of May 2023 to the 1st of May 2025, what the nature of

these safeguarding alerts has been, the date of each safeguarding alert and how they have been investigated and or resolved?

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

495

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, all safeguarding alerts are investigated in line with the Gibraltar multi-agency safeguarding procedures. Madam Speaker, I now hand over a schedule with the information requested.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 430  
ANSWER TO QUESTION 428

LOCATION	DATE	REASON	STATUS	ACTION TAKEN
JMW	05.05.2025	Wrist fracture	Under internal investigation	
JMW	21.03.2025	resident been abusive	Under internal investigation	resident was moved to a different floor
HS	09.04.2025	Hip fracture/fall	Under internal investigation	
JMW	03.02.2025	Accusation of theft	Under police investigation	Pending RGP investigation outcome.
JMW	17.09.2024	Abusive with other residents	Closed	Medication review, behaviour chart, close supervision.
BV	02.09.2024	Suspicion of abuse from family	Closed	MDT Meeting with family.
JMW	17.09.2024	Abusive with other residents	Closed	Medication review, behaviour chart, close supervision.
JMW	18.07.2024	Hip fracture/fall	Pending RoHG	
JMW	30.04.2024	Hip fracture/bed bound	Closed by RoHG	New Poster implemented. (Safeguarding residents spending prolonged time in bed)
HS	20.03.2024	Hip fracture/fall	Closed by RoHG	
JMW	04.03.2024	Hip fracture/fall	Pending RoHG	
HS	03.10.2023	Husband being abusive with the resident	Ongoing	
HS	06.08.2024	Hip fracture/fall	Closed by RoHG	
HS	28.06.2023	G3 Ulcer not responding to treatment	Closed by RoHG	Timeline, Daily dressing done with the supervision of Nurse Manager.
JMW	08.09.2023	Hip fracture/fall	Closed by RoHG	
JMW	14.11.2023	Hip fracture/fall	Closed by RoHG	
JMW	10.05.2023	Hip fracture/fall	Closed by RoHG	

## ANSWER TO QUESTION 430

Raised by	Date	Category	Reason	Status	Action taken
ADA	03/05/2023	financial/material	Allegation that carer had stolen money	Closed- not substantiated	Internal investigation carried out by care provider at the time. Outcome passed onto Care Agency.
ERS- John Mac Wing	09/05/2023	Physical	Skin Flap following a fall	Resolved- pending formal outcome form.	Internal investigation carried.
ERS- John Mac Wing	10/05/2023	Physical	Accidental fall.	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Internal investigation carried.
Care Agency Social Worker	23/05/2023	Neglect / Act of Omission	Service user left unsupervised, despite social workers informing this should not happen	Substantiated	Strategy meeting held. Service user admitted into respite care
ERS-Mount Alvernia	02/06/2023	Physical	Hip Fracture	Not Substantiated - pending formal outcome form	Internal investigation carried out. Accidental fall.
Care Agency Social Worker	14/06/2023	Neglect/ Acts of omission	Carers failing to notify development of pressure sore	Not Substantiated - pending formal outcome form	Internal investigation carried out.
ERS- Mount Alvernia	21/06/2023	Not stated- neglect/acts of/ omission	Grade 4 pressure sore	Not Substantiated - pending formal outcome form	Internal investigation carried out. Strategy meetings held, and patient remained in SBH and not ERS.
GHA	21/06/2023	Neglect/acts of omission/ institutional	Grade 3 pressure sore	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Wound care/Pressure area Care/Doctor review/Datix INC-8705 completed
ERS- Mount Alvernia	21/06/2023	Physical	Allegation of staff being physically abusive	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Internal investigation carried out. Nursing assistant removed from patients care.
MEDDOC	26/06/2023	Neglect	Carer attend the service	Closed	Care provider to monitor
GHA	06/07/2023	physical/psychological/ financial/ Material	Domestic abuse	Not substantiated	Several MDT meetings in the hospital. Liaising with outside agencies (housing). Patient returned home with POC and social work involvement
ERS- Hillisides	29/06/2023	physical/psychological/ institutional	Concerns raised on admission process	Not substantiated	Not a safeguarding concern. Internal review on admission process.
ERS- Hillisides	29/06/2023	physical	Grade 3 pressure Sore	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Internal investigation carried out. Dr informed re: care plan
Care Agency Social Worker	20/07/2023	Neglect / Act of Omission	Medication Error	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Internal investigation carried out.
Care Agency- Dr Giraiddi	27/07/2023	Neglect/ Acts of Omission	Service user left planned care	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Minor incident, requiring increased monitoring
MEDDOC	10/08/2023	Physical	Brusing observed on body	pending formal outcome form	Internal investigation carried out.
Care Agency Social Worker	11/08/2023	Neglect/ Organisational	Medication administration	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Minor incident requiring monitoring. Carers called in and provided with written warning.
Care Agency Social Worker	16/08/2023	Physical/ Psychological	Domestic Abuse disclosure	Substantiated- pending formal outcome form	RGP informed, family support provided. Concerns no longer present
ERS-Mount Alvernia	14/09/2023	Physical/ Institutional/ organisational	Accidental fall	Resolved-pending formal outcome form	Internal investigation carried out.
ERS-Mount Alvernia	26/09/2023	Physical/ Sexual/ financial	Concerns raised re: visitors	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Minor incident. Increased monitoring required.
Care Agency- Dr Giraiddi	28/09/2023	Institutional	Abducting planned care	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Minor incident. Increased monitoring required.

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## CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 430

ERS- Hillsides	03/10/2023	Physical	Family member acting aggressively with other residents	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Internal investigation. Agreement made to observe resident presentation when visitor arrived to determine if to go ahead with visit.
Care Agency- Dr Giraldi	07/10/2023	Neglect/ acts of Omission/ Institutional/ organisational	Professional misconduct	pending outcome	Internal investigation following disciplinary process.
Care Agency- Dr Giraldi	07/10/2023	Neglect/ acts of Omission/ Institutional/ organisational	Professional misconduct	pending outcome	Internal investigation following disciplinary process.
ADA	09/10/2023	Financial/ Material	Items missing from the home	Not Substantiated	Internal investigation completed by care provider
GHA- CMHT	02/11/2023	psychological	Domestic abuse disclosure	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Social worker allocated to review home dynamics and implement additional support.
ERS- Hillsides	13/11/2023	Physical	Accidental fall	Resolved- pending formal outcome form	Minor incident- increased monitoring
ERS- Mount Alvernia	16/11/2023	Physical/ Institutional/ organisational	Accidental fall	Not substantiated	Internal investigation.
Care Agency- Dr Giraldi	28/11/2023	Physical	Medication administration	Resolved	Internal investigation. MDT around service user, discussed care plan and informed relative
GHA- GP	01/12/2023	Psychological	Domestic Abuse disclosure	Resolved -pending outcome form	RGP informed however, did not wish to proceed with safeguarding process. Advice on keeping safe provided as well as contact numbers.
Care Agency Social worker	04/12/2023	Neglect	Professional Misconduct	Substantiated	Carers removed
GHA	11/12/2023	Physical/Neglect/ Institutional	Gross Misconduct	Ongoing	Regular MDT meetings. Reviewing of records.
ADA	04/01/2024	Financial/ Material	Money missing from home	Closed	Internal investigation.
MEDDOC	31/01/2024	physical	Accidental Fall	Closed	Minor incident. Increased monitoring required
GHA	22/01/2024	Psychological	Domestic abuse disclosure	Closed	Social worker allocated to case. Assessment completed to provide additional support and ensure oversight should safeguarding concerns persist.
Care Agency- Waterport Day centre	25/01/2024	Financial/ Material	Concerns vulnerable adult being taken advantage of	Closed	Welfare visit undertaken by social worker. Advice provider- NFA
ADA	31/01/2024	Financial/ Material	Allegations of theft	Closed	Internal investigation. Service user did not consent to informing the police nor removing carer from her service
ADA	06/02/2024	Financial/ Material	Care accepting money from services user	Closed	Internal investigation. Money returned to the service user
RELATIVE	14/02/2024	Neglect	Carer asleep on shift	Closed	Internal investigation. Increased monitoring of the Flat. Family informed and content with the plan
ERS- Mount Alvernia	22/02/2024	psychological/ neglect	Professional Misconduct	Closed	Internal investigation. No abuse sustained and review of disciplinary actions conducted.
ERS- Mount Alvernia	22/02/2024	Psychological	Professional Misconduct	Closed	Internal investigation. No abuse sustained and review of disciplinary actions conducted.
Care Agency- Dr Giraldi	24/02/2024	neglect/ acts of omission/ institutional/ organisational	Carers asleep whilst on duty	Closed	Internal investigation- Staff were removed from shift and asked to submit a reflective statement to the senior management team of their accounts of the day. HR departments of the respective employers notified of the concerns raised



## CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 430

ERS- John Mac Wing	04/03/2024	physical	Accidental fall	Closed	Internal investigation and resident taken to SBH
GHA	05/03/2024	Physical	Domestic Abuse disclosure	Closed	No consent obtained to proceed with Safeguarding procedures and notify RGP. Social worker met with family and provided advice. Family protective factors and informed that RGP will be contacted should concern persist.
ERS- Mount Alvernia	11/03/2024	physical	Accidental fall	Closed	Internal investigation and resident taken to SBH for treatment.
ERS- Mount Alvernia	11/03/2024	physical	Accidental fall	Closed	Internal investigation and resident taken to SBH for treatment.
Care Agency- Dr Giraldi	13/03/2024	Neglect	Medication Error	Closed	Minor incident, increased monitoring provided by organisation.
ERS	15/03/2024	physical	Accidental fall	Closed	Internal investigation and resident taken to SBH for treatment.
ADA	23/03/2024	Financial/ Material	Allegation of theft	Closed	Internal investigation. Carer spoken to by the supervisor. Allegations not proven. Family have installed cameras in the house.
MEDDOC	26/03/2024	Financial/ Material	Allegation of theft	Closed	Internal investigation. Discussions held with Care Provider supervisor, carer and service user. Allegation not proven. Carer removed from the service.
MEDDOC	09/04/2024	Psychological/ Physical	Accidental fall within the home.	Closed	Internal investigation.
ERS- John Cochrane Ward	10/04/2024	physical/ institutional/ organisational	Accidental fall	Closed	Internal investigation and taken to SBH
GHA	12/04/2024	Physical/ psychological	Concerns of potential domestic abuse	Closed	Several attempts were made to contact the individual; however, this was not possible. SALM informed that should individual return or further information obtained to proceed with safeguarding process.
ERS- Mount Alvernia	06/05/2024	Physical	Accidental fall	Closed	Matter was later addressed through a separate pathway.
Care Agency- Dr Giraldi	08/05/2024	physical	Service user observed with marks following outing to Spain with Family	Closed	Internal investigation. Review on risk assessments relating to outings in Spain conducted.
Care Agency Social Worker	09/05/2024	Neglect/ Organisational	Carers observed inappropriately using manual handling equipment	Closed	Strategy meeting arranged. Review of all carers' training records done and refresher training rolled out.
Care Agency Social Worker	09/05/2024	Neglect/ Organisational	Care provider failure to send carers.	Closed	Internal investigation. Strategy meeting arranged and discussion of improved communication between carer provider and family addressed. Investigation highlighted increased risk of injury associated with providing only 1 carer for a 2:1 service. This was addressed and family kept updated.

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## CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 430

Care Agency Social Worker	24/05/2024	Psychological	Domestic Abuse disclosure	Closed	Hospital social worker investigated matter and facilitated arrangements for patient to be discharged to the Woman's refuge. Following discharge, on-going social work assistant support provided.
ERS- Mount Alvernia	27/05/2024	physical/ institutional/ organisational	Accidental fall	Closed	Minor incident, increased monitoring
Care Agency Social Worker	14/06/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Carers asleep whilst on duty	Closed	Care Provider informed and request made to remove carers from the flat and not return.
Care Agency Social Worker	14/06/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Carers asleep whilst on duty	Closed	Care Provider informed and request made to remove carers from the flat and not return.
Care Agency Social Worker	14/06/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Carers asleep whilst on duty	Closed	Care Provider informed and request made to remove carers from the flat and not return.
Care Agency Social Worker	14/06/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Carers asleep whilst on duty	Closed	Care Provider informed and request made to remove carers from the flat and not return.
Care Agency Social Worker	14/06/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Carers asleep whilst on duty	Closed	Care Provider informed and request made to remove carers from the flat and not return.
Care Agency Social Worker	14/06/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Carers asleep whilst on duty	Closed	Care Provider informed and request made to remove carers from the flat and not return.
Care Agency Social Worker	18/06/2024	Organisational	Skin Flat sustained following inappropriate use of manual handling equipment	Closed	Strategy meeting arranged. Refresher training re: manual handling for carers to attend. Updated manual handling care plan provided by the OT's. Carers reminded to remain the allocated time and not rush the service.
Care Agency- St Bernadette's	27/06/2024	Acts Of Omission	Service User found with broken glass	Closed	Minor incident. Increased monitoring
ADA	05/07/2024	Financial/ material	Allegation of theft	Closed	Internal investigation. Carer removed from service
Care Agency- Dr Giraldi	15/07/2024	Financial/ Material	Concerns re: vulnerable adult being taken advantage of	Closed	No consent provided. Did not meet threshold for safeguarding procedures.
GHA	16/07/2024	Physical/Sexual/Psychological	Staff observed inappropriately touching patient.	Pending Closure.	Strategy meeting arranged. RGP informed and investigating the matter. Staff involved interdicted and removed from the GHA. Care provider informed that these staff members are not to work with the GHA or CareAgency premises.
ERS- John Mac Wing	18/07/2024	Physical	Accidental fall	Closed	Internal investigation
ERS- Mount Alvernia	24/07/2024	Physical	Accidental fall	Closed	Minor incident
Care Agency- Dr Giraldi	09/08/2024	Neglect/ acts of Omission/ Organisational	Professional Misconduct	Closed	Internal investigation. Staff member moved to another service and added as a second carer.
Care Agency- Dr Giraldi	09/08/2024	Neglect/ acts of Omission/ Organisational	Professional Misconduct	Closed	Internal investigation. Staff member moved to another service and added as a second carer.
GHA- Ocean Views	13/08/2024	Physical/ Sexual	Patient inappropriately touch by another patient	Closed	RGP informed and spoke to parties involved. Verbal warning given. 1:1 staffing provided for safeguarding matters.
Care Agency Social Worker	23/08/2024	Sexual	Care speaking and acting inappropriately	Closed	Strategy meeting held and RGP contacted. Carer removed from the service. Service user withdrew complaint to the police and investigation ended.

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## CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 430

ERS- John Mac Wing	02/09/2024	Physical	Patient attacked by another resident	Closed	Substantiated- other resident removed from JMW
Bella Vista	02/09/2024	psychological	Domestic Abuse disclosure	Closed	Strategy meeting held, with RGP involved. Matter resolved as family member left family home and has not returned.
GHA- Ocean Views	16/09/2024	Psychological	Professional Misconduct	Closed	Internal investigation. Staff member removed from service users care
ERS- Mount Alvernia	02/10/2024	physical	Concerns around substance misuse	Closed	Internal investigation. Service has capacity and offers made with regards to access to additional support. Staff to monitor resident when returning to facility.
ERS- Mount Alvernia	02/10/2024	physical	Accidental fall	Closed	Internal investigation.
ERS- Mount Alvernia	07/10/2024	Neglect (recorded as institutional)	Accidental fall	Closed	Internal investigation.
Care Agency Social Worker	09/10/2024	Financial/ Material	Financial abuse	Pending Closure	Strategy meeting held. Support provided in the form of package of care. Matter raised to the RGP to investigate. Family to support with checking finances at the bank.
GHA	09/10/2024	Institutional	Family recording patient within GHA facility	Closed	Internal investigations. GHA to initiate procedures regarding recordings within their facility.
GHA	18/10/2024	psychological	Professional Misconduct	Pending Closure	Internal investigation initiated by GHA
Care Agency Social Worker	23/10/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Substantiated. Internal investigation initiated and increased monitoring and communication platform for carers created to ensure services were not missed.
Care Agency Social Worker	24/10/2024	Neglect/ Acts of Omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Internal investigation initiated and increased monitoring and communication platform for carers created to ensure services were not missed.
Care Agency Social Worker	31/10/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Substantiated – care provider dismissed carers in question.
Care Agency Social Worker	29/11/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions- resulting in admission to SBH	Closed	Substantiated. Internal investigation report sent by care provider highlighting failure to notify The Carer Agency of not being able to increase package of care. Care Provider informs better communication methods being implemented.
Care Agency Social Worker	04/11/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Inadequate care provided by care provider, poor communication	Closed	Strategy meeting held. Matters resolved following implementation plan.
Care Agency Social Worker	07/11/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Substantiated
Care Agency Social Worker	08/11/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Resolved - pending outcome form	Internal investigation. Care team reviewed and consistent team implemented. Pending outcome form

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## CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 430

Care Agency Social Worker	13/11/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Professional misconduct	Closed	Client did not wish to pursue this. Not substantiated
GHA	21/11/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Self- Neglect	Closed	Strategy meeting held. Admission to hospital warranted due to self-neglect and transferred to ERS.
RGP	30/11/2024	Financial/ Material	Allegation of theft	Closed	RGP investigation – client did not want to follow Safeguarding procedures. Not substantiated.
Care Agency Social Worker	05/12/2024	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Pending outcome	Internal investigation- consistent care team implemented
Care Agency Social Worker	08.01.25	Financial/ Material	Allegation of theft	Closed	Investigation undertaken. Difficult to prove due to incident taking place pre LifeCome Care and length of time taken to report.
Care Agency Social Worker	08.01.25	Neglect/ Organisational	Increased number of missed care sessions	Resolved - pending outcome form	Strategy meeting held with Care Provider. Care team reviewed and consistent team implemented.
Care Agency- St Bernadette's	09.01.25	Physical	Service user displaying physical aggression toward family. Concerns of carer breakdown	Resolved - pending outcome form	Internal investigation undertaken. Pending outcome form.
Care Agency Social Worker	14.01.25	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Resolved - pending outcome form	Strategy meeting held with Care Provider. Incident investigated Care team reviewed and consistent team implemented.
Care Agency Social Worker	17.01.25	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Strategy meeting held with Care Provider. Care team reviewed and consistent team implemented.
Care Agency Social Worker	17.01.25	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Internal investigation undertaken. Consistent care team implemented.
Care Agency Social Worker	19.01.25	Neglect/ Organisational	Inconsistent care team. Provision of carers who are not trained in using manual handling equipment	Closed	Strategy meeting held with Care Provider. Care team changed. Pending outcome form
Care Agency Social Worker	24.01.25	Neglect/acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Investigated - Not Substantiated
Care Agency Social Worker	27.01.25	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Strategy meeting held with Care Provider. Incident investigated Care team reviewed and consistent team implemented.
Care Agency Social Worker	27.01.25	Material/Financial	Allegation of Theft	Closed	Client declined to pursue investigation/did not consent to Safeguarding procedures
Care Agency Social Worker	29.01.25	Neglect	Inadequate care provision- 1 carer for a 2:1 service	Resolved - pending outcome form	Internal investigation undertaken. Consistent care team implemented. Pending outcome form
Care Agency Social Worker	30.01.25	Neglect/ acts of omission	Carer breakdown	Closed	Strategy meeting held. Appropriate support implemented as vulnerable adult admitted to residential care.
Care Agency Social Worker	30.01.25	Neglect/acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Internal investigation undertaken. Consistent care team implemented.
Care Agency Social Worker	04.02.25	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Internal investigation undertaken. Consistent care team implemented. Pending outcome form
MEDDOC	04.02.25	Material/Financial	Allegation of theft	Closed	Client declined to pursue investigation/did not consent to Safeguarding procedures

CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 430

Care Agency Social Worker	06.02.25	Material/Financial	Allegation of theft	Closed	Not Substantiated
Care Agency Social Worker	14.02.25	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Closed	Internal investigation undertaken. Consistent care team implemented.
Care Agency Social Worker	19.02.25	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Resolved - pending outcome form	Strategy meeting held with Care Provider. Incident investigated Care team reviewed and consistent team implemented. Pending outcome form
GHA	25.02.25	physical	Gross Misconduct- allegation of physical slap from staff to patient	Ongoing	RGP investigation ongoing
GHA	25.02.25	physical	Gross Misconduct- allegation of physical slap from staff to patient	Ongoing	RGP investigation ongoing
GHA	02.03.25	Sexual	Gross Misconduct- allegation of staff inappropriately touching patients backside	Ongoing	RGP investigation ongoing
Care Agency Social Worker	03.03.25	Psychological	Disclosure of domestic abuse	Ongoing	Strategy Meeting held - ongoing support being provided to victim.
Care Agency Social Worker	04.03.25	Neglect/ acts of omission	Increased number of missed care sessions	Resolved - pending outcome form	Internal investigation undertaken. Consistent care team implemented. Pending outcome form

515 **Madam Speaker:** We will come back to 428 to 430 in due course. Next question.

**Q431 & 432/2025  
Care Agency –  
GDC Grades & Posts**

520 **Acting Clerk:** Question 431, the Hon A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide a breakdown of all GDC grades and posts within the Care Agency for the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 432.

530 **Acting Clerk:** Question 432, the Hon A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide a breakdown of all GDC grades and posts within the ERS for the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25?

535 **Acting 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 431, in financial year 2023-24, there was: GDC Grade 3-1 and GDC Grade 1-6. In financial year 2024-25, GDC Grade 5-1, GDC Grade 4-5, GDC Grade 3-2 and GDC Grade 1-8. In answer to  
540 Question 432, the GHA has the following GDC grades within the ERS: GDC Grade 5-1, GDC Grade 4-2, GDC Grade 1-5. In financial year 2024-25, there were GDC Grade 2-1, GDC Grade 1-3.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

545

**Q433/2025  
Hillsides –  
Cleaning Staff**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 433, the Hon A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state the complement of cleaning staff at Hillsides for  
550 the past 12 months, broken down by month, and indicate whether there have been any changes to their duties or rotas within the last 6 months?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the cleaning  
555 staff at Hillsides is subcontracted to Medoc and is therefore run by Medoc as part of their contract.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker. Has the Hon. Minister made enquiries or asked whether there have been any changes within the complement of cleaning staff at Hillside recently?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, not that I can recall. I have hundreds of meetings a week.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker, but given that there is a specific question on this in relation to Hillside and the complement of cleaning staff, has the Hon. Minister made an effort to enquire about this and the cleaning staff and whether the complement has changed? That is my specific question to the Minister.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as a result of the question, definitely not. The question is asked of me, and the way this works is that, the contract was put up to tender. Meddoc won the tender and they determine how to best allocate the resources they are given.

So, no, it is up to Meddoc to determine what cleaning staff they require for the tender that they were ordered.

**The Hon. Dr K. Azopardi** Can I just ask the Hon. Minister, have the contracted duties changed at all in the last six months?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the tender for Meddoc was put out *circa* a year ago. It was awarded shortly after that. I cannot remember the exact date.

Since the tender was awarded, as far as I am concerned, there certainly have not been any changes to the contract that has been awarded.

**Q434-436/2025**

**GHA/ERS –**

**Government-Owned Companies/GDC Employees Seconded**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 434, the Hon A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide details on the total number of employees of Government-Owned companies, including GDC employees, who were posted, seconded to, or working within the GHA and ERS, who earned 30% or more above their annual basic salary in overtime payments during the following financial years 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25, broken down by post, grade, or title, and further broken down by basic salary and overtime payments on a yearly basis?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker I will answer this question together with Questions 435 and 436.

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

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide details on the total number of Public or Civil Servants excluding direct employees of the GHA, who were posted, seconded to, or working within the GHA and ERS, who earned 30% or more above their annual basic salary in overtime payments during the following financial years 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25, broken down

by post, grade, or title, and further broken down by basic salary and overtime payments on a yearly basis?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 436, the Hon A Sanchez.

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**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide details on the total number of direct employees of the GHA and ERS, who earned 30% or more above their annual basic salary in overtime payments during the following financial years 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25, broken down by post, grade, or title, and further broken down by basic salary and overtime payments on a yearly basis?

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

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

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#### ANSWER TO QUESTION 436

#### ANSWER TO QUESTION 434

For the Financial Years 2023/2024 & 2024/2025 the answer is none.

#### FY21/22

Grade Desc	Basic	Overtime
GDC Grade 1	£ 20,777.14	£ 6,530.81
GDC Grade 2	£ 12,909.15	£ 10,922.51
GDC Grade 1	£ 20,777.14	£ 6,610.15
GDC Grade 1	£ 19,625.13	£ 5,979.70
GDC Grade 1	£ 14,052.36	£ 5,512.32
GDC Grade 1	£ 19,978.03	£ 7,535.02

#### FY22/23

Grade Desc	Basic	Overtime
GDC Grade 2	£ 30,981.96	£ 10,849.39



**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436****ANSWER TO QUESTION 435****FY21/22**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Sum of TOTAL BASIC</b>	<b>Sum of TOTAL OVERTIME</b>
SENIOR OFFICER(NEW SCALE)	£ 63,109.27	£ 65,170.24
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£ 30,370.43	£ 12,242.94
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£ 38,699.04	£ 17,210.39
SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£ 51,288.00	£ 17,964.79
P.T.O	£ 40,655.04	£ 45,465.62
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 25,401.39
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 20,843.64
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 29,365.10	£ 20,529.19
SENIOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£ 40,424.73	£ 42,936.37
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 17,808.46
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 27,696.38	£ 16,452.89
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 31,081.64	£ 17,380.39
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 25,864.95	£ 16,166.10
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 28,548.73	£ 18,383.59
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 24,878.23
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 18,074.96
DIRECTOR OF NURSING P.T.H	£ 86,400.78	£ 42,836.60
HEALTH PROTECTION PRACTITIONER	£ 26,140.96	£ 15,552.34
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 20,614.23
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£ 36,914.05	£ 11,552.99
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 32,619.04	£ 17,208.73
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 20,308.59
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 18,634.90
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 27,994.99	£ 19,099.65
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	£ 28,156.89	£ 10,014.68
DOMESTIC SERVICES MANAGER	£ 31,415.81	£ 11,901.71
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 17,300.99
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£ 38,699.04	£ 18,527.67
SENIOR OFFICER(NEW SCALE)	£ 77,057.24	£ 30,246.72
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 21,887.88
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 18,999.78

**FY22/23**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Sum of TOTAL BASIC</b>	<b>Sum of TOTAL OVERTIME</b>
SENIOR OFFICER(NEW SCALE)	£ 68,284.26	£ 54,712.35
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£ 33,193.51	£ 13,891.39
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£ 38,699.04	£ 15,855.91
SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£ 52,981.84	£ 20,448.77
P.T.O	£ 40,655.04	£ 33,589.29
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 4,075.16	£ 4,839.15
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,687.96	£ 26,146.75
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 30,204.67	£ 27,173.01
SENIOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£ 42,269.16	£ 36,235.62

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436****CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 435**

HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	19,128.35
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	28,226.10	£	24,874.45
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	31,842.68	£	23,275.69
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	27,332.20	£	19,579.59
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	29,194.97	£	24,341.14
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	29,164.20
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	20,945.68
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,497.14	£	19,706.65
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£	38,211.95	£	11,715.33
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,418.32	£	21,230.49
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	25,814.45
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	19,997.41
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	28,532.43	£	25,288.27
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	£	28,845.38	£	9,116.10
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	19,668.55
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£	35,546.25	£	10,767.74
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	23,965.90

**FY23/24**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Sum of TOTAL BASIC</b>		<b>Sum of TOTAL OVERTIME</b>	
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£	34,421.18	£	12,576.90
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£	38,699.04	£	15,792.21
HEAD OF FINANCE & PROCUREMENT	£	54,042.96	£	16,963.06
GHA SKILL ZONE 2	£	501.52	£	169.05
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£	19,678.99	£	7,877.90
P.T.O	£	40,655.04	£	61,244.43
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	27,035.25
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	30,992.66	£	28,030.33
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	20,744.69
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	28,768.27	£	27,075.67
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	32,619.04	£	20,866.53
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	27,850.00	£	23,278.33
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	30,034.33	£	27,103.19
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	34,198.58
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	27,361.32
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	14,295.08	£	9,659.95
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£	38,699.04	£	11,789.41
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	28,362.91
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	28,511.56
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	23,678.99
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	29,169.85	£	29,435.49
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	11,776.71	£	6,345.24
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	£	29,548.10	£	11,172.28
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	8,408.03	£	3,919.50
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	33,687.96	£	21,762.60
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£	27,484.69	£	14,281.35

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436****CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 435****FY24/25**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Sum of TOTAL BASIC</b>	<b>Sum of TOTAL OVERTIME</b>
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£ 39,499.04	£ 11,990.87
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 21,537.10	£ 14,869.11
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 34,487.96	£ 18,373.87
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 32,550.82	£ 19,647.40
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 34,487.96	£ 19,554.30
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 30,332.98	£ 18,526.49
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 34,282.20	£ 20,062.15
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 32,046.08	£ 18,864.58
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 34,487.96	£ 22,499.13
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 37,975.63	£ 15,710.03
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£ 39,499.04	£ 15,139.36
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 33,556.71	£ 18,091.15
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 2,058.71	£ 2,467.93
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 34,487.96	£ 17,578.32
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 30,809.19	£ 20,082.03
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 25,980.45	£ 16,192.88
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	£ 31,069.89	£ 11,329.26
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 25,890.50	£ 16,132.76
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 25,521.61	£ 16,433.95
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 34,487.96	£ 19,890.68
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£ 34,487.96	£ 19,153.86

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436****ANSWER TO QUESTION 436****FY 21/22**

Grade	Basic Salary	Overtime Payment
SENIOR OFFICER(NEW SCALE)	£63,109.27	£65,170.24
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£30,370.43	£12,242.94
GHA JUNIOR CLERK	£19,914.94	£8,363.05
BIOMEDICAL ASSISTANT QUALIFIED	£1,963.84	£1,222.08
STAFF NURSE	£4,256.84	£1,970.51
STAFF NURSE	£3,866.91	£2,528.19
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£38,699.04	£17,210.39
JUNIOR A&E CLERK	£20,140.23	£9,525.94
SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£51,288.00	£17,964.79
STAFF NURSE	£39,159.44	£13,815.26
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£21,394.65	£8,043.22
ENROLLED NURSE	£25,012.27	£10,070.66
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN	£34,257.00	£11,866.06
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£28,186.48	£39,130.45
STAFF NURSE	£14,131.41	£2,613.51
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN	£28,572.96	£10,514.64
NURSE ASSISTANT	£258.26	£872.51
STAFF NURSE	£6,171.50	£3,115.29
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£12,375.01
DEPUTY PUBLIC ANALYST	£42,465.96	£22,136.20
STATION MANAGER	£50,658.00	£23,240.60
CATERING DIRECTOR	£53,939.04	£26,691.90
ENROLLED NURSE	£24,450.34	£32,270.91
STAFF NURSE	£2,177.63	£1,141.87
NURSE ASSISTANT	£10,984.25	£5,787.64
ENROLLED NURSE	£26,248.81	£10,010.62
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,656.49	£9,001.30
OPERATING DEPT. PRACTITIONER	£7,143.24	£2,181.40
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£11,256.41	£4,646.41
P.T.O	£40,655.04	£45,465.62
ENROLLED NURSE	£30,563.04	£12,078.42
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£25,401.39
TSSU/CSSD TECH(EX NURSING)	£21,192.81	£7,252.60
LOCUM ASS MOLECULAR MIC SCIENT	£13,415.08	£3,879.04
STAFF NURSE	£5,709.50	£1,786.50
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£20,843.64
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£29,365.10	£20,529.19
TSSU/CSSD TECH (EX COMM PROJ)	£22,947.79	£7,005.36
SENIOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£40,424.73	£42,936.37
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£17,808.46

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

JUNIOR A&E CLERK	£20,557.97	£7,248.94
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£9,559.43
STAFF NURSE	£4,762.16	£2,028.31
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£15,281.52	£14,588.78
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£11,514.68
STAFF NURSE	£54.80	£246.35
BIOMEDICAL ASSISTANT QUALIFIED	£28,367.15	£17,746.55
DIABETES NURSE SPECIALIST	£3,541.33	£1,120.10
DENTAL NURSE	£25,499.08	£11,685.45
ENROLLED NURSE	£29,324.47	£8,852.21
ACA TRAINING EMT	£23,705.04	£7,387.68
TSSU/CSSD TECH(EX NURSING)	£7,243.03	£2,569.21
DENTAL NURSE	£15,027.81	£4,934.29
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£27,696.38	£16,452.89
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£31,081.64	£17,380.39
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£25,864.95	£16,166.10
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£28,548.73	£18,383.59
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£24,878.23
STAFF NURSE	£3,882.07	£1,978.76
NURSE ASSISTANT	£14,568.80	£4,827.24
GHA CLERK	£30,435.06	£21,779.95
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£18,074.96
CYTOLOGY SCREENER	£31,755.96	£21,661.67
ENROLLED NURSE	£30,580.04	£19,168.21
STAFF NURSE	£822.87	£1,259.04
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF NURSING SER	£66,293.04	£28,703.23
ASSOCIATE SPECIALIST	£90,936.96	£38,920.00
DIRECTOR OF NURSING P.T.H	£86,400.78	£42,836.60
STAFF NURSE	£212.83	£698.91
HEALTH PROTECTION PRACTITIONER	£26,140.96	£15,552.34
ENROLLED NURSE	£30,563.04	£12,575.95
PARAMEDIC	£44,147.83	£26,051.88
GHA CLERK	£28,186.48	£10,957.88
STAFF NURSE	£9,854.49	£2,144.69
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£29,409.00	£16,148.80
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£10,931.66
STAFF NURSE	£36,926.14	£24,269.26
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£12,508.31
PARAMEDIC	£8,062.77	£2,930.73
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£20,614.23
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN	£31,755.96	£10,506.16

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

NURSE PRACTITIONER	£49,344.22	£21,966.76
SISTER/CHARGE NURSE	£49,384.88	£16,691.95
STAFF NURSE	£5,521.16	£1,629.88
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£2,310.92	£1,077.17
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£36,914.05	£11,552.99
AMB SERV CALL TAKER DISPATCHER	£29,409.00	£9,877.40
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£32,619.04	£17,208.73
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£20,308.59
CLINICAL NURSE MANAGER (NEW)	£62,347.10	£21,955.84
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£27,174.37	£11,556.92
STAFF NURSE	£6,171.50	£3,025.11
ENROLLED NURSE	£32,497.30	£24,253.74
STAFF NURSE	£22,037.96	£9,096.82
NURSE PRACTITIONER	£51,435.22	£25,628.52
STATION OFFICER	£36,134.00	£17,966.03
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN	£31,755.96	£9,842.29
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£10,025.14
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£14,316.03
ACA TRAINING EMT	£23,705.04	£7,171.42
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£18,634.90
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£27,994.99	£19,099.65
GHA JUNIOR CLERK	£23,893.87	£7,579.54
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£11,550.21
STAFF NURSE	£36,235.98	£12,223.71
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	£28,156.89	£10,014.68
STAFF NURSE	£35,074.58	£22,901.96
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,330.19	£451.68
GHA CLERK	£30,981.96	£18,641.79
CLINICAL NURSE MANAGER (NEW)	£87,841.17	£30,690.44
NURSE ASSISTANT	£20,851.02	£7,454.39
DOMESTIC SERVICES MANAGER	£31,415.81	£11,901.71
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£8,638.70
GHA JUNIOR CLERK	£21,193.70	£7,629.08
STAFF NURSE	£3,486.43	£1,171.16
CLINICAL NURSE MANAGER (NEW)	£59,470.08	£43,292.80
NURSE ASSISTANT	£22,619.43	£10,818.05
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£29,409.00	£16,648.32
CHIEF AMBULANCE OFFICER	£46,377.43	£20,980.39
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£17,300.99
STATION OFFICER	£33,275.41	£23,265.37
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£28,124.09	£16,115.10
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£38,699.04	£18,527.67

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

CLINICAL NURSE MANAGER (NEW)	£63,780.48	£21,013.26
SENIOR OFFICER(NEW SCALE)	£77,057.24	£30,246.72
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£5,343.06	£4,553.33
CLINICAL NURSE MANAGER (NEW)	£64,454.89	£21,085.52
JUNIOR A&E CLERK	£20,324.90	£9,479.12
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£21,887.88
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£15,290.11
NURSE PRACTITIONER	£43,660.31	£13,409.37
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,877.75	£765.85
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,451.45	£15,099.31
LOCUM PH LAB(PCR)SCIENTIST	£22,561.29	£11,950.00
PARAMEDIC	£37,029.00	£14,854.53
BIOMEDICAL ASSISTANT QUALIFIED	£29,409.00	£27,053.52
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£33,126.96	£21,785.44
GHA JUNIOR CLERK	£20,393.03	£6,516.70
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£12,478.97	£3,750.54
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£18,999.78
TSSU/CSSD TECH (EX COMM PROJ)	£22,619.42	£12,863.22
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£10,803.69

**FY22/23**

Grade	Basic Salary	Overtime Payment
SENIOR OFFICER(NEW SCALE)	£68,284.26	£54,712.35
RESIDENT MEDICAL OFFICER	£44,124.00	£29,535.00
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£33,193.51	£13,891.39
GHA JUNIOR CLERK	£20,601.00	£8,327.51
NURSE ASSISTANT	£3,317.93	£1,786.02
TSSU/CSSD TECH(EX NURSING)	£22,878.71	£7,239.45
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,603.17	£503.00
BIOMEDICAL ASSISTANT QUALIFIED	£21,638.72	£10,597.44
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£38,699.04	£15,855.91
RESIDENT MEDICAL OFFICER	£42,915.31	£30,947.50
DOMESTIC SERVICES MANAGER	£47,244.00	£17,344.48
JUNIOR A&E CLERK	£20,812.44	£10,951.19
SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£52,981.84	£20,448.77
BIOMEDICAL ASSISTANT QUALIFIED	£19,879.21	£8,533.42
STAFF NURSE	£15,979.27	£4,882.02
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£18,145.74	£6,736.74
ENROLLED NURSE	£25,913.69	£10,417.63
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£28,875.58	£43,599.31
STAFF NURSE	£38,662.33	£13,209.25



**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN	£29,080.88	£8,914.15
RECEPTIONIST/HELPDESK OPERATOR	£30,981.96	£9,376.08
STATION OFFICER	£31,755.96	£10,442.45
STATION MANAGER	£50,658.00	£24,789.20
ENROLLED NURSE	£24,851.45	£19,172.46
ENROLLED NURSE	£27,147.38	£13,050.67
P.T.O	£40,655.04	£33,589.29
STAFF NURSE	£2,758.19	£1,781.91
ENROLLED NURSE	£30,563.04	£9,756.57
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,562.17	£674.50
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£4,075.16	£4,839.15
TSSU/CSSD TECH(EX NURSING)	£22,991.00	£9,082.34
LOCUM ASS MOLECULAR MIC SCIENT	£3,903.36	£1,659.84
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£26,146.75
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£30,204.67	£27,173.01
TSSU/CSSD TECH (EX COMM PROJ)	£23,094.78	£8,060.21
SENIOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£42,269.16	£36,235.62
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£19,128.35
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£38,208.13	£17,770.00
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£44,124.00	£17,940.00
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,562.17	£775.19
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£28,226.10	£24,874.45
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£31,842.68	£23,275.69
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,650.75	£498.22
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£27,332.20	£19,579.59
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£29,194.97	£24,341.14
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£29,164.20
NURSE ASSISTANT	£16,029.52	£6,345.24
SNR ANATOMICAL PATHOLOGY TECH	£3,100.00	£2,828.61
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£20,945.68
CYTOLOGY SCREENER	£31,755.96	£28,762.06
STAFF NURSE	£12,985.99	£4,572.61
ENROLLED NURSE	£30,563.04	£17,229.24
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,650.75	£659.30
ASSOCIATE SPECIALIST	£90,936.96	£31,080.00
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,650.75	£798.65
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£15,701.90	£11,177.50
PARAMEDIC	£13,189.96	£4,416.82
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,650.75	£499.11
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£14,704.50	£5,722.86
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£13,865.52	£4,913.03
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£18,385.00	£6,240.00

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

STAFF NURSE	£37,029.00	£16,948.60
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£13,029.14
CLINICAL INFORMATICS OFFICER	£75,584.77	£24,881.22
PARAMEDIC	£1,459.93	£876.48
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,497.14	£19,706.65
NURSE ASSISTANT	£302.86	£305.67
NURSE PRACTITIONER	£50,658.00	£22,408.99
STAFF NURSE	£8,378.02	£2,539.94
SISTER/CHARGE NURSE	£49,566.97	£15,261.38
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£38,211.95	£11,715.33
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,418.32	£21,230.49
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£25,814.45
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£28,231.33	£11,727.00
RESIDENT MEDICAL OFFICER	£31,967.24	£19,592.50
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,022.49	£436.96
ENROLLED NURSE	£32,087.00	£28,655.16
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,474.91	£497.76
STAFF NURSE	£25,835.96	£13,367.31
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,562.17	£623.90
NURSE PRACTITIONER	£50,658.00	£19,190.99
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN	£31,755.96	£11,789.18
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£1,170.02	£1,066.50
STAFF MIDWIFE	£28,577.20	£9,790.49
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£19,997.41
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£28,532.43	£25,288.27
STAFF NURSE	£37,147.07	£13,904.17
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,278.00	£463.50
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	£28,845.38	£9,116.10
STAFF NURSE	£9,998.25	£4,714.27
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,603.17	£484.24
NURSE ASSISTANT	£1,650.75	£508.93
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£29,409.00	£17,605.90
CHIEF AMBULANCE OFFICER	£56,358.96	£25,200.00
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£8,891.10
STATION OFFICER	£35,093.56	£16,363.73
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£28,899.61	£9,843.16
JUNIOR A&E CLERK	£21,003.78	£10,308.24
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£19,668.55
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£13,865.52	£6,466.57
NURSE PRACTITIONER	£25,329.00	£11,780.73
LOCUM ASS MOLECULAR MIC SCIENT	£7,247.36	£2,808.96

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£14,540.01
PARAMEDIC	£37,029.00	£11,963.55
BIOMEDICAL ASSISTANT QUALIFIED	£29,409.00	£13,741.65
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£33,126.96	£20,116.16
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£35,546.25	£10,767.74
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£23,965.90
TSSU/CSSU MANAGER(EX NURSING)	£29,268.48	£14,051.67
LOCUM MOLECULAR MIC SCIENTIST	£13,865.52	£5,663.15

**FY23/24**

Grade	Basic Salary	Overtime Payment
RESIDENT MEDICAL OFFICER	£24,221.73	£13,500.00
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£34,421.18	£12,576.90
GHA JUNIOR CLERK	£4,148.12	£2,150.81
TSSU TECHNICIAN	£23,094.78	£8,510.19
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£44,124.00	£45,820.00
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£38,699.04	£15,792.21
RESIDENT MEDICAL OFFICER	£44,124.00	£32,220.00
EHT OFFICER	£47,518.68	£25,828.53
GHA JUNIOR CLERK	£21,759.61	£9,021.03
HEAD OF FINANCE & PROCUREMENT	£54,042.96	£16,963.06
BIOMEDICAL ASSISTANT QUALIFIED	£18,812.30	£10,120.57
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£29,548.83	£9,043.83
ENROLLED NURSE	£26,839.37	£19,574.24
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£29,579.11	£19,528.47
STAFF NURSE	£38,946.39	£20,846.24
GHA SKILL ZONE 2	£501.52	£169.05
STAFF NURSE	£9,616.04	£4,510.84
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£19,678.99	£7,877.90
STATION MANAGER	£50,658.00	£22,724.40
SENIOR ENROLLED NURSE	£33,126.96	£13,835.62
ENROLLED NURSE	£27,984.52	£16,164.51
P.T.O	£40,655.04	£61,244.43
STAFF NURSE	£45,829.68	£16,301.80
STAFF NURSE	£29,350.83	£14,922.95
TSSU TECHNICIAN	£22,921.93	£9,205.49
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£27,035.25
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£30,992.66	£28,030.33
TSSU TECHNICIAN	£22,878.71	£8,022.64
SENIOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£43,758.25	£21,922.54
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£20,744.69

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

TSSU TECHNICIAN	£22,624.02	£7,684.68
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£44,124.00	£18,230.00
STAFF NURSE	£34,823.10	£11,026.48
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£28,768.27	£27,075.67
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£32,619.04	£20,866.53
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£27,850.00	£23,278.33
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£30,034.33	£27,103.19
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£34,198.58
STAFF NURSE	£37,455.09	£14,734.25
SNR ANATOMICAL PATHOLOGY TECH	£3,100.00	£3,315.15
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£27,361.32
CYTOLOGY SCREENER	£31,755.96	£32,765.32
ENROLLED NURSE	£30,563.04	£14,718.09
ASSOCIATE SPECIALIST	£90,936.96	£28,280.00
STAFF NURSE	£306.12	£3,647.82
ENROLLED NURSE	£30,563.04	£23,327.55
STAFF NURSE	£37,284.53	£13,207.56
GHA CLERK	£29,579.11	£12,561.56
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£22,062.00	£9,560.00
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£14,295.08	£9,659.95
NURSE PRACTITIONER	£50,658.00	£19,555.76
EHT OFFICER	£41,060.59	£14,815.70
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£38,699.04	£11,789.41
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£28,362.91
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£28,511.56
ENROLLED NURSE	£30,146.22	£10,218.60
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£28,841.79	£11,548.21
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£22,289.72	£10,725.31
AMBULANCE CARE ASSISTANT	£16,953.92	£7,118.19
CLINICAL FELLOW	£37,215.64	£16,750.00
STAFF NURSE	£34,979.68	£15,436.97
SENIOR EHT OFFICER	£63,118.21	£20,397.74
ENROLLED NURSE	£32,145.62	£28,537.78
STAFF NURSE	£14,802.74	£6,171.79
CLINICAL FELLOW	£19,242.96	£8,625.00
NURSE PRACTITIONER	£50,658.00	£18,454.69
STATION OFFICER	£35,634.00	£10,744.09
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£23,678.99
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£29,169.85	£29,435.49
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£11,776.71	£6,345.24
STAFF NURSE	£38,167.92	£22,087.68

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	£29,548.10	£11,172.28
STAFF NURSE	£1,813.55	£2,093.65
CLINICAL FELLOW	£5,175.24	£8,280.00
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£8,408.03	£3,919.50
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£33,126.96	£12,105.40
ELDERLY RESIDENTIAL SER DOCTOR	£103,376.23	£46,250.00
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£35,079.22	£16,660.44
STATION OFFICER	£38,820.82	£18,512.75
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£9,243.68	£4,301.00
STAFF NURSE	£28,995.63	£11,221.15
STAFF NURSE	£29,769.21	£11,006.95
JUNIOR A&E CLERK	£21,868.42	£10,765.15
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,687.96	£21,762.60
ACA TRAINING EMT	£21,695.04	£6,818.97
STAFF NURSE	£29,658.49	£9,647.24
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£27,731.04	£8,940.87
SENIOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£29,985.61	£11,799.58
APP MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER	£43,575.00	£14,362.96
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£27,484.69	£14,281.35
TSSU/CSSU MANAGER(EX NURSING)	£40,060.01	£15,297.65

**FY24/25**

Grade	Basic Salary	Overtime Payment
SENIOR EHT OFFICER	£65,102.45	£21,508.60
CLINICAL FELLOW	£22,897.98	£8,145.00
TSSU TECHNICIAN	£23,635.50	£8,793.89
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£21,380.70	£8,910.00
STAFF NURSE	£8,243.87	£4,304.50
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£39,499.04	£11,990.87
RESIDENT MEDICAL OFFICER	£44,924.00	£39,105.00
EHT OFFICER	£49,188.36	£24,874.10
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£31,558.62	£9,645.62
PARAMEDIC	£37,829.00	£13,831.57
SISTER/CHARGE NURSE	£38,590.78	£15,461.29
ENROLLED NURSE	£28,480.01	£23,378.71
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£21,537.10	£14,869.11
TSSU TECHNICIAN	£4,264.54	£1,660.95
EHT OFFICER	£52,642.52	£18,257.32
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£31,101.71	£29,209.90
STAFF NURSE	£39,329.51	£16,963.22
RADIOGRAPHER SENIOR II	£16,334.13	£4,897.23

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

GHA SKILL ZONE 2	£6,312.89	£4,680.75
STAFF NURSE	£34,253.26	£12,433.46
NURSE ASSISTANT	£24,033.63	£8,713.57
SENIOR ENROLLED NURSE	£36,434.00	£15,435.06
SENIOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£26,854.97	£8,252.76
TSSU TECHNICIAN	£22,781.86	£7,241.60
ENROLLED NURSE	£29,624.67	£24,592.07
ESTATES MANAGER	£41,455.04	£45,549.64
ENROLLED NURSE	£31,363.04	£9,991.60
STAFF NURSE	£31,502.69	£10,158.12
STAFF NURSE	£31,083.64	£11,291.22
TSSU TECHNICIAN	£6,861.08	£3,364.91
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£34,487.96	£18,373.87
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£32,550.82	£19,647.40
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£34,487.96	£19,554.30
STAFF NURSE	£2,670.77	£1,039.71
DENTAL NURSE	£29,372.96	£8,882.92
GHA SKILL ZONE 2	£15,249.36	£12,353.64
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£44,924.00	£13,545.00
DENTAL NURSE	£26,163.52	£7,973.00
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£30,332.98	£18,526.49
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£34,282.20	£20,062.15
NURSE ASSISTANT	£219.19	£1,053.70
STAFF NURSE	£29,184.48	£19,008.26
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£32,046.08	£18,864.58
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£34,487.96	£22,499.13
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£37,975.63	£15,710.03
STAFF NURSE	£39,116.46	£11,915.57
STAFF NURSE	£38,000.00	£13,542.74
SNR ANATOMICAL PATHOLOGY TECH	£9,705.99	£3,067.53
NURSE ASSISTANT	£34,487.96	£17,814.54
STAFF NURSE	£6,271.50	£2,177.46
ENROLLED NURSE	£31,363.04	£13,555.21
GHA SKILL ZONE 2	£15,249.36	£6,194.74
GHA SKILL ZONE 2	£13,335.05	£6,177.92
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£11,134.60	£4,247.51
ENROLLED NURSE	£31,363.04	£27,827.62
GHA SKILL ZONE 2	£4,995.64	£4,588.75
STAFF NURSE	£38,369.87	£20,062.60
GHA CLERK	£31,101.71	£9,817.37
GHA STORES MANAGER	£39,391.51	£12,272.49
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£24,425.12	£11,455.89

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£22,462.00	£41,535.00
CLINICAL FELLOW	£13,304.60	£5,625.00
CLINICAL FELLOW	£18,655.93	£5,580.00
CLINICAL FELLOW	£11,945.00	£7,740.00
STAFF NURSE	£39,329.51	£17,274.69
EHT OFFICER	£47,587.53	£24,197.51
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	£39,499.04	£15,139.36
GHA SKILL ZONE 2	£15,831.99	£9,239.36
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£33,556.71	£18,091.15
CLINICAL FELLOW	£9,476.49	£5,120.00
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£2,058.71	£2,467.93
ENROLLED NURSE	£30,612.85	£10,145.25
NURSE ASSISTANT	£25,369.86	£12,769.35
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£30,426.12	£12,274.14
ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY CLERK	£25,354.83	£10,794.92
ACA TRAINING EMT	£23,825.30	£9,173.52
AMBULANCE CARE ASSISTANT	£23,726.30	£11,082.25
CLINICAL FELLOW	£38,705.96	£19,440.00
STAFF NURSE	£32,247.86	£10,358.35
SISTER/CHARGE NURSE	£37,554.64	£16,176.41
STAFF NURSE	£37,973.33	£11,743.29
GHA SKILL ZONE 2	£10,612.79	£9,192.24
STAFF NURSE	£38,619.36	£12,168.63
ENROLLED NURSE	£32,341.91	£34,503.88
STATION OFFICER	£36,434.00	£11,297.88
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN	£32,555.96	£10,579.95
ACA TRAINING EMT	£24,505.04	£8,218.05
GHA JUNIOR CLERK	£22,571.23	£8,152.11
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£34,487.96	£17,578.32
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£30,809.19	£20,082.03
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£25,980.45	£16,192.88
ASSISTANT EHT OFFICER	£40,439.96	£13,495.65
STAFF NURSE	£38,375.50	£21,419.53
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	£31,069.89	£11,329.26
STAFF NURSE	£38,903.42	£14,485.92
STAFF NURSE	£13,532.64	£4,310.75
CLINICAL FELLOW	£12,224.20	£7,893.44
EHT OFFICER	£53,511.96	£16,981.52
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£25,890.50	£16,132.76
ELDERLY RESIDENTIAL SER DOCTOR	£101,786.04	£62,325.00
STATION OFFICER	£11,878.00	£6,817.16

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**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 436**

CLINICAL FELLOW	£44,924.00	£15,722.50
TSSU TECHNICIAN	£22,681.87	£7,862.21
SISTER/CHARGE NURSE	£31,109.00	£9,939.78
STATION OFFICER	£36,434.00	£15,627.82
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£7,354.00	£6,120.00
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£25,521.61	£16,433.95
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£22,462.00	£37,947.60
DENTAL NURSE	£29,372.96	£8,999.30
NON CONSULTANT HOSPITAL DOCTOR	£28,434.64	£9,360.00
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£11,134.60	£6,711.07
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£34,487.96	£19,890.68
ACA TRAINING EMT	£22,495.04	£6,961.97
STAFF NURSE	£31,507.30	£13,469.23
BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£30,141.78	£9,861.78
BIOMEDICAL ASSISTANT QUALIFIED	£25,847.96	£7,987.52
SISTER/CHARGE NURSE	£49,283.65	£15,587.54
BIOMEDICAL ASSISTANT QUALIFIED	£30,209.00	£11,487.22
SENIOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENTIST	£56,012.59	£22,456.27
HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS	£34,487.96	£19,153.86
TSSU/CSSU MANAGER(EX NURSING)	£43,566.01	£15,875.86

640

**Madam Speaker:** All right, we will come back to that later, we will move on.

**Q437/2025**

**Community Mental Health Services –  
Housing Accommodation**

645

**Acting Clerk:** Question 437, the Hon A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** In relation to the Community Mental Health Services, could the Government state whether it has any plans to extend the provision of housing accommodation, similar to the model of care offered at Sandpits House? If so, could the Government elaborate on when it intends to do so, and whether any specific locations have been identified?

650

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

655

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, in the work being undertaken to develop a new model of care for Community Mental Health Services, the importance of supported accommodation is fully accepted. As this new model develops, we will come back with appropriate proposals for supported accommodation.

660 **Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker, could the Hon. Minister perhaps elaborate on the options that are being considered, whether the Government actually intends to extend the provision of what is offered in Sandpits House? Is that what the Government is intending to do, or is the Government considering a different approach to this

665 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I previously stated, we will come back with proposals when we are ready to.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

670

**Q438/2025**  
**Mental Health Board Report 2024 –**  
**Current Staffing Complement**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 438, the Hon A Sanchez.

675 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Can the Government provide a current staffing complement of the housing outreach program as referenced in the Mental Health Board Gibraltar Annual Inspection Report 2024? Specifically, could the Government (a) Detail the number of employees by specific grade; (b) Indicate how many of these positions are full-time and how many are part-time; and (c) Confirm whether all these posts are currently filled, or if any are vacant or affected by long-term  
680 absence?

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

685 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the housing outreach team consists of two full-time nursing assistants. Currently, one of them is on long-term sick and is being covered by another full-time nursing assistant.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker. Could the Hon. Minister confirm whether any of these positions are covered by anyone on a part-time role or are there  
690 any administrative posts being covered on a part-time role? There is mention of this in the Mental Health Board report. This is why I make reference to part-time in the question.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the information that I have in front of me is that the housing outreach program consists of two full-time nursing assistants. One of them, as I have said,  
695 is covered because they are on long-term sick. The information that has been presented to me is that they are covered by another full-time nursing assistant.

Therefore, the information that I have in front of me is that there are two full-time nursing assistants, and one of these nursing assistants is off on long-term sick, and the post is being covered by another full-time nursing assistant.

700

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker. Could the hon. Lady perhaps outline the duties and the role of the staff in this department, and what the housing outreach program is, what they cover, what they are meant to do?

705 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it is becoming a bit of a boring refrain, but if a specific question like that is to be put to me, I need to have notice of the question. If you want to know what the housing outreach program and nursing assistant does, I am very happy to provide the

hon. Lady with information regarding exactly what the housing outreach and nursing assistant does. However, I would need notice of that question.

710

**Hon. A Sanchez:** With all due respect, Madam Speaker, I would have assumed that the hon. Lady would come to this House and would have done some homework in terms of preparing her supplementary answers.

715

**Madam Speaker:** That is the answer you have. Is there another question? I am not going to rehearse the same question with the same answer.

720

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Does the hon. Lady at least have a sense of what the housing outreach program does, and to be able to form a view as to whether she feels that one full-time nursing assistant is enough to cover the roles and responsibilities of what this program should be doing, given that she has already stated that one of the staff is on permanent long-term sick leave?

725

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I have said before, my staff and the staff of the Care Agency and or the GHA and or the ERS are not here to wake up one morning to determine what the hon. Lady might ask me that day. The question is very specific.

730

It breaks it out into A, B and C, and the staff have taken great care to answer questions A, B and C. If the hon. Lady then turns up at the House and determines that she wishes to answer a completely different question on a completely different set of facts, requiring me to provide different factual information relating to the job description of a nursing assistant in a housing outreach program, as I have said to her numerous times today, and that's in this session alone, and I have said it in the previous session and I have said it in the session before that, if the hon. Lady wishes me to answer a question, I am very, very happy to stand here for hours, as I will do today, and provide all of the information that the hon. Lady asks me for. However, I need notice of the question.

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I do not know how many times I have to repeat the same refrain, Madam Speaker. The hon. Lady should know by now that if she wants a detailed answer, she has to ask me the right question. You cannot ask me a question about the current staffing complement and then want to go into a question about job descriptions.

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We have now been here for over 18 months, Madam Speaker. This is a basic premise, and in all fairness, it is not the first time I have raised this point. I understand that the hon. Lady wants to get a rise, wants to get a Facebook clip.

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I really get this. I really, really understand that she is going for her Facebook clip that she is going for the rise. However, Madam Speaker, there is a basic premise that you ask a question and you get the answer.

I have never refused to answer a question. I have not given the information that the hon. Lady is requesting. However, the hon. Lady needs to learn finally that in order to get a detailed response, she needs to ask the right question.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

#### Q439/2025

#### Mental Health Board Report 2024 – Underutilization of Sunshine Ward

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**Acting Clerk** Question 439, the Hon. A Sanchez.



**Hon. A Sanchez:** In light of the observations and recommendations in the Mental Health Board Annual Inspection Report 2024 regarding the continued underutilization of Sunshine Ward at Ocean Views and its potential role in addressing the gaps in Elderly Residential Services care, can the Government: (a) Confirm whether a decision has been made regarding the future use of Sunshine Ward; and (b) If so, provide details of that decision, including any plans to repurpose the ward to support ERS capacity or other healthcare needs.

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, no final decision has yet been made regarding the future use of Sunshine Ward. However, consideration is currently being given to its potential use. Preliminary assessments are ongoing to evaluate the feasibility of reintroducing a specialized responsive behavior dementia assessment unit.

Should this ward be repurposed for this service, it may also enable an increase in respite capacity within the Elderly Residential Services, as this is due to consistently high demand. The respite service operates at full capacity at all times.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker. Given that this is a concern that is continuously expressed by the Mental Health Board, and indeed it was expressed in their report in 2022 as something that had already been highlighted previously, then again expressed in 2024, and now in 2025. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps give a more concrete timeframe as to when we can expect developments in this or a decision to be taken as to the use of Sunshine Ward in relation to the ERS?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it is remarkable that we focus on that and we do not focus on all the positives that the Mental Health Report actually states, and all the positives and the warm comments that the Mental Health Board actually takes, for which I would like to give a warm thank you to George Parody and his team on that. The Mental Health Board actually acknowledges that we are doing a lot of work and they acknowledge that the model of care that we are actually proposing is a very good model of care, so I am very, very grateful for the contents of their report, and yes, it does raise stuff like Sunshine Ward. As I have stated in my answer, Madam Speaker, preliminary assessments are ongoing and I am not able to give a further date as at this point.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q440-41/2025**  
**Mental Health Board Report 2024 –**  
**Lack of Housing Arrangements**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 440, the Hon A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** In light of the concerns highlighted in the Mental Health Board Gibraltar Inspection Report 2024 regarding inappropriate placements in mental health facilities due to lack of suitable housing arrangements, can the Government: (a) outline the specific measures currently being implemented to address the issue of inappropriate placements in mental health facilities; and (b) provide the details of the measures currently being introduced to ensure the availability of suitable housing options and adequate support for individuals requiring such assistance?

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

805 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 441.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 441, the Hon A Sanchez.

810 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state what measures are being implemented to address the issue of inappropriate placements in mental health facilities due to delays in transfers to Elderly Residential Services facilities as highlighted in the Mental Health Board Gibraltar Annual Inspection Report 2024? Additionally, could the Government provide figures for the numbers of individuals affected by such delays during the years 2023-24 and 2024-25 to present date, broken  
815 down by month and facility?

**Acting 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  
820 Question 440, in response to the issue of inappropriate placements within mental health facilities, referrals are now being directed to more suitable services, including the Elderly Residential Services and the Care Agency. Additionally, a housing outreach team has been established to provide support and assistance to service users within their homes, thereby reducing the unnecessary use of mental health facilities. To further ensure the availability of appropriate  
825 housing options, the mental health workforce is actively collaborating with the Housing Department.

This joint effort aims to guarantee that individuals with mental health and housing needs are provided with suitable accommodation. This may include independent living arrangements supported by tailored care packages or placement within supported accommodation settings. In  
830 answer to Question 441, the mental health team are working closely with the ERS to identify and refer those suitable for ERS.

When capacity becomes available in ERS, suitable patients for mental health services are given priority. In February 2023, there was one individual delayed in transfer to ERS, and in 2024, there were two individuals affected, one in January and one in September, by a delay in transfer to ERS.  
835 There are currently two service users to date in Ocean Views awaiting transfer to ERS, and one awaiting an outcome of assessment with a view to transfer to ERS.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for your answer, Madam Speaker. The Hon. Minister has stated that a housing outreach team has been developed or introduced to help deal with the issue of  
840 inappropriate placements. Can the Minister state the date on which this housing outreach was developed?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** It was introduced on February 23.

845 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Is the Hon. Minister of the opinion that this is effectively dealing with the issue of inappropriate placements, given that the latest report, 2025, still raises the issue of inappropriate placements, even after the introduction of this housing outreach team?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** The important thing is that there is an MDT working together in order to facilitate the move of these individuals that are affected. There is the issue then of where to put them. The space in ERS is limited and the space in housing is limited.  
850

As soon as space has become available, the MDT, my team together with Minister Orfila's team, work together in order to get them into the appropriate facility. There are limitations in that respect, but the housing outreach teamwork very closely with the Housing Department, etc.,  
855 in order to make sure that the individuals are allocated appropriate housing or facilities in ERS as soon as it is possible.

**The Hon D J Bossino** If I may ask the Hon. Minister, just to explore further, and I hope this is a reasonable supplementary which arises from the answers that she has given as she is able to provide the information to this House. The housing outreach team, is that an organisation, a group of people under her auspices, which then liaises with the Housing Department? Does it comprise members of both the departments I have just referred to? Is it exclusively a Housing Department?

Are they comprised from members of the Housing Department? What is the structure? In addition, if I may, is she able to state how many individuals comprise this team?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, It is quite extraordinary. We have just got into detail who the housing outreach team is and whom they comprise. There are two nursing assistants comprising the housing outreach team, I have just answered that question, and they liaise with the MDT regularly with the Housing Department. I have not spoken with the Housing Department in order to do that.

I can see the hon. Gentleman raising an eyebrow. It is in answer to Question 438.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q442/2025**

**Mental Health Board Report 2024 –  
Alcohol Detoxification Services**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 442, the Hon A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government elaborate on what measures it is taking, if any, to address the concerns raised in the Mental Health Board Gibraltar Annual Inspection Report 2024 regarding the provision of alcohol detoxification services in Horizon Ward in Ocean Views?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will try not to mumble so that the Opposition understand my answers. The current alcohol detox services are carried out in Horizon Ward at Ocean Views.

However, any patients deemed to be at risk of physical health complications have their detoxification at St Bernard's Hospital. As part of the new community mental health service model, the Drugs and Rehabilitation Service (DARS) will be relocated to Sir Joshua Hassan House. This will provide even more resilience to this important service.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker. By way of clarification, the hon. Lady is saying that alcohol detoxification will now not take place in Ocean Views, that when the new community mental health facility is ready, it will take place in Joshua Hassan House. Is that what she meant?

Perhaps I have misunderstood, but could she just clarify?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, there will be an additional option which will be available if required. However, as I have explained before, and Hansard of 22 January 2025 contains the excerpt, if a patient is acutely unwell or has an illness, which requires hospitalisation, the patient is hospitalized at St Bernard's Hospital. The difference is that if a patient is unwell and requires to be put into St Bernard's Hospital, the patient will be put into St Bernard's Hospital.

905 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for this answer, but within the last two mental health reports, there have been very serious concerns expressed. They note how these concerns have been expressed by the clinical director in relation to alcohol detox taking place in Ocean Views in one of the wards. The report notes how staff is concerned with the facility, according to them, not being equipped to deal with the life-threatening issues that can occur and the environment not being best suited for the needs of these patients.

910 Is there something that has been officially reported or these concerns have been officially raised with management in the GHA, and if so, have they been officially raised or made known to the Minister?

915 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** I do not know whether they have been raised to the management of the GHA. As the hon. Lady is aware, there is a level of independence between what the clinicians determine and Ministry. What the report has said is that there is a need to undergo detox at St Bernard's Hospital and, indeed, acutely unwell patients do undergo detox at St Bernard's Hospital, as determined between the clinicians themselves.

920 The clinician will determine whether the detox needs to go to St Bernard's Hospital or whether they need to stay in Ocean Views. It is the clinician's decision as to which institution they go to. As I have previously said, patients who are acutely unwell and are treated for detox in conjunction with a treatment for their primary presenting condition will go to St Bernard's.

925 Otherwise, they will stay in Ocean Views.

**Q443-44 & 483/2025**  
**Mental Health Board Report 2024 –**  
**Alcohol Detoxification Services**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 443, the Hon A Sanchez.

930 **Hon. A Sanchez:** In relation to the appointment of capacity assessors by the Minister, as outlined by the Mental Health Board Annual Inspection Report 2024, could the Government clarify the following: (a) How many capacity assessors have been appointed to date; (b) What qualifications or criteria are required to be appointed as a capacity assessor?

935 **Acting 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 444 and 483.

940 **Acting Clerk:** Question 444, the Hon A Sanchez.

945 **Hon. A Sanchez:** In relation to the appointment of capacity assessors by the Minister, as outlined by the Mental Health Board Annual Inspection Report 2024, could the Government clarify the following: (a) Are there currently any individuals awaiting capacity assessments? If so, could the Government provide the number of such cases; (b) How many capacity assessments have been carried out to date since the appointment of these capacity assessors; and (c) Could the Government outline the guidelines and process followed when conducting a capacity assessment?

950 **Acting Clerk:** Question 483, the Hon J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister detail the protocol for conducting the capacity assessments, which is in place at Ocean Views, who is responsible for conducting them, and why this issue is a matter for the Hon. Minister and not a clinical lead?

**Acting 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 443, eight capacity assessors have been appointed to date. Capacity assessors can be appointed from any of the following professional groups: medical practitioners; nurses; social workers; occupational therapists; and charter psychologists. In answer to Questions, 444 and 483, mental capacity of all inpatients at Ocean Views is assessed on a regular basis and therefore there are no outstanding cases.

Capacity assessments take place every day in respect of every patient on the unit and therefore the precise number is not available. The assessment of a patient's capacity is an integral part of day-to-day clinical practice and is carried out routinely by staff in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and its guiding principles. At our mental health facility, the assessment of a patient's capacity is an integral part of day-to-day clinical practice.

Routine and ongoing assessments - all staff are responsible for assessing capacity as part of routine care. These assessments are typically carried out by nursing staff or other ward-based care staff who interact regularly with the service users.

Assessments of capacity are often informal and relate to everyday discussions, including whether or not the patient has capacity to decide if they want to take a shower, choosing to eat or decline meals and deciding whether to go for a walk or participate in daily activities. These types of assessments are part of the dynamic and ongoing interactions and are documented appropriately in the patient's care notes.

Assessments for more complex or significant decisions - Where capacity concerns involve more complex or higher stake decisions, a more structured assessment is conducted. Examples include: capacity to consent to or refuse medication; capacity to take their own discharge from hospital; capacity to engage with therapeutic interventions or risk-related decisions. In such cases, staff undertake a formal capacity assessment using the two-stage tests set out in the Mental Capacity Act: (1) determining whether the person has an impairment or disturbance in the functioning of the mind or brain; and (2) assessing whether this prevents them from making a specific decision at the time it needs to be made. The involvement of senior clinicians. Senior clinicians, including doctors and consultants, become involved in capacity assessments where the decision is more complex and has long-term consequences, or falls outside of a routine ward-based issue.

This typically includes matters such as capacity to manage personal finances, capacity to decide where they want to live upon discharge and any legal or safeguarding issues where the outcome may affect their liberty or significant aspects of their life. Four - Ministerial involvement. While the clinical responsibility for capacity assessment lies entirely with the professionals involved in a patient's care, Ministerial involvement may arise in cases where broader operational or policy considerations are required.

In this instance, the matter was escalated to me because of two non-clinical factors: Firstly, a funding decision was required regarding the use of external professionals to carry out assessments; and secondly, discussions were underway regarding whether to amend the lasting powers of attorney framework to include non-medical practitioners in specific capacity assessments. Therefore, my involvement related not to clinical determination of capacity, but to the resource and regulatory decisions necessary to support the service in line with evolving needs.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Mrs Sanchez, any supplementaries and I will come to Mrs. Ladislaus.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that answer, and just by way of clarification as to the process aspect of the assessments, in cases where those being assessed might not have a trusted person close to them to support them through the process, are independent advocates being appointed throughout these capacity assessments or this process?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the process is being carried out in accordance with the appropriate legislation.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. J Ladislaus, have any supplementary questions?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we have heard the Minister state that for a lot of these capacity assessments, they are undertaken informally by a nurse who might know the patient, but then in more complex cases, it is clinicians who are more senior who become involved. Can the Hon. Minister confirm whether there is a standardized approach being applied across the board? It seems that there is not.

What guidelines do practitioners follow? It seems that it changes depending on what clinician or nurse might be tasked to undertake such an assessment.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the decisions on these matters are purely clinical decisions, which are taken in respect of the patient and the needs of the clinicians of each patient. Now, there is a very strict regulatory framework. There is a very strict legal framework, which encompasses all the decisions relating to capacity.

Indeed, the decisions relating to which both of these very similar questions relate to. Indeed, it is startling that the two hon. Ladies have submitted quite similar questions. It is almost as if the members of the Opposition do not speak to each other as to what questions they are going to submit.

Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition does not review all the questions before submitting them. In terms of what capacity assessments are taken in respect of each patient, it is purely a clinical decision taken by the individuals within the appropriate legal framework. If you actually go to the Mental Capacity Act, the Mental Capacity Act states in very strict terms what decisions are to be taken by each of the individuals at every point in time?

When I say each of the individuals, I mean each of the appropriate individuals as dictated by the appropriate legislation that is currently in place.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** If I may, there is a section from the Mental Health Reports, which I think is relevant to the question that I am going to pose. At page 21 It reads; "The Clinical Director was asked about capacity assessments and who would be responsible for conducting them. He explained that the issue was currently with the Minister for Health and Care".

We have just heard that the Ministers involvement was only as to funding. Does the Minister agree with me that that section suggests that there was further involvement in that and not just clinical involvement?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker As I have pointed out, there is email correspondence, which confirms that my involvement relates to financial and regulatory matters and does not in any way impinge on any clinical decision.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, if I may ask as well, there is also a reference within the paragraph above that. "Addressing this matter with a clear protocol for conducting capacity assessments is essential to avoid further delays and ensure smooth, efficient operations in affected service areas". Does the Hon. Minister accept that because the matter was with the Hon. Minister, it does not seem like any progress could be made? Is that accepted?

1055 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it is somewhat surprising that these questions are being raised. If the matter is a regulatory matter and if the matter is a legislative matter, the matter has to come to me as to whether there is a question on whether or not the legislation needs to be amended. It was determined that the legislation does not need to be amended, but it was a funding issue.

1060 If it is a funding issue, as the hon. Lady will be familiar, Parliament sets the GHA budget. If the actual element of the expenditure is not within the budget of the GHA, then a request for supplementary funding needs to come to me, as happened in this instance. In that case, it might be helpful if the hon. Lady listened to my answer, and then it would not be repeated numerous times.

1065 When a matter comes to funding, and funding which is not within the budget, the matter has to come to me for supplementary funding, to me and or any other relevant Minister.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I take the point that the Minister states that it was in respect of funding, but the point made here is that the clinical director was asked about capacity assessments and who would be responsible for conducting them. The answer was that the issue was currently with the Minister for Health and Care. Can the Minister confirm whether she has been involved in respect of who is to be responsible for conducting these capacity assessments?

1075 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it might be helpful if the hon. Member's opposite listened to what I was saying. In respect of the way that it is done, the proposal is put to me as to whether the capacity assessors can be an external party. Indeed, in this instance, it was proposed that the capacity assessment was carried out by an external party.

1080 If a capacity, assessment is to be carried out by an external party that requires additional funding. It was proposed by those clinicians, by the medical director and the divisional lead that the matter be outsourced to an external third party for a capacity assessment, and therefore there was a funding requirement.

I was not getting involved in a clinical decision. I was not getting involved in who should be making the capacity assessment. I was merely being asked for the money to fund the clinical decision. That is the extent of the involvement.

1085 We can read that however we want to read it, but there is email correspondence, which determines that what they came to me for was to ask for the additional funding to pay for the third party who was going to provide the capacity assessments.

1090 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Was that in respect of just one specific case, or is that the case now across the board?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** The request was put in. You would have thought that I would not have to explain this, but I will go into explaining this. In the budget session that we are going to go into now in June or July, there will be budgets for each department in the GHA.

1095 There will be budgets that are set out for everything. If, going forward, the funding for the third party is included in that budget; it will not have to come to me. In this instance, at this point in time, the budget for an external third party capacity assessor was not included in the budget. Therefore, the request came to me to ask whether the budget was approved.

1100 In respect of the approval of a budget for a capacity assessor, the request came to me, as should be applauded by the hon. Members opposite. In fact, that is exactly the procedure, which should occur.

1105 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful again for the very detailed answer, but that is not the question that I have asked. I pose the question, was that funding requested? I know that business cases are raised when extraordinary funding is requested by different departments outside of what has been approved by the budgets.

What I am asking is, was that funding requested in respect of an individual that is going to be appointed across the board to deal with matters across the board, or simply in one case? Just a one-off, or is this individual going to be as an independent to be dealing with cases across the board?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker the individual is as capacity assessor across the board.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q445-453/2025**

**Domiciliary Care and Home Support –  
Contract**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 445, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** In relation to Domiciliary Care and Home support, could the Government state whether it has signed a contract with Community Care and Domiciliary Services Ltd. If so, on what date the contract was signed and what the value of the contract is.

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 446 to 453.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 446, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** During the TUPE transfer process of employees from the former service provider of Domiciliary Care and Home Support Services, LifeCome Care to Community Care Domiciliary Services Ltd (CCDSL), have the Care Agency or CCDSL identified cases where police checks or other vetting had not been conducted or were not up to date; (b) have the Care Agency or CCDSL identified any cases where vetting or police checks for careers yielded results deemed unacceptable or unsuitable, If so, could the Government provide the exact number of such cases?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 447, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state who is providing and delivering the training to careers employed by Community Care Domiciliary Services Ltd (CCDSL) and confirm whether all staff have received this training? In addition, could the Government outline the specific training that has been delivered to date?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 448, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** At the 14th of May 2025, how many careers were employed by Community Care Services Ltd (CCDSL) on; (a) zero hour contracts; (b) other specified hour contracts under 20 hours per week; and (c) other term contracts.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 449, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide the exact figures for the following: (a) the number of individuals in the community currently waiting to be assessed for domiciliary care and



1155 home support; (b) the number of individuals in the community who have been assessed as requiring domiciliary care or home support and are currently awaiting the provision of services.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 450, the Hon. A Sanchez.

1160 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide the exact figures for the following: (a) the number of individuals currently in hospital or in Ocean Views waiting to be assessed for domiciliary care and home support; and (b) the number of individuals currently in hospital or Ocean Views who have been assessed as requiring domiciliary care or home support and are currently awaiting the provision of services.

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 451, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Can the Government provide the figures for the number of complaints received, logged by the Care Agency and relevant subcontracted providers, including LifeCome Care and CCDSL, in relation to domiciliary care and home support broken down by month, entity and nature of complaint from the 1st of December 2024 to present date?

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 452, the Hon. A Sanchez.

1175 **Hon. A Sanchez:** In relation to the Government's request to Community Care Domiciliary Care Services Limited concerning domiciliary care and home support services, has the Government asked CCDSL to consider establishing further additional rest areas or facilities for their staff within the various district zones? Furthermore, does the Government intend to assist CCDSL in the provision or development of such facilities?

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 453, the Hon. A Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state when it expects the new app for domiciliary care and home support services intended for use by the Community Care Domiciliary Services Limited to be ready and launched?

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**Acting 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 445, the contract between CCDSL and the Care Agency has not yet been signed. The Government expects this to be signed in the next few weeks. In answer to Question 446, during the TUPE process, all employees were asked to resubmit their vetting information as part of the onboarding process.

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All these vetting certificates were subjected to a verification process. All employees provided upon request vetting information, which was up to date. 195 of 237 TUPE employees have suitable vetting certificates, which have passed the verification stage.

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Two of the 237 TUPE employees providing vetting certificates which could not be authenticated but have subsequently provided suitable certificates which have passed the verification stage. 34 of the 237 TUPE employees have provided suitable vetting certificates, which are pending verification. Six of the 237 TUPE employees have provided vetting certificates containing previously undisclosed offences. These six individuals are being managed under risk assessment.

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Madam Speaker, in relation to Question 447, existing TUPE careers had training provided by their previous employees. The Care Agency is supporting CCDSL to provide refresher training for all TUPE employees.

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This training commenced on Monday 12 May and will continue until all TUPI careers have received their refresher training. This refresher training includes: assisting and moving people; medication; loan working and breakaway techniques; safeguarding training; basic life support; health and safety; fire prevention; and professional boundaries. Any new careers who have been employed by CCDSL after the TUPE process have received initial training and will be shadowing existing careers before undertaking individual rotas.

In relation to Question 448, whilst I am more than happy to provide information regarding the Care Agency's involvement and assistance provided to CCDSL, it would not be appropriate for me to answer questions about the number of individuals CCDSL employ, as CCDSL is not in any way a Government entity. We are, however, encouraging CCDSL to ensure that within a six-month period as many careers as possible are given fixed-term contracts.

In answer to Question 449, there are currently 58 individuals in the community who are currently waiting to be assessed for domiciliary care and home support. There are currently nine individuals who have been assessed and are currently waiting on the provision of services.

In answer to Question 450, as at 9 May 2025 there were 28 patients in St Bernard Hospital referred for domiciliary care and home support. The status of the referrals are as follows: Nine have approved pending hours; one either the patient or the relatives have declined a package of care; In respect of two, the patients are medically unwell at present; and 16 are patients pending assessments or approval. There are currently two patients in Ocean Views referred for domiciliary care and home support: One is awaiting a package of care and one is awaiting a learning disability placement.

In answer to Question 451, I now hand over a schedule with the information requested.

In relation to Question 452, careers are currently provided with access to a kitchen area where they can have their lunch, as well as a rest place equipped with sofas and a bathroom. In addition, tea, coffee and milk are made available to them and they can charge their scooters on site. At present, there is no additional rest areas beyond those existing facilities. However, the Government, through meetings involving the United Union and the Care Agency, continue to actively explore different options with CCDSL.

bvIn answer to Question 453, Madam Speaker, I am advised by the Care Agency that the remaining functions of the app, which is currently being developed, should be ready for testing by the end of May. It is still too early to say exactly when the app will be launched, as this may be affected by the testing period.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 453

ANSWER TO QUESTION 451

Month	Entity	Total	Nature	Number
December	Lifecome	126	Missed Care Sessions	75
			Late Arrivals and Shortened Sessions	27
			Continuity of Care and Carer Changes	9
			Professional Conduct of Staff	3
			Documentation and Communication Issues	9
			Inadequate Supervision and Emergency Response	3
			Change of Carers	0
			Change of Visit Times	0
January	Lifecome	135	Missed Care Sessions	66
			Late Arrivals and Shortened Sessions	41
			Continuity of Care and Carer Changes	10
			Professional Conduct of Staff	9
			Documentation and Communication Issues	4
			Inadequate Supervision and Emergency Response	5
			Change of Carers	0
			Change of Visit Times	0
February	Lifecome	97	Missed Care Sessions	62
			Late Arrivals and Shortened Sessions	25
			Continuity of Care and Carer Changes	1
			Professional Conduct of Staff	6
			Documentation and Communication Issues	1
			Inadequate Supervision and Emergency Response	2
			Change of Carers	0
			Change of Visit Times	0
March	Lifecome	78	Missed Care Sessions	46
			Late Arrivals and Shortened Sessions	13
			Continuity of Care and Carer Changes	7
			Professional Conduct of Staff	4
			Documentation and Communication Issues	5
			Inadequate Supervision and Emergency Response	3
			Change of Carers	0
			Change of Visit Times	0
April*	Lifecome	16	Missed Care Sessions	9
			Late Arrivals and Shortened Sessions	2
			Continuity of Care and Carer Changes	0
			Professional Conduct of Staff	1
			Documentation and Communication Issues	1
			Inadequate Supervision and Emergency Response	0
			Change of Carers	2
			Change of Visit Times	1
	CCDSL	106	Missed Care Sessions	35
			Late Arrivals and Shortened Sessions	3
			Continuity of Care	1
			Professional Conduct of Staff	3
			Documentation and Communication Issues	2
			Inadequate Supervision and Emergency Response	0
			Change of Carers	25
			Change of Visit Times	37
May	CCDSL	163	Missed Care Sessions	88
			Late Arrivals and Shortened Sessions	2
			Continuity of Care	4
			Professional Conduct of Staff	3
			Documentation and Communication Issues	0
			Inadequate Supervision and Emergency Response	1
			Change of Carers	27
			Change of Visit Times	38

\* Lifecome Care ceased operations on 26th April 2025, CCDSL commenced operations on 27th April 2025

1240 **Madam Speaker:** I take supplementary questions for all of them except Question 451, which I will allow the hon. Member to look at the schedule and revert.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for that answer. In relation to Question 445, I will ask supplementary questions on that one. The Hon. Minister has explained that they have not signed a contract with CCDSL yet, but in terms of the contract that they are going to enter into with CCDSL, is it the same contract as the one entered into with LifeCome Care, are they the same specifications and requirements as the contract that was in place with LifeCome Care?

1250 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Yes, Madam Speaker, the contract will largely be the same as the contract entered into with LifeCome Care.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Would the Hon. Minister be able to state what the value of the contract would be? Would it be the same value?

1255 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** We are envisaging, Madam Speaker, that it is going to be largely in the same area. That is one of the points that are currently being negotiated.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** In relation to the set-up of CCDSL, Madam Speaker, because—

1260 **Madam Speaker:** I am going to ask the the hon. Member, could you refer to what question?

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker Question 445. We have heard the Government publicly speaking about CCDSL when it was announced, with No. 6 commenting on CCDSL, and the Directors having experience in domiciliary care and retired individuals being brought back for their experience in domiciliary care.

The Directors of the company are public information. It is in Companies House. We are aware of one individual, one of the Directors, who has been in town hall meetings, who has been mentioned publicly by the Government.

1270 In relation to the second Director that appears in Companies House, I do not want to name individuals in Parliament. Would the Hon. Minister be able to elaborate on the experience and the background that this individual has in relation to domiciliary care? I think it would be of interest to know this in the same way that has been explained by the Government in relation to the people who are taking this forward.

1275 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, No problem. The individual has been involved in administration work at a senior level previously, and therefore it was part appropriate. The reason that the individual has not been present at the meetings is nothing more innocuous than that she had a previously booked holiday and therefore was unable to attend.

1280 **Hon. A Sanchez:** In relation to Question 445 and in particular to this supplementary, I assume that in relation to what the Hon. Minister has explained, the role of this particular Director is also being remunerated or compensated for her role as Director, is this correct.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** We do not usually expect people to work free, so yes.

1285 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Supplementary on Question 446. Madam Speaker, by way of clarification, because the answers were all grouped together I believe...

1290 **Madam Speaker:** The answers were specific. This is why I am asking to keep a record so there were specific numbers.

**The Hon A Sanchez:** Yes, but they came together, so I just want to clarify. In relation to the vetting and answers to Question 445, I believe the Minister mentioned that there were six individuals that were found to have previous offences, is this correct?

1295

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

**The Hon A Sanchez:** Of these six individuals, were they employees of LifeCome Care who had gone through the TUPE process? Were they previous employees of other subcontracted entities too?

1300

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Yes, Madam Speaker. These six individuals have gone through a self-disclosure process, my understanding is in relation to CCDSL, and I would expect that the same was to be the case in relation to LifeCome Care. I do not know this, but given that I have been informed that this was the case with CCDSL, I would assume that it was the case before.

1305

There are risk assessments that are put in place in order to assist these individuals, because many of these relate to expired offences.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** My question is, Madam Speaker, perhaps the Hon. Minister can explain how this was not picked up before, given that we have asked questions about vetting in Parliament before, specifically to the Hon. Minister. She has given assurances before, very firm assurances that the Government knew exactly where they were in the vetting process and exactly where LifeCome was in the vetting process for each career. Therefore, I fail to understand how this was not picked up before, if they are indeed individuals that went through the TUPE transfer process.

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1315

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, again I question whether the hon. Lady listens to my replies. The individuals went through a self-disclosure process. We are certainly a Government that believes in rehabilitation of people, and we do not believe in holding people for the rest of their lives for an offence, which has expired.

1320

The individuals involved went through a self-disclosure to CCDSL of their previous offences. Most of these offences have already expired. Most of these offences were explained to CCDSL, and CCDSL, and I imagine prior to that LifeCome, have put in place a risk assessment and appropriately managed these situations so that they are confident that they are sending these individuals to users.

1325

Therefore, Madam Speaker, it is not that it was not caught before. There is a procedure to deal with individuals who self-disclosed spent offences. There is a procedure to deal with individuals who have expired offences, and therefore it is quite appropriate that either CCDSL or LifeCome deal with these individuals in a manner that they deem appropriate.

1330

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, it is not that I do not listen to the Hon. Minister, but I think it is also right to ask her for clarification, and when I ask her for clarification, I do not think that she should stand up and patronize me. I do not think that that is right either. I am here to ask questions, and it would be great for her to answer in a manner that is deemed as sarcastic or patronizing, which seems to be all that she is doing in this session.

1335

What I am asking is, she is saying that most of the offences are expired, most meaning that not all of them are expired. Are there cases where some of the offences were not spent, offences or not expired - Is that the case?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I do not intend to patronize. I have explained the question, as I have explained to numerous other questions.

1340

I have also explained the process for asking questions, and indeed, I do not believe that my manner is in the slightest bit patronizing. It is not meant to be patronizing, and I understand that the hon. Lady raises an eyebrow at me. It is not meant to be patronizing.

1345 It is simply that I do not want to repeat myself, because there are 105 questions to get through, and indeed, it would do us all a favor if we could get through the answers by actually listening to the responses that I provide. It is not meant in an attempt to be patronizing, Madam Speaker.

Yes, in order to answer the hon. Lady's questions, some of the offences are spent and some of the offences are explained by the individuals to the CCDSL.

1350 CCDSL along with advice provided by appropriate safeguarding procedures, take the view that there are some cases where, when self-disclosure is made, it is appropriate to help these individuals through and actually work with the individuals. The issues arise when there is no self-disclosure, when a *certificado penal* is provided incorrectly or when a *certificado penal* is provided inaccurately. In those instances, of which we do not have evidence of any yet, in those instances there would be an issue, but in the instances that an individual has come forward and made the  
1355 appropriate self-disclosure, the view can be taken by CCDSL, indeed working with the appropriate agency, which is the very agency that is contracting them, the Care Agency, in order to work through some of these instances.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Just on this before my hon. Colleague moves on, but just for clarification, 1360 because the Hon. Minister, I think, said in answer not to this question, but just the previous one, that

**Madam Speaker:** We are not going to come back to the supplementaries on the previous one.

1365 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** No, on this one, on this issue, I am just trying to take the hon. Lady back one answer, if I may.

**Madam Speaker:** No, because.

1370 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** It is on this issue.

**Madam Speaker:** We dealt with Question 445, we are on Question 446.

1375 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker is not, Madam Speaker does not understand. I am asking on this question, but I am taking her back, not to the immediate answer she has just given, but the one just before that on this same question.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you.

1380 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Lady indicated that this question of the convictions or the offences had been managed by LifeCome, but I had understood from her original answer that these had been previously undisclosed offences. So, can I understand, is it that they were previously undisclosed and therefore undisclosed to LifeCome, or were they disclosed to LifeCome and they were managed?  
1385

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately, as I replied previously, I do not know what was disclosed to LifeCome or otherwise. They were previously undisclosed, we think, but they have been disclosed. They have been self-disclosures to CCDSL.

In addition, as I said previously, the individuals are being managed under a risk assessment.

1390 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** If they were previously undisclosed, at least on the original answer which I have just confirmed, which was my note, then that tends to erode what the hon. Lady indicated to my hon. Colleague that somehow this process had been managed by LifeCome. Point of the question is this; There were contractual duties, which we have asked about in this House, about  
1395 vetting and so on.

Who has accountability in the Government of those vetting procedures if it is possible, therefore, that these offences were undisclosed before. Who is dealing with, dealt with LifeCome in the past, dealing with these vetting issues in the future going forward from the Government point of view?

1400

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, let us not try to tangle this issue. The six individuals were previously undisclosed during the TUPE process. That does not mean that they were not self-disclosed to LifeCome in the same way that they were self-disclosed to CCDSL.

1405

My answer says, quite specifically, TUPE employees, so in the TUPE process, they were previously undisclosed. That does not necessarily mean that they were not self-disclosed previously.

1410

Therefore, what I have said is that now we know that they have been self-disclosed to CCDSL. So, let us not confuse the issue there. There is a contract in place, as I have explained previously in this Parliament, there is a contract in place, or there will be a contract in place, between CCDSL and the Care Agency where appropriate vetting of individuals is tested.

It is therefore the Care Agency, which will hold CCDSL to account in all of these processes.

1415

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Expired or not, because some of them, I think the hon. Lady indicated, might be expired matters or not. Is she aware of the nature of those matters, those offences, and is she satisfied that they are not of a nature that would make it inappropriate for them to handle care?

1420

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** I will take that question in two parts. I have not said anything about expired vetting certificates. I said that 34 of the 237 have provided suitable vetting certificates, which are pending verification. I have not said anything about expired offences.

1425

Some of them are expired offences, but I do not have any further information on the nature of the offences. Given that, the Care Agency is the body of Government that deals with safeguarding issues, if there is anyone in Government who is going to be concerned about the nature of the offences, etc.; it is going to be the Care Agency that will have knowledge on what is required to safeguard individuals. I fully trust the individuals within the Care Agency to hold CCDSL to account on these issues, especially now that they are having these conversations.

1430

In order to further explain that 34 of the 237, what happens with those certificates is that there is a number on the side of the certificates, and that number has to be manually entered into a website to get the confirmation that the certificate is valid. The certificates provided, you cannot see that number, so that is a number of 34. It has nothing to do with expired certificates or otherwise.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Question 447, yes the Hon. E J Reyes.

1435

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am not entirely certain if the Minister did answer this section, but when asked about who was providing and delivering the training, if I understood correctly, she said that the training had been delivered by the previous service provider, and exactly so then who is providing the training for those who joined or are going to join after that date, because we do not know who the current service training provider is actually tasked with.

1440

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I will forgive the hon. Gentleman for not picking up on that explanation. I did mention it in my answer. The Care Agency is supporting CCDSL in that training, obviously for a fee.

1445

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Question 448?

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, we note from the Hon. Minister's answer that she cannot comment on the number of employees or the contracts of CCDSL. I do note that when the entity was announced, comments by No. 6 were made specifically in relation to the issue of the contracts, stating that the company would work immediately towards agreeing to as many fixed-term 15-hour contracts as possible, and indeed also mentioning the Hon. Minister with responsibility for care as working closely with UNITE the Union, on this issue.

Does the Hon. Minister not have information, by way at least, of keeping up to date with the progress of this matter as to whether this commitment by the new entity is being kept, and whether indeed more or any of these contracts have been given to the careers?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, in an interview that I gave, I explained the procedure, which we expected CCDSL to go to, and the explanations that had been provided to us, and it is perfectly logical. CCDSL have endeavored to change the rotors so that the careers are zoned differently. What I explained in that interview is that CCDSL will have to wait for that to calm down, for everything to fall in place, so that they then can see the number of contracts and the number of fixed hours that they can give.

We have asked CCDSL specifically, as I stated in my question, to ensure that within a six-month period they start giving as many fixed-term contracts as to the careers. That is what I said in the interview, and that is what I have repeated today.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** So, Madam Speaker, does that mean that, to the Hon. Minister's knowledge, this has not started, CCDSL has not started giving out or rolling out these 15-hour contracts yet?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I said in my answer to the question, and as I will repeat again, within a six-month period we have requested CCDSL to start giving these contracts.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Question 449? Question 448, yes, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure we understand why it is inappropriate for the Hon. Minister not to give us a figure of how many careers are employed by CCDSL on 14 May. The hon. Lady has given us a figure of the 2 employees, so 237, which has gone through them, in terms of the transfer. Therefore, there were 237, presumably, LifeCome.

Really, all we want to know is how many careers are employed by CCDSL. It cannot be a number, presumably, that far off 237. So does she have that information?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the Care Agency have been in constant touch with CCDSL as to the vetting procedure, which is why we have that number. I would imagine that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is correct. It must be around 237 employees that there are.

However, I do not have confirmation of the exact number, and that is indeed a matter for CCDSL.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Understood, but there is a precise question filed by my hon. Colleague about how many careers were employed. While the hon. Lady has not been able to give us a breakdown because of the explanation she has given, I thought there might be a total, irrespective of that, that she would have in her notes in front of her. I will just ask her again to perhaps consider that. Can I just ask if I may, as an add-on, I saw an advert today on the recruitment of careers by CCDSL. In discussions with the Care Agency, is there a specific number of careers; is there a total number of careers that the company are aspiring to employ?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** If I refer to the question again, it says how many careers were employed by Community Care Services Limited on zero hour's contract, other specified hour's contract and



1500 20 hours per week and other term contracts. That is a matter entirely for CCDSL, and I do not know the breakdown of how many different contracts were entered into for A, B and C. Therefore, I do not have that breakdown for the hon. Gentleman.

As I confirmed, I would imagine that if the vetting has been done for 237 careers, the vetting must have been done for all the careers that were coming into employment. The number is *circa* 237. Forgive me, Madam Speaker, but I cannot recall the second part of the question.

1505

**The Hon. Dr K. Azopardi** The second part of the question is, is there a number of careers in the discussions with the Care Agency that has been alighted on that should be recruited to make up a total number, because there is an advert out? Clearly, presumably in the discussions that have been held with the Care Agency and the Town Hall meeting and everything that went into preparing that discussion, I assume that that advert has gone out because of some kind of assessment of how many more careers you need to add to the TUPE number.

1510

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am very grateful to the hon. Leader of the Opposition for repeating the question. Apologies. There is no number of careers.

1515

It is a desired number of careers. There is a number of packages of care that need to be provided, so it is up to CCDSL to determine how many careers they require to deliver the number of packages of care. As we have seen in answer to other questions, the number of packages of care in the community is growing, so therefore it is up to CCDSL to determine how many careers they need to provide the packages of care that are being requested of them.

1520

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Question 449?

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Grateful for the answer, Madam Speaker, in relation to Question 449. Could the Hon. Minister state whether the assessments or are the time that people are waiting to be assessed and indeed once assessed and then waiting to receive the services. Are they facing delays because of all the issues that have been going on during the transition?

1525

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** I would imagine that the immediate concern would be the careers that are currently deployed to service users. However, having said that, if there is an urgent need for a career and that is determined by the social worker deployed to assess the service user, that package of care will be deployed immediately. I would imagine that the packages of care probably have been taking slightly longer in this last month and it will just pick up once indeed the recruitment process continues and the careers are found and the whole thing settles.

1530

If there has been a delay, I imagine that is a short delay in delivering the packages of care, but that will soon be picked up by CCDSL.

1535

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Question 450? Question 452? Question 453? Next question.

**The Hon Arias-Vasquez** I wonder if we are currently halfway through and I think that we are now changing to questions from the Hon. Mrs. Ladislaus. I wonder if now a good time to take a 10-minute recess.

1540

**Madam Speaker:** I may have to direct that it is a 15-minute recess because I do not know whether the staff have put the coffee on and it might take an extra five minutes to warm that up.

1545

*The House recessed at 4.50 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 5.05 p.m.*

**Madam Speaker:** All right, we can continue with questions.

**Q456/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Supporting Sporting Events Costs**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 456, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1550

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** What cost has the GHA incurred in the past 24 months in respect of supporting sporting events? Please provide a breakdown by grades, remuneration incurred by each individual and the work carried out.

1555

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the cost of the GHA was nil.

1560

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q457-58/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Criteria for Drugs in Connection with Obesity**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 457, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1565

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** What are the clinical criteria applied by the GHA for the following drugs to be prescribed in respect of treatment for obesity: (1) Ozempic; (2) Mounjaro; and (3) Wegovy.

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

1570

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 458.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 458, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1575

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Please provide a breakdown of the pharmacies and private health clinics in Gibraltar, which are licensed to sell Ozempic, Mounjaro and Wegovy and clarification as to the criteria applied for a license to be granted for such purposes.

1580

**Acting 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 457, Ozempic and Mounjaro do not currently form part of the bariatric treatment program within the GHA. These drugs are prescribed for the treatment of diabetes. Wegovy is prescribed for patients on the bariatric program.

1585

To be eligible for Wegovy, the patient needs to have been engaged with a dietician for six months. They also need to have a BMI of 30 kilograms per mass squared or more or have a BMI of 27 kilograms per meter squared in the presence of at least one weight related to comorbidity.

In answer to Question 458, no clinics are licensed to retail Ozempic, Mounjaro and Wegovy. The list of pharmacies is publicly available from the OFT website and the criteria for the operation, the criteria applied for the operation of a pharmacy is also publicly available.

1590

1595 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Thank you for the answers. Madam Speaker, first, before I continue in my supplementaries, I would like to ask forgiveness of the Hon. Minister for not wishing her a happy birthday before now. Therefore, I wish her a very happy birthday and now I will ask the question.

**Madam Speaker:** The Chair will echo that sentiment, although I imagine the Hon. Minister would be thinking she could be anywhere else on her birthday other than here, but there you are.

1600 **Madam Speaker:** If the hon. Member tells us of his birthday, I will happily wish him a happy birthday

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** I hope at least that we provide the Hon. Minister with a memorable birthday, Madam Speaker, nothing more.

1605 Madam Speaker, in terms of Question 458, we have heard that no clinics are licensed to sell these drugs, yet we keep hearing of individuals in Gibraltar procuring these drugs for weight loss purposes. Does the Hon. Minister have any information as to how these drugs are being procured by the public?

1610 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I would imagine that they go see a doctor and the doctor prescribes it. Ozempic, Wegovy and Mounjaro are prescription-only medicines and as prescription-only medicines, they would have to be prescribed by a doctor on a prescription, whether it is a private or a GHA prescription, going through the criteria applied. However, I would imagine that being prescription-only medicines, they have been prescribed in the usual way.

1615 I believe that the OFT has been made aware of several reports of wholesalers selling these and these reports are actively being investigated now.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the Hon. Minister have any further information as to how many wholesalers have been flagged as selling these?

1620

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker, all I have available to date is that there are some wholesalers that the OFT has received reports on them and as the hon. Lady will be aware, these have to be let into an investigator to determine whether there is any merit to them or otherwise.

1625 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q459-60/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Electronic Records**

1630 **Acting Clerk:** Question 459, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister provide an update as to how the transfer of hard copy records of the GHA to electronic format is progressing and whether it is still expected that all GHA records will be in electronic format by December 2025?

1635

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 460.

1640

**Acting Clerk:** Question 460, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How far back will the digitalisation of GHA records go? Will digitised records include service users' full medical histories or will they only be digitized as from a specific date?

1645 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I am advised that 95% of legacy notes have already been scanned with full completion anticipated by the end of June at the latest. In answer to Question 460, all available patient records will be scanned and digitized and therefore there is no cut-off point. In addition, the digitisation will include service users' full available medical history without a cut-off point.

**The Hon J. Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, is it the case that

1655 **Madam Speaker:** In relation to what question is the hon. Member asking?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, in respect of Question 460, in respect of the files that have already been digitized, are those full files. So just to clarify, do those files span the entire history of the patient or is it the case that they are being done, for example, by year?

1660 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, my understanding is that it is the full file of the patient. So, for example, if Gemma Arias- Vasquez's file were being scanned, it would be the entirety of my file that would be scanned in one go.

1665 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, just to confirm, I believe that this is being done in-house. Could the Hon. Minister confirm that that is the case?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, last time we had this discussion, I believed that it was done in-house. Microbusiness Systems is actually carrying out this digitisation process.

1670 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, given that it is Microbusiness Systems and they are a third-party agency, could I just ask what is in place in terms of data protection, because obviously various eyes will be scanning this data as it goes through?

1675 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, Microbusiness Systems are actually on-site at GHA premises to scan these documents, so the documents are not being taken out of GHA premises, and whereas I do not have confirmation of the fact, and I have not asked the question, I assume that all suitable non-disclosure agreements were signed prior to engaging these individuals.

1680 **Madam Speaker:** All right, before I move on to the next question, can I just very quickly welcome the ladies from the mentorship program? It is very nice to see you all here, and I hope you enjoy the afternoon's session. Next question.

1685 **The Hon D J Bossino** Can I just make one point. You have raised that. I think it is unprecedented that I have done the numbers.

I think we have a majority of women sitting around the Chamber today, including yourself.

**Madam Speaker:** In the Chamber and not in the public gallery, clearly.

1690 **The Hon D J Bossino** Exclusively in the Chamber, absolutely, yes.

**Madam Speaker:** It is a first for the public gallery. You must have brought us luck then.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

1695

**Q461-63/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Centralized Data System**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 461, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1700

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the GHA have one centralised data system, which allows clinicians from different specialties to access patient-specific information?

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

1705

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I too would take the opportunity to say welcome to everyone in this House, and indeed I would echo the hon. Member's sentiments that it is a pleasure to have a majority of women in this House, once and for all.

1710

**Madam Speaker:** It is not often the hon. Member agrees so...

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, in terms of this particular question, I will ask this question together with Questions 462 and 463.

1715

**Acting Clerk:** Question 462, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker. Please provide a breakdown of the different types of healthcare software that the GHA use. Is all the software in use capable of communicating?

1720

**Acting Clerk:** Question 463, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the GHA have clinical communication software to facilitate effective communication between healthcare professionals within a clinical setting?

1725

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

1730

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Thank you. Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 461, as with all modern healthcare systems that span both the primary and secondary care, the GHA does not rely on a single unified electronic system. Instead, it uses several interoperable platforms that together provide clinicians with access to patient-specific information required to deliver safe and effective care.

1735

There is no limit to the number of systems that an individual clinician may have access to, if this access is required to look after their patients. The two principal systems for medical records are EMIS, which is primarily used in a primary care setting, and EDMS, which is predominantly used in secondary care. In addition to this, the hospital information system HISS is used across both sectors and contains critical clinical data, including: laboratory requests and results; referral pathways; outpatient and theatre lists; ward locations; cancer pathway tracking; death certification; and the palliative care register.

1740

Significant work has been undertaken to integrate these systems and minimize the risk of error when transitioning between them. For example, general practitioners can now access multiple platforms through a single portal, improving both efficiency and patient safety. A dedicated

digitalisation committee has been set up to oversee and progress the modernization and integration of our clinical information systems.

It is worth noting, however, that the aim is not necessarily to enforce a single monolithic system. Different specialties have diverse workforce and clinical needs, and our digital infrastructure must support, not constrain, safe and efficient clinical practice. The priority, therefore, remains interoperability, accessibility and security of data across a continuum of care.

In answer to Question 462, the Gibraltar Health Authority uses a broad mix of in-house and commercial healthcare software across clinical, administrative and specialist areas. Key systems include the in-house hospital information system (HISS), which is modular and increasingly central to operations, alongside commercial tools like EMIS web for primary care, CRIS and PACS for radiology, Modulab for labs and Symphony for emergency care. While some integration exists, such as HISS linked to the lab and primary care systems, not all software platforms function under HISS, strategically moving towards improved interoperability and reduced reliance on standard and commercial systems.

I have handed over a schedule with the information requested. In response to Question 463, yes, ma'am.

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 463**

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 462**

System	Description	Typically Used By	In-House or Commercial Product
HIS	Modular clinical system. Wide variety of modules developed and steady stream of new requests. Some of the larger modules are Theatres, Referrals, Patient Dashboard, Sponsored Patients, My Lab Requests, Oncology.	All clinicians. Also by clinic clerks and admin support staff. Role determines which modules staff have access to.	In-House
Bed Management	Manages ward admissions, nursing handover notes, reports on bed states, etc.	SBH clinicians, ward staff and other staff who have a need to see patients on wards.	In-House
EMIS Web	Primary Care system. Contains patient's primary care record, primary care appointment book, referrals mechanism for primary care specialties. All community prescribing happens here.	GPs, PCC nursing staff, PCC clerks. Non-PCC clinicians also have access due to need to prescribe or because they need to check patient primary care record.	Commercial
eCAMIS	Manages GHA patient demographic database. Is about to be replaced by a HIS module.	Registration team. Limited number of other users who may need to create a patient / visitor out of hours.	Commercial (will be replaced by In-House HIS module)
Symphony	System for ED. Handles patient flow from checking in at counter to discharge from department.	ED Staff.	Commercial
Evolve EDMS	Electronic document management system. Paper forms are scanned by records team in order to add the documents to the patient's electronic document record. Also has e-forms functionality. Various departments making use of this.	Records staff for managing scanning process. All clinical staff in order to view patient document record. Specific departments making use of e-forms (ENT, Paediatrics, Ocean Views, CCU)	Commercial

Cont...



CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 463CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 462

Frontdesk	Appointment system used in SBH. Needs to be replaced by August 2026 due to withdrawal of product.	SBH clinicians and admin staff	Commercial (will be replaced by In-House HIS module)
CRIS / PACS	Radiology software, supplied by Philips Healthcare. Manages storing of radiology images, reports and requests.	Most clinical staff for requesting / reviewing results. Radiology team for management of requests, etc.	Commercial
Modulab	Laboratory Information System software supplied by Werfen. Manages laboratory requests / results.	Most clinical staff for requesting / reviewing results (often via HIS link to Modulab). Laboratory staff for management and processing of requests, etc.	Commercial
Hero Health	EMIS Partner software. Provides online appointment booking functionality into EMIS appointment book. Also provides SMS functionality used by Primary Care clinicians.	Patients via eGov platform (where the online appointment booking is hosted). PCC clinicians.	Commercial
Endobase	Endoscopy software	Endoscopy team	Commercial
R4	Dental software. Records treatment, consultations and appointment book. Has recall list functionality.	Dentists and CHC admin staff	Commercial
Athis	Anticoagulation dosage system software.	Haematologist and haematology nurses.	Commercial
Oncopharm	Chemotherapy software used to record drugs and dosages given to patients.	Oncology consultants, nurses and pharmacists.	Commercial
Horus	Blood bank software	Laboratory staff	Commercial
Bighand	Dictation software.	Clinicians to dictate letters, secretarial staff to type letters based on the dictation	Commercial
Omniceil	Stock Management software. Used in stores and smart cabinets on wards	Stores staff, ward staff.	Commercial
Datix	Incidents and Risk Reporting System	All Users	Commercial

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful. In respect of Question 461, how are the GHA systems maintained? Is it a case that there is a mix of internal and external maintenance, or is it the case internal, I believe it is ITLD, maintain the systems?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the GHA has its own internal IT department, so ITLD sometimes work with the GHA's IT department, and such an example will come up in a later question in relation to the systems in the PCC. The GHA has its own internal IT department, which sometimes does develop specific platforms, such as the HISS system. There are other systems, such as EMIS, which is a purchase product, which is maintained externally outside the GHA, although the GHA IT systems do deal a lot with EMIS web, for example.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, are individuals employed within the internal IT department of the GHA trained to maintain the external systems provided by third-party agencies?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, there is a specific department within the GHA who is trained specifically to deal with EMIS, EDMS and the third-party systems, and the GHA IT department mainly deals with the hardware and the HISS program, etc.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, the reason I ask this question is because we have received information that there are a very limited number of people who are actually trained in very niche programs, and what occurs sometimes is that they are transferred out to another department within Government, and therefore there remains a gap. What is the GHA doing to address that issue?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, there is a brilliant department within the GHA called Clinical Informatics, which specifically deals with the development of these programs and the application of these programs to different departments within the GHA. They are very much an integral part of the GHA team, and my understanding is not that they are moving out. They have

1790 now become an integral part of the GHA's IT structure, but Clinical Informatics has the role of aligning programs with the clinicians that use them.

1795 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, in respect of Question 463, could the Hon. Minister detail what types of communication are available? For example, instant messaging, are they WhatsApp, how is it that these clinicians communicate?

1800 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I would imagine that the clinicians communicate either through the platforms that they have, so again, EDMS, etc., or by email, such as ordinary mortals that are not clinicians.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, has a survey been undertaken of clinicians' views in respect of this communication software that is available?

1805 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Not to my knowledge, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Would the Hon. Minister commit to reviewing that area and perhaps carrying out such a survey?

1810 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I confirmed in my response, there is a dedicated digitalisation committee that has been set up in order to determine the best progress for the software that the GHA uses, so I would imagine that any clinician that has any issues should go straight to the digitalisation committee in order to express any issues that they may have and deal with it through the appropriate forum, which would be a specific committee that has been set up for this purpose.

1815 **Madam Speaker:** Does the hon. Member have anything on Question 462, or would you require some time to look at the schedule?

Before we move on to the next question, we will take the supplementary first to Question 421, please.

1820 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In relation to the safeguarding children and at-risk adult's policy. The date on which the policy was most recently updated prior to the most recent version, it says that this is a newly created policy. Madam Speaker, when we then look at the number of safeguarding alerts that have been raised in relation to the Care Agency, it is evident that safeguarding alerts are indeed raised, given the number of safeguarding alerts that appear on the schedule.

1825 Was there, prior to April 2025, no policy in place in the Care Agency in relation to the safeguarding of children and at-risk adults?

1830 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as the document, which I handed over, confirmed, the newly created policy is based on existing processes and procedures and aims to streamline internal reporting. Therefore, the processes and procedures were there. What the policy does is that it codifies those procedures.

1835 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for that answer. There was no standardized document or official policy in relation to the safeguarding of children and at-risk adults. This has been introduced in April 2025. Is this correct?

1840 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, from the information that has been provided to me and the hon. Lady opposite, yes, that was said to be correct.

What I do not know is at what point the Act was introduced requiring such a policy, but as the document, which I have handed over specifically, states, this is based on existing processes and procedures, which are in place. Indeed, as the document that I handed over to the hon. Lady demonstrates, safeguarding procedures have been in place for a significant period of time.

1845

**Madam Speaker:** Just let me ask whether the Hon. A Sanchez has anything on Question 427 and then I will come to the Hon. E J Reyes.

1850

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister be able to clarify who approved these purchases. Were they approved by the ERS or by the GHA?

1855

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the ERS has a budget of £25 million, I think, off the top of my head. The approval of TV screens, wooden bamboo blinds, laptops, etc., amounting to £4,000. I am not sure it is something, which I should necessarily be involved in, so I am unaware of who gave the authority for this, but I assume it was done in the ordinary course of the approvals process within the ERS.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. E J Reyes had a question.

1860

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are looking at the schedule. On the fourth entry down, the 3rd of September, it says “free by surface pro facilities and ERS manage and clinical lead”.

1865

If we compare that to the first entry, the first one is for monitors, two of which were for the facilities manager and two for the care manager. That is understood. In this case, I do not know what surface-pro facilities are and then we bought three.

Who are they for, the ERS manager or for the clinical lead? It is not exactly as well explained as the first entry, so we do not know who ended up with what and what exactly the surface-pro facilities are.

1870

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am informed that surface-pro’s are tablets. Tablets amounting to £4,000. Again, I do not know who approved these, but if we have three tablets, if the ERS management determines that they need three tablets at a cost of £4,240, as long as that is properly accounted for, properly approved, etc., I am not sure what exactly it is that the hon. Lady and Gentleman are trying to get at.

1875

**Hon. E J Reyes:** I am grateful that the Minister is trying to clarify. At the end of the day, we buy three tablets. If one goes to the ERS manager and the other one goes to the clinical lead, where is the third one? Alternatively, the ERS manager needs two at the same time. The figures do not tally.

1880

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, my office did not give approval for this. Again, I would imagine that the approval process goes through the appropriate clinical lead in the ERS. We are talking about three tablets at a cost of £4,240 in a budget of £25 million.

1885

I would assume that the appropriate approvals have been granted to the appropriate people at the appropriate time and the appropriate receipts have been given. So if three surface pro were required, I imagine that three surface pro were required for three individuals within ERS. I do not know who those individuals were and I assume that they have gone through the appropriate processes of approvals.

1890

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker; I know my colleague may have asked. I never pressed to in respect of who gave the authority. What I am trying to find out is where these £4,240.50 worth of equipment have ended and it seems the accountability, at least from what I

read of the schedule, the ERS manager could have ended up with one, the clinical lead could have ended up with the other.

1895

**Madam Speaker:** Is it a different question or is the hon Member repeating? If it is the same question, I am going to ask the hon. Member to take a seat.

1900

**Hon. E J Reyes:** It is a question, which I did not quite get the answer of what I was trying to ask. If we purchase three, which seems to be like tablets, where have they ended up? They named the ERS manager, they named the clinical lead, but unlike the description given for the first entry, we do not know where the third one has gone to irrespective of who gave the purchasing authority, which I was not questioning at all.

1905

**Madam Speaker:** I am not sure that was a question in the end. Was there a question?

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, my question is where have those three ended up? In the list, I only see one for the ERS manager and one for the clinical lead. Therefore, if we bought three, where is the third one?

1910

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I have 10 portfolios. I have 106 Parliamentary questions. I can assure you that I do not know where the three tablets are.

1915

I can go tomorrow and find out for the hon. Gentleman where the three tablets are, but I can assure you that those tablets would have been purchased by the appropriate individuals with the appropriate approvals, etc. I am not sure that it is my job or my remit either to be a clinician or to go and find out where three tablets are. I trust the staff at ERS, and if the staff at ERS tell me that they need three tablets, they will need three tablets.

I am not sure where this line of questioning is going. Do I not trust the staff at ERS who tell me that they need three tablets? I just do not see where this is going.

1920

Is the hon. Gentleman trying to tell me that part of my remit is to account for each tablet, each monitor, each wooden bamboo blind, and each executive officer's chair? There is accountability, but I am not sure that it is the Minister's job, and I certainly have not been ever informed in the 18 months that I have been here, that it is my job to try and identify where three tablets that ERS staff have felt that they need are. I am very sorry, Madam Speaker, but I am unable to answer the hon. Gentleman's question because I do not know where the three tablets are.

1925

**Madam Speaker:** Any supplementaries on Questions 428, 429 or 430? No more? Questions 428, 429, 430, 434, 435? Does the Hon. A Sanchez have anything on Question 435?

The Hon. E J Reyes.

1930

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Question 435 referred to—we were asking to provide details of public or civil servants, and it was very similar to Question 436, which asked for the respect of direct employees of the GHA. I see in the schedule the answer.

1935

If we look at the second page, for example, for financial year 2021-2022, there is a senior officer (new scale) we have the basic salary, and the sum of total overtime is actually higher than the basic salary. However, that then, later on in the schedule, in answer to Question 436, we have undergrade senior officer (new scale) the same figures again for basic salary and overtime. I am not quite sure whether this senior officer is in respect of Question 435, which is a public servant, or is it in Question 436, which is direct employees of the GHA?

1940

Are they different people, or is it the same person that has appeared, accounted for twice, in Questions 435 and then again repeated in Questions 436? I am asking this because if I were to add all the figures, am I adding twice the figures given for Question 435 and again for Question 436?

1945 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am not certain is the answer. The amounts appear to be identical, so it would be logical that we are talking about the same individual. As the hon. Member may appreciate, there are many individuals on here, and I have been provided with this information, so I am not 100% certain that it has not been duplicated.

The hon. Gentleman is correct. They are asking about two different things, but I have not picked up on that anomaly. Therefore, in all honesty, I am unable to answer that question.

1950

**Hon. E J Reyes:** It is understandable, Madam Speaker. Having raised it, the Minister will have time and can come back at a later session, because there is a very similar repetition on the other pages, where there is not only a senior officer, there is a senior officer (new scale) for the next financial years and so on. Therefore, I appreciate she needs time to look there.

1955 Can I, Madam Speaker, just indulge a minor question on page 3 this time? On the grade, it says PTO, salary £40,655 and the overtime £61,000. PTO is normally either, please turn over to the next page, or it is something that is a common nomenclature.

I know it was used in the Housing Works Agency. I think it was Principal Technical Office or something, but it does not coincide with perhaps medical trades. Personal to holder, as we find in the Estimates Book, normally has an abbreviation.

1960

So, is the Minister aware of what PTO is? If not, she can come back to us at some stage. It is not an executive officer, he is not a hospital attendant, it does not seem to be a clerical grade, and I am a bit at a loss, being pedantic as a retired schoolteacher, I am intrigued what PTO means.

1965 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I would assume that it is a technical grade, but I do not have that, I am not certain about it. I am happy to come back with that information at a later session.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. A Sanchez, anything on Question 451?

1970

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, I have gone to the month of May, and missed care sessions are at 88. I appreciate that the transition from LifeCome to CCDSL took place on 26th or 27<sup>th</sup> and CCDSL commenced operations. Given that, these figures take us to mid-May, and they are still quite high, would the Hon. Minister have indications now, at present date, whether there seems to be a decline in complaints, and whether things seem to be settling down at this point?

1975

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, these are the latest figures that I have available, but from anecdotal evidence, as well as I am in touch with the Managing Director of CCDSL on a quasi-daily basis to see how things are going, and I would say that things seem to be settling down. I would expect that the transition has a few issues, but things seem to be settling down, and I would expect that number to go down significantly in the next few weeks.

1980

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, these missed sessions, the issues or the high number that is reflected here in relation to missed care sessions, are these attributed to the changes that have been made in relation to the rotas? Is this what has impacted this number, or is there another explanation to this?

1985

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, what we are seeing is that it is in relation to the change in the rotas and the change in the zoning areas, and again, we would expect this to be calming down.

1990

**Madam Speaker:** All right, that is the end of the supplementaries arising from schedules, so we will continue with Question 464, I think.

**Q464/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Ear Irrigation Procedure**

1995

**Acting Clerk:** Question 464, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many service users have had an ear irrigation procedure at the GHA in the past nine months? Please provide a monthly breakdown.

2000

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, none.

2005

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker I ask this question, and I understand that the procedure is no longer carried out by the GHA. The reason I ask this question is that we were in receipt of information that suggests that at least one procedure was carried out within the GHA, an ear irrigation procedure, within those nine months. I would therefore ask whether the Hon. Minister is aware that that one procedure was carried out.

2010

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, clearly not.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2015

**Q465/2025**  
**St Bernard's Hospital –**  
**Cardiac Rehabilitation Gym**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 465, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2020

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Is the cardiac rehabilitation gym situated within St Bernard's Hospital used by patients only?

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

2025

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the gym is limited to individuals who have been under the care of the GHA.

2030

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Again, we have received information, Madam Speaker, that members of staff sometimes use the gym. So again, I would ask, is the Hon. Minister aware that this is the case and that concerns have been raised in this regard?

2035

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, my understanding is that members of staff are not allowed and have never been allowed to use it unless the specific member of staff has undergone a cardiac procedure in the GHA. Cardiac, Eves, Muscoskeletal reconditioning or cardia rehabilitation. Therefore, my understanding is firmly that members of staff are not permitted to use the cardiac rehabilitation gym.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** May I ask how often it is maintained and who is responsible for its maintenance?

2040 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I do not have this information to hand. Again, if the hon. Lady were to put a question, give me notice of the question, I would be happy to answer that.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2045

**Q466/2025  
GHA –  
Donations**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 466, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2050

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Please provide a breakdown as to all donations over £500 made to the GHA from 1 May 2023 to date, to include the amount of the donation and or the item of service donated, the cost of the item of service donated and the department which the donation was made to, if specific and not to the GHA as an organization.

2055

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

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

2060

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 466**

DATE	PAYEE	DONATIONS RECEIVED	DEPT DONATION MADE TO
08/06/2023	Donation 1	£44,219.32	Dermatology
20/06/2023	Donation 2	£11,961.68	Orthopaedic
04/07/2023	Donation 3	£500.00	Chemo Unit
08/08/2023	Donation 4	£34,432.25	Community
06/09/2023	Donation 5	£20,000.00	Radiology
19/10/2023	Donation 6	£3,200.00	Oncology
01/11/2023	Donation 7	£1,800.00	Training
05/02/2024	Donation 8	£10,000.00	ENT
28/02/2024	Donation 9	p	Radiology
24/04/2024	Donation 10	£80,000.00	Training
14/05/2024	Donation 11	£4,065.00	Urology
20/06/2024	Donation 12	£16,000.00	Maternity
25/09/2024	Donation 13	£1,069.60	Dudley Toomey Ward
04/11/2024	Donation 14	£11,586.10	Cardiac Dept
27/11/2024	Donation 15	£3,696.35	Cardiac Dept
04/12/2024	Donation 16	£163,618.05	Set aside (Unallocated at present)
09/12/2024	Donation 17	£180,000.00	Set aside (Unallocated at present)
17/12/2024	Donation 18	£201,441.50	Urology
24/12/2024	Donation 19	£34,780.16	MHF

Cont...



**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 466**

07/02/2025	Donation 20	£500.00	Unallocated
28/02/2025	Donation 21	£2,653.80	Gynae
11/03/2025	Donation 22	£899.00	Set aside (Unallocated at present)
28/03/2025	Donation 23	£12,146.98	Rainbow
06/04/2025	Donation 24	£2,700.00	Oncology
17/04/2025	Donation 25	£100,000.00	Surgical Outpatient Unit
25/04/2025	Donation 26	£30,000.00	Training
15/04/2025	Donation 27	£80,416.75	Chemo Suite
07/05/2025	Donation 28	£207,937.96	Chemo Suite

**Madam Speaker:** All right, we will come back to that for supplementaries. Next question.

**Q467/2025**

**GHA –**

**Cross-Frontier Workers Use of Services**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 467, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Have there been any cases over the past 24 months of unregistered and non-entitled cross-frontier workers making use of GHA services free of charge? If so, how many cases have there been and what service did they benefit from?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, No ma'am.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, again, I ask these questions based on information received that some have benefited from this service free of charge and they were not entitled. I ask the Minister what, if any, review has been conducted to ascertain whether zero is indeed the answer.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I relay on the information provided by the GHA, In order to get an appointment to the GHA, there are two routes that you can get into the GHA.

You can get into the GHA either via the GP route, in which case you call 200 52441 in the morning and you give an appointment. However, when you call 52441 in the morning, the clerk that answers a call will check that you are registered and that your GHA card is valid at that point in time. If your GHA registration card is valid, you will get the appointment. If the GHA registration card is not valid, you will be put through a procedure to make sure that you are properly registered and entitled to have the services in the GHA.

The other route which determines whether you are able to access services in the GHA is via A&E. Therefore, when you go to A&E, most members of the House will be familiar with the process. You turn up at the A&E counter and they ask for your name and your date of birth. Again, when you turn up at the A&E counter and you ask for your name and date of birth, they will determine whether you are eligible for services in the GHA. If you are going by A&E, you are stopped at the counter and if you are going by an appointment, the call operators will determine whether you are eligible.

Therefore, it is quite difficult to get through that system unless you have a card that has been granted, it has been granted for a period, and you are no longer working in the GHA. That is the only way that you are able to come into the GHA if you are no longer working in Gibraltar, for example, and you are no longer paying social insurance. In fact, what we are actually doing is we are putting systems in place so that the information is immediate, so that you will know on a daily and active basis whether or not individuals are indeed registered and are indeed paying social insurance, etc., so that Gibraltarian residents who are entitled to services are getting services and only entitled patients receive services from the GHA. This is something, which we are actively pursuing in the GHA.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** So, Madam Speaker, just to unpack what the Hon. Minister has just explained, is it therefore the case that, to date, the systems in place are not satisfactory in order to determine who is or is not eligible to receive free services from the GHA?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker, I will unpack it further. The way the system has always operated is that if I am in employment in Gibraltar and I am resident in Gibraltar, you go to the GHA, you register for your GHA card and you are given a card. In that period, for example, I might be given a card; I think it is for a five-year period.

In that period, I might fall out of employment, I might move away from Gibraltar, but the card is valid for five years. The card is valid for five years if you are in regular employment in Gibraltar. There are circumstances if you are self-employed, for example, that you get a card for a lesser period.

What this means is that the system currently is that you are given a card for a period, and that has always been the case. That has been the historical legacy case, and I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition is familiar with that system because it must have been the system that was in place for more than 20 years. What we are now doing is that we are now looking to get active data so that we have the data available and we are able to look at whether you are in employment today in Gibraltar.

It is not the case that there is anything wrong with the system. The system is a system that has always been in place in Gibraltar. At the moment, if I go with my GHA card, and I must have got my GHA card at the birth of my last son, so five years ago, six years ago, the GHA card will be valid for a period of five years, and I then go and renew it.

What we are looking to do is to make that more current, so we are actually updating the system to make sure that we have current information available.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** So based on that, is it then the case that somebody who perhaps stopped working for the Government or stopped working in Gibraltar, say, two years ago, but their health card is still valid, is it the case that they can obtain such services even if they have not been paying social insurance contributions for the past two years in Gibraltar?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** It would be unlikely, Madam Speaker, that someone would be able to get services for an extended period, because the cards are limited depending on the type of employment that you have. So, different cards will be issued depending on different employment statuses. You might be able to get it if you were employed two months ago, possibly under the current system, but highly unlikely that you would be able to get it if your card was issued two years ago, if that makes sense.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** If there is a scenario where employment terminates before the contractually agreed time, like for example a dismissal. How does the system pick up upon that?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** At the moment Madam Speaker, eligibility for your GHA card is determined by your employment status at the point of applying for the status.

2150        Therefore, that is the way that it has historically been determined. Therefore, I apply for a GHA card today; I get my GHA card dependent on my employment status today. We are looking to update that system so that it is in line with active data that is being produced concurrently.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2155

**Q468/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Prescriptions Issued**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 468, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2160        **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Please provide a monthly breakdown of the number of prescriptions issued by the GHA from 1 May 2022 to date and the cost incurred by the GHA from 1 May 2022 to date of fulfilling those prescriptions.

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

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2170        **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, in relation to the number of prescriptions issued by the GHA from 1 May 2022 to date, due to the manner in which the information is coded, we are unable to provide a monthly breakdown of the number of prescriptions. However, we do know that the total number of prescriptions issued from 1 May 2022 to date is 833,685. In relation to the costs incurred by the GHA from 1 May 2022 to date of fulfilling those prescriptions, I now hand over a schedule with the information requested.

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 468**

<b>2022</b>	<b>£</b>
May	850297.41
Jun	422348.02
Jul	1371524.87
Aug	888445
Sep	765000
Oct	767535.74
Nov	829900
Dec	791900
<b>2023</b>	
Jan	1522495.19
Feb	818863.83
Mar	840200
Apr	1229547.61
May	802155.62
Jun	938730.90
Jul	851366.43
Aug	959747.29
Sep	832718.98
Oct	839427.30
Nov	976004.07
Dec	892928.30
<b>2024</b>	
Jan	1719708.80
Feb	1010358.72
Mar	925572.53
Apr	1379271.57
May	1112796.32
Jun	978973.27
Jul	1049637
Aug	1338936.76
Sep	1037991.84
Oct	1295175.83
Nov	1011103.07
Dec	1257278.51
<b>2025</b>	
Jan	1014381.04
Feb	2158451.38
Mar	977105.41
Apr	1152248.69
May	9705.07

2175 **Madam Speaker:** I shall come back to that for supplementaries in due course. Next question.

**Q469/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Immunisation History**

2180 **Acting Clerk:** Question 469, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** What mechanisms are in place for GHA service users and GHA employees to check their immunisation history and status?

2185 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Sorry, Madam Speaker, you will be pleased to know that I am through my first file and now my second file. I am just trying to organise myself here.

2190 Madam Speaker, any service user or GHA employee can request information by contacting the release of records team. The request form is available online via email or can be picked up from the postbox outside the records office, located on the ground floor of St Bernard's Hospital. Once processed, the information can be provided via email, USB or a printed copy, depending on the individual's preference.

2195 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, back in March 2021, the then Minister for Digital and Financial Services stated that there was a new app, in fact, being developed, which would provide Gibraltarians with digital proof of vaccinations and could become a multi-use platform for GHA needs, such as booking appointments. The app would allow Gibraltarians to prove vaccinations and at the time, of course, this was very important, to store Covid test dates, results, and that would aid travelling.

2200 I ask the question, is this app still being considered because, of course, we have heard nothing in the past four years as to whether this is going to be rolled in or not, but it certainly seemed a good idea.

2205 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure whether that particular app is being looked into, but we are actively considering different apps. To be clear, I am not sure if it is the same app that my colleague referred to four years ago, but we are actively considering implementing an app for the GHA. I do not know the timeline of the implementation of the app.

2210 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Just for clarity, is it an app that separates to eGov or is it something that would perhaps be uploaded to or integrated with eGov website?

2215 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the avenue that we are exploring is a separate app, but as I said, it is at an initial stage of exploration.

2220 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I do not think that the Hon. Minister would have the answer, given that they are at the initial stages, but I ask it anyways. Does the Hon. Minister have a period as to when this app may be rolled out?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker, I do not.

**Q470/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Consultants/Nurses**

2225 **Acting Clerk:** Question 470, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2230 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Do all consultants working within the GHA have the benefit of nurses to assist them in carrying out their duties and responsibilities?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, this question appears to reflect a tradition and somewhat outdated view of healthcare delivery and does not align with the modern multidisciplinary team approach that underpins contemporary clinical practice within the GHA and indeed all advanced healthcare systems. Nurses are not assistants to doctors, but are autonomous healthcare professionals who work collaboratively as part of an MDT. Many nurses in the GHA lead services independently, manage caseloads and provide specialised care within their scope of practice.

Whether delivery of care necessitates direct nursing involvement, such as in the operating theatre, where procedures cannot proceed safely without a scrub nurse, consultants always have the required nursing support. Similarly, in intensive care, accident emergency, pediatric or inpatient wards, nurses and doctors work in close collaboration to deliver patient care. In some outpatient or diagnostic settings, healthcare support workers or administrative staff may be more appropriate to the task, while in others, a consultant may work entirely independently.

It is important to emphasise that resources are aligned with clinical need and service design, and not with individual practitioners. If the hon. Member is referring to a specific clinical area or scenario, I would be pleased to provide a more detailed and tailored response at the next session of Parliament.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, the fault is entirely mine, perhaps not asking the question more widely as to support workers. I do refer to the area of mental health, where there appears to be a shortage of support staff available, not just support staff but also support staff within a clinical setting, not just admin staff. I turn to page 20 of the mental health report, just for ease of reference for the Minister, and within there it is stated that the clinical director believes that the mental health services currently face challenges not just from limited resources but also from how those resources are allocated.

One of the issues appears to be the imbalance in staffing. There are not enough less qualified mental health professionals to support senior staff like consultants, who are often burdened with tasks that could be handled by others at a lower pay grade. Does the Minister therefore agree that perhaps mental health professionals or consultants are being discriminated against, and so is the service?

My understanding is that, other areas, such as gynecology and pediatrics, do have in-clinic nursing support, which I am told is not the case with the mental health consultants. More generally, is the Hon. Minister accepting of that position.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the discussion that I sometimes have with the Divisional Lead for Mental Health is one of requiring less qualified doctors to support consultant psychiatrists, for example. In the conversations that I have had with the clinical psychiatrist and the Divisional lead of Mental Health, he would confirm that the level of staffing is not in relation to nurses specifically, I do not believe, but is in relation to less qualified doctors. We have actually five clinical psychiatrists employed and maybe the balance there may not be correct.

We have these ongoing discussions with the Divisional lead for Mental Health. Again, as I have explained to the hon. Lady previously, the complement that is in place for mental health is a complement that the GHA has requested. At each turn, at each budget, the Government has approved the budget for the complement that the GHA has requested.

If the GHA has requested a complement of five clinical psychiatrists, the budget has been approved for the provision of five clinical psychiatrists in that specific scenario. What I would advise and what I have advised the Divisional lead for Mental Health to do is, if he believes that less qualified individuals can do the same job, or if he believes that the complement should be structured differently, that is a discussion which he should have with the medical director, the



medical director should have with the DG, and indeed the complement can be revisited along those lines if that is indeed what he believes.

2285 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, based on that answer, does the Hon. Minister anticipate a different model following within the new model of mental health care that provides further support to these consultants within the mental health care setting?

2290 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, in this scenario, we are led by the clinicians, so if the clinicians request that they need nursing posts, the nursing posts are given, and indeed we are training mental health nurses, which is one of my next answers, we are training mental health nurses specifically for this purpose. Every single clinical position that was given, every single doctor that was requested, every single nurse that was requested by the GHA at the last budget, and indeed at this budget, has been granted by HMGOG, so the funding has been provided for the  
2295 complement as requested by the GHA.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2300

**Q471/2025**  
**PCC –**  
**Expenditure Incurred**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 471, the Hon J Ladislaus.

2305 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Could the Minister provide details as to the expenditure incurred in respect of purchasing the self-check-in counters at the PCC and the Children's PCC, including any additional costs such as training and software, and when they are expected to be commissioned? How will these counters be maintained, and at what cost?

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

2310

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the expenditure incurred for the hardware installation and delivery was £54,938. The expenditure incurred for the annual license cost was £9,756.72. The planned implementation of the patient check-in kiosks originally purchased via our EMIS partner, will not proceed as intended. This is due  
2315 to EMIS and NewMed ending their partnership, which has effectively rendered the original solution unusable.

Despite this setback, we do not intend to let the investment go to waste. We have identified an alternative workflow that will allow us to repurpose the kiosks and still deliver a patient check-in function. The workaround is currently being configured and tested, and we aim to begin trial in the kiosk with a new set-up shortly.  
2320

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, how far back were these kiosks actually purchased.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately I do not have that information available.  
2325

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, when does the Hon. Minister expect that these kiosks will be up and running? Is there a period within which this is expected to happen?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, this is something, which is happening as we speak, so  
2330 the trials are actually occurring as we speak, and in fact is the very occasion that I was referring to

before when I said that the GHA IT team works closely with IT&LD. In this instance, the GHA IT team has worked closely with the IT&LD department in order to provide a solution which they are currently testing, so I would not envisage that this will take more than, at most, a couple of months to implement, and I would want it to be far sooner.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q472/2025**

**GHA –**

**Outcome of the Employee Surveys 2024/2025**

2340

**Acting Clerk:** Question 472, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Will the GHA publish the outcome of the employee surveys carried out in 2024 and 2025 respectively?

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

2350

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the 2024 staff survey results have been shown and discussed with each of the divisional teams. Madam Speaker, these are: surgery; medical; primary care; mental health; and the elderly residential services. The 2024 results were also taken in detail to the GHA board.

The current 2025 survey is underway and the results will be reported in a similar fashion when completed.

2355

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Minister just clarify whether all staff have seen the results of these surveys, or is it just clinical leads?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I would expect that the information that has been provided say that it is divisional teams. I would expect the divisional leads to feed it down to their teams.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Are there any plans to make the results of these surveys available to the wider public? For example, the surveys that were carried out by the Police Complaints Board carried out surveys. Certainly, there was a survey carried out on the RGP's complement.

I ask the question, will this be made available to the public in the same way?

**The Hon Arias-Vasquez** Not to my knowledge, Madam Speaker.

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**The Hon J Ladislaus** What are the reasons for that because to my mind, this is very much in the public interest.

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, this is a decision made by the Director-General and the executive team. I am not aware of what the reasons are, or indeed that it will not be published going forward. What I have said is that, to my knowledge, it will not be published.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q473/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Bed Shortages**

2380 **Acting Clerk:** Question 473, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Are bed shortages considered a consistent issue throughout the GHA? If so, what is being done to address this?

2385 **Acting 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. Bed shortages have been a thing of the past for many years. Although they were a constant issue before 2011, they now only occur occasionally.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, have there been days when the GHA has had no beds available?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, bed management is actively managed on a day-to-day basis. There is a bed management team, there is a bed management coordinator, and the bed management team will actively manage the beds available on a day-to-day basis. As far as I am aware, no, Madam Speaker.

2400

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, the issue of bed shortages was again raised within the mental health reports for this year, and I do not unfortunately have it at my fingertips which specific section it was raised in, but it was certainly raised as an issue within the GHA, and it did state the GHA. Again, I ask the Hon. Minister whether she would agree with that statement that has been made within that report.

2405

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, bed capacity is managed actively, and it is a jigsaw puzzle, which is actively managed by a team on a daily basis. Whereas there may have been beds allocated for specific purposes, to my knowledge, there are not issues.

In fact, there are programs in place for it to be managed in a more efficient manner, so there is always an excess of beds available. To my knowledge, there have been no bed shortages, Madam Speaker.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, what is the Government doing to address the issue of long-stay patients?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure that that is a supplementary for this question.

2420

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, how is it that the Minister can say that there is not an issue of bed shortages when we hear comments from constituents that surgical operations are cancelled on that ostensible ground given to them on information from the health authority?

2425

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, again, bed management is an issue, which is consistently managed, and whereas beds may be put to one side in order to facilitate other procedures, emergencies, etc., operations may be cancelled because of this. As to bed shortages, the information that I have is that there have been no bed shortages at all throughout this period, and that the Bed Management Committee has actively managed it.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, perhaps we are miscommunicating, but if someone is told, or quite a few people are told that your operation has been cancelled because there is not a bed, those people would be entitled to think that that means that there is not a bed, therefore there is a bed shortage on that particular day. Is the Minister defining this in a different way? I am not sure I follow.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, bed management is, again, I explained to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and again, the hon Leader of the Opposition has been in this position previously, so bed management is actively managed so that there will always be beds available in case an emergency comes in, in case an emergency procedure is required, etc. Therefore, bed management is actively managed, and elective procedures are in some instances cancelled because the situation is tight. However, to my knowledge, there have been very few, if any, elective procedures cancelled throughout this latest winter period, and therefore, to my knowledge, bed management is actually actively being managed in order to ensure that any elective procedure can go ahead as pre-planned.

When I say that bed management is an active process, it means that decisions have to be taken as to whether elective procedures can go ahead because of the current situation to determine whether emergencies come in that may require those beds, for example.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Minister is speaking in Riddles. If there are 40 days when people in the year where people have been told there are no beds for your surgery, on 40 days there is a bed shortage, it does not help those people that there is a bed in midwifery, because you are not going to be put in midwifery. I really struggle to understand what the hon. Lady is trying to explain on the bed management.

Does she not accept that to the extent that there are days where people's surgery has been cancelled, at least on those days there is a bed shortage because if there were not a bed shortage, they would not have, the operation cancelled.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I have explained numerous times, if there is an elective procedure and the bed management situation is tight on any given day, the elective procedure may be cancelled to give priority to any emergency that may come in. To my knowledge, in this winter period, there have been very few, if any, operations that have been cancelled, but I fully accept that, I fully take on board the fact that the bed management committee has been managing the situation very well and there have been further changes brought in which will manage the situation even better and more proactively. I do not think that there is a consistent issue of any bed shortage in the GHA at present.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

#### Q474-76/2025

#### GHA –

#### Waiting Times for Services

**Acting Clerk:** Question 474, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** What are the current average waiting times at the GHA for: (1) overall psychological services; (2) primary care counsellor; (3) secondary care psychologist; and (4) clinical psychologist under the Gibraltar Young Minds Service?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 475 and 476.

2480 **Acting Clerk:** Question 475, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How long is the average waiting time for an MRI scan to be carried out from the date of referral to the date on which the imaging is carried out?

2485 **Acting Clerk:** Question 476, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** What was or is the average waiting time, broken down by month, for a service user to have neurosurgery at the GHA from the time of referral to the date on which surgery was or is carried out, as from the 1st of November 2024 to date?

2490 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the current average waiting times at the GHA for overall psychology services is 21 weeks. The current average waiting times for primary care counsellor is nine weeks. The current average waiting times for secondary care psychologist is 32 weeks and the current average waiting times for a clinical psychologist under the Gibraltar Young Minds service is 27 weeks.

2495 In answer to Question 475, the average waiting time for an MRI scan at SMG slash GibMed from the date of referral to the date of examination is eight weeks. In answer to Question 476, the GHA does not perform neurosurgery.

2500 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, in respect of Question 474, I note that the waiting time for secondary care psychologist is 32 weeks. That, to my calculation, is eight months.

Is the Hon. Minister satisfied with that amount of time for somebody to have secondary care by a psychologist?

2505 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I also raise a similar question. The waiting list is down from 77 weeks in June 2024 to 32 weeks. Because a complement of psychologists has now been completed, and all the five psychologists are now in employment, we would expect to see these waiting lists drop significantly.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, in respect of the clinical psychologists under the Gibraltar Young Minds service, we have just heard that that has gone up to 27 weeks. If we turn to page 27 of the mental health report, which is dated 14 October to 18 November 2024, the waiting time to see a psychologist at that point in time was 18 weeks. That was already four and a half months, but now this has risen even further, and it has almost doubled, Madam Speaker.

Is the Hon. Minister satisfied with those numbers almost doubling, and can she account for the reasons behind such a high increase in the past few months?

2520 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the data that I have is that—sorry, could the hon. Lady repeat the dates that she is referring to.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Yes, so it would be the dates on which the mental health report for 2024 was carried out. I am at page 27 under Young Minds, and it says the latest data—so the report is dated 14 October to 18 November 2024, which presumably is the date within which all the work carried out was undertaken, or rather the report was actually put together.

It says, "The latest data reveals that 14 children and young people are currently on the waiting list. Of these, only one is waiting an appointment with a counsellor, while the remaining 13 require appointments with a clinical psychologist. The waiting time to see a psychologist is 18 weeks".

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the data that I have is that October 24 the wait time was 50 weeks, November 2024 the wait time was 46 weeks, December 2024 the waiting time was 42 weeks, and that has dropped to 27 weeks now. So clearly the method of calculation of this data and the data that the hon. Lady has is different. The data that I have in front of me, again, is that these waiting times are dropping.

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We do have dashboards, which we keep on top of, which show us that the waiting times are dropping significantly. Again, because we are at full complement now, we would expect these waiting times to decrease significantly.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for that clarification, but it is slightly concerning because, obviously, the report that the Mental Health Board put together, and painstakingly, might I add, because a lot of work has been carried out, is very clear. We have to be grateful for that, for all the work that they have carried out. It is concerning that, the figures therein reflect 18 weeks and have now risen to 27.

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Can the Hon. Minister clarify how those figures are provided to the Mental Health Board?

**The Hon Arias-Vasquez** No, Madam Speaker, I cannot.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister perhaps undertake to delve more deeply into that discrepancy, and perhaps if I write to her, would the Hon. Minister perhaps be in a position to respond to that discrepancy?

It is concerning because this is obviously a public document that has gone out, and it does not appear to reflect what the reality at the GHA at the time, which in fact is a lot higher.

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am very happy to engage the hon. Lady on this issue. I would imagine that it is a way that the data is collected that offers a discrepancy. I am very happy to ask how the data was provided to the Mental Health Board, and I am very happy to contrast and compare it to the way that the data that I have collated in front of me has been gathered.

Therefore, yes, I am very happy to engage with the hon. Lady on that.

2560

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Question 475?

2565

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, can I just ask on this, and assuming that the Minister is going to take on board in any event this issue on the statistics and clarify it with my hon. Colleague, but on this specific issue, on the 27-week delay to see someone, or waiting time rather, to see a clinical psychologist under the Young Minds service, does the Minister agree that that is over six months. That is quite a long period for a young person to be waiting for a referral to a clinical psychologist. I am sure she accepts that.

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In terms of how the individual, how the family, are perhaps anxiously waiting for that matter to be dealt with at a sensitive period in that person's life, what steps are the Government considering to try to make that waiting list shorter?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I would obviously not want an individual to be waiting for 27 weeks. That is not the aim. However, one thing that is important to point out is that it is not that an individual is left waiting in an abyss for 27 weeks.

There is plenty of support that is offered to the individuals, be it through a mental health nurse, be it through other means, through counselling. However it is, the individual would be offered assistance in that period. If there is an urgent demand, if there is an urgent case, that urgent case



will of course be seen much quicker than the 27-week average, and I think it is important to clarify that.

In respect of what steps are being taken by the Government to reduce the waiting list, the first step that is very important to say that has been taken by the Government to reduce their waiting list, by the GHA, is that the complement is now at full complement. Five psychologists have been recruited, they are now employed at full time in order to deal with the waiting list for mental health issues. I think it is fair to say, Madam Speaker that this Government is a Government, which has paved the way for mental health services and is continuing to do so in terms of the community mental health facility, in terms of changing the model of care, in terms of increasing the complement of psychiatrists, psychologists and mental health nurses.

It is important to say that there is a cohort of 14 mental health nurses, which is currently studying at the University of Gibraltar in order to become mental health practitioners in Gibraltar. I think it is very important that we have our own homegrown mental health nurses for that continuity of the service that is very difficult to provide otherwise. I think it is important to say that because at this moment in time there is a global shortage of mental health practitioners, so we have striven to offer a complete cohort of services.

Whether we argue about the manner in which the statistics are provided, and I am very happy again to sit with the hon. Lady to delve into exactly why we have different statistics, but what is inarguable is that the waiting lists have fallen at a point, which I would be happy with. Clearly, I want the waiting lists to be much less, than they currently are, and we are taking steps to ensure that that is the case. In answer to the hon. Leader of the Opposition's question, the first step that we have taken is to complete the complement so that all vacancies are filled in terms of psychiatrists and psychologists.

All mental health nurses are currently employed, and we are indeed training a further 14 mental health nurses in order to complete that site.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, is the average waiting time of eight weeks also applied to cases of, for example, an acute injury where somebody has twisted a knee playing a sport?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker, acute cases are seen to much quicker than the eight-week average that I presented.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** In terms of the waiting list of eight weeks, how is that being managed or addressed. Is there an active move to bring down or decrease the waiting time?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** The eight-week waiting time is something, which I assure the hon. Lady we are on top of consistently. There have been issues with the MRI scanner. As the hon. Lady knows, the MRI scanner is a facility that is provided to us by GibMed, and GibMed have had issues with the MRI.

Contractually, the timing obligations are far less, and indeed, we are pushing for that to be the case, so that the waiting lists are far reduced in line with the contract. However, there has been unexpected maintenance downtime, and they have had other issues with the MRI, which has fed into the eight-week waiting time. However, we are in constant dialogue with GibMed in order to try to reduce that waiting time as much as possible.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, again, perhaps it is that I have misunderstood the specialty, but who is it, therefore, if the GHA does not carry out neurosurgery, then how or when is spinal surgery carried out?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, neurosurgery is a tertiary-level specialty, and all cases are referred to external centers for treatment.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, they are referred externally. Surely, there is a contract with a tertiary provider. I ask, therefore, what the waiting times are for treatment to be obtained from those tertiary providers.

2635 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I do not have information as to the waiting times for these tertiary institutions, but they do include: King's College Hospital; University College; London Hospital; and Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital. As the hon. Lady is probably aware, we do not drive waiting times for the NHS, therefore we are oftentimes at the mercy of NHS waiting lists, and these do vary significantly.

2640 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, my understanding is that Gibraltar pays for those services from NHS tertiary providers, and on that basis, how are we at the mercy of the NHS as a public service to those waiting times? Could the Hon. Minister perhaps provide some clarification as to that statement?

2645 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, there is a reciprocal arrangement in place with UK hospitals, and therefore they are not private patients who go to the NHS.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2650

**Q477-78/2025**  
**St Bernard's Hospital –**  
**Safeguarding Alerts**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 477, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2655 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many safeguarding alerts relating to St Bernard's Hospital have been raised in the past 24 months, broken down by month?

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

2660 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 478.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 478, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2665 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many safeguarding alerts relating to ocean views have been raised in the past 24 months, broken down by month?

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

2670 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 477, there have been 17 safeguarding alerts raised by GHA staff within St Bernard's Hospital in the past 24 months. The breakdown is as follows; there was one in June 2023; one in July 2023; one in November 2023; two in December 2023; one in January 2024; one in March 2024; one in April 2024; one in July 2024; one in August 2024; one in September 2024; two in October 2024; one in November 2024; two in February 2025; and one in March 2025.

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In answer to Question 478, over the past 24 months, there have been four safeguarding alerts raised pertaining to Ocean Views. These alerts were raised in December 2023, August 2024, September 2024 and October 2024.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** In respect of Question 477, have all those safeguarding alerts been addressed?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, all of those alerts have been addressed and they are either resolved or they are pending the outcome because they are currently under investigation.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, the same question pertains to Question 478. Have all those alerts now been addressed and have they been resolved?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I think it is necessary to clarify that all safeguarding alerts are dealt with by the Gibraltar inter-agency safeguarding procedures and they are all dealt with in the same manner, whether it is in the ERS, the GHA, or the Care Agency. Therefore, all safeguarding alerts will be investigated and then there will be a register saying whether they have been resolved or whether they are currently under investigation. Therefore, yes, they are.

The four safeguarding alerts either in Ocean Views are also currently resolved or under investigation.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** And can I ask, do the safeguarding alerts raised pertain to in-house issues or do they pertain to issues that, as we saw in the table provided to my hon. Colleague, Mrs. Sanchez, there were breakdowns with explanations as to each of those safeguarding alerts which were raised within ERS and there were explanations and within those it could be ascertained whether they had been raised as to issues that were internal or issues that were, for example, to do with family or external issues with visitors.

Can the Hon. Minister comment, does she have the breakdown as to how many relate to internal issues?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, from the breakdown provided to me, I would deduce that they are largely, if not all, internal issues.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, what processes must be followed in order to raise the safeguarding alerts and in what instances are they usually raised at the GHA.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, there are a panoply of reasons why a safeguarding alert may be raised and any complaint, whatever avenue it comes through, will be raised to the Gibraltar Interagency Safeguarding Procedure. There are a number of tiers of safeguarding alerts and these are, it depends on the tier that it falls within, the category of safeguarding alert that will be raised. For example, in the GHA, a safeguarding alert can be raised via PALS, a safeguarding alert can be raised through the Complaints Procedure, a safeguarding alert can be raised directly to a clinician or, indeed, directly to management.

In the Care Agency, again, similarly, either to a social worker or to the CEO of the Care Agency, but all safeguarding alerts will eventually go to the same committee and will be dealt with in the same way and it depends on the severity of the safeguarding alert how that individual safeguarding alert will be dealt with.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister give further detail as to whether any of these safeguarding alerts have resulted in a change in policy?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, each and every DATIX entry, each and every investigation by clinical governance will result in a look-back exercise and will result in the GHA the Care Agency or, indeed, ERS looking at whether or not there are procedures, policies, training, etc., that can be improved. Each safeguarding alert, whatever tier it falls under, will be investigated and it will be reviewed by clinical governance and by the Inter-Agency Safeguarding

Procedures Committee to make sure that in the look-back exercise any lessons learned will be learned.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2735

**Q479-81/2025**  
**Skyward –**  
**Air Conditioning & Maintenance**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 479, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

2740 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister confirm whether the works undertaken to the air conditioning system in Sky Ward have provided a permanent solution or whether the works carried out have only resulted in a temporary solution?

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

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**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will ask this question together with Questions 480 and 481.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 480, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Could the Hon. Minister provide details as to the maintenance program, which is currently in place for the Ocean Views buildings? Has the review of the Ocean Views Hospital's maintenance contract and evaluation of all services provided concluded? What are the findings and recommendations of that review and will the maintenance contract be put out to tender?

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 481, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Have the roof repairs in Ocean Views Hospital been carried out and do they offer a permanent or temporary solution? When did those works commence and by when were they/are they expected to be completed?

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

2765 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 479, the whole Sky Ward's air conditioning system has been replaced, providing a permanent solution. In answer to Question 480, the maintenance agreement that was in place in Ocean Views was terminated in October 2024 and responsibilities were transferred to the Mental Health Sites and Services Department. Since then, this department has been reviewing all existing service agreements, identifying further maintenance requirements and undertaking repairs to the facility's infrastructure.

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The process continues, although much work has already been done. These include a thorough study of the whole air conditioning system that has helped identify matters like oil circulation issues and communication hindrances and all of these are now being addressed accordingly. A significant improvement to the hot water supply resilience has also been done.

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Ocean Views now has an on-site critical spare parts component and additionally individual hot water systems have been installed in both Horizon and Dawn Ward. Reinforcing the cooling system of the GHA's critical IT infrastructure within Ocean Views is also currently underway. As

stated, the process continues and any service contracts required will be put out for tender as per the GHA and Government policies.

In answer to Question 481, the last works to the Ocean Views' roof concluded in September 2024. Since then, there has been no damage reported or works conducted to the facility's roof.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, in respect of Question 479, since when has there been a permanent solution in place?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am aware the works were completed fairly recently but I do not have the actual completion date to hand.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, the reason I ask is because at the March session, the Hon. Minister confirmed that works had been completed on 13 December 2024 but since then we received information that the works that had been completed only provided another temporary solution at the time, which is the reason I ask when those permanent works were completed because the information given was that works had been completed as on 13 December 2024.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, my understanding is that there have been some issues with the air conditioning facility but not because of not having a permanent solution in place. As part of the fire safety protocols, all air conditioning systems in the facility automatically switch off whenever a fire alarm is triggered. During the past few weeks, Ocean Views have had some minor issues with the fire alarms that have now been resolved. My understanding is that it is not the air conditioning solution, which is now a permanent solution, which hopefully works and gives no further issues, but it is an issue with the fire alarms that has triggered some problems with the air conditioning system and that is also now resolved.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q482/2025**  
**Ocean Views –**  
**Issue of Duplication and Excessive Paperwork**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 482, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Have processes at Ocean Views been reviewed to address the issue of duplication and excessive paperwork, which detracts from the time that nurses, can spend with their patients?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, yes ma'am.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister please give further detail as to what has been put in place?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, a number of administrative procedures have been streamlined and unnecessary repetition has been eliminated whenever possible. In addition, a restructuring of the junior administrative staff workload has been undertaken to better align their roles with operational needs of the wards. This restructuring has enabled administrative

personnel to provide more consistent ward support and to assume responsibility for routine filing and documentation tasks that were previously carried out by the nursing staff.

These measures are intended not only to reduce the administrative workload on nurses but also to ensure that clinical staff are better supported and able to dedicate more of their time to delivering high quality patient care, which remains our foremost priority.

**The Hon J Ladislaus** Since when have those new processes been in place?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, again I do not have that information to hand. If the hon. Lady, again as I said to a colleague, if the hon. Lady wishes me to have that specific level of detail I am very happy to provide it but if she could ask it in the question I would be very grateful.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2840

**Q484/2025**  
**Ocean Views –**  
**Appointed Doctor**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 484, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Has a second opinion appointed doctor been contracted for Ocean Views? If not, can the Minister outline what is being done to ensure that an appropriate individual is identified?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, yes, a second opinion appointed doctor has been contracted for Ocean Views.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Minister comment as to when that individual commenced employment?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, that individual has commenced employment fairly recently. I do not have a specific date but it is recent.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister clarify whether the contract under which that person has been employed is a permanent contract or whether it is a temporary one?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, these questions again are very detailed questions. I am very happy to provide the hon. Lady with the answers. I assume that it is a permanent contract.

I am not on top of every single contract that the GHA provides. If the hon. Lady could give me notice of the question, I am very happy to provide her with the answer.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I would have thought that this one was one that would have fallen under the remit of the initial answer. In any event, I ask it on the basis that in the annual report of the Mental Health Board, the recent one, it outlined that a temporary solution had been implemented in 2022 to supervise cases involving patients who were unable or unwilling to consent to treatments. Thereafter, by the 2023 Mental Health Board report, the temporary measure had expired and the service was left with a gap within that area which they were struggling to fill.

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2875 Hence, the reason why I ask whether this individual has been appointed on a permanent contract or are we going to be seeing the same as happened in 2023 whereby there was a gap left in the service again. Can the Hon. Minister perhaps comment as to whether that will be the case?

2880 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, again, if I read the question, has a second opinion appointed doctor been contracted for ocean views? If not, can the Minister outline what is being done to ensure that an appropriate individual is identified? This does not refer to a fixed-term contract; it does not refer to a permanent contract.

I need notice of the question in order to answer the specific question. I hear the hon. Leader of the Opposition muttering about supplementary questions. I am not here to guess what the hon. Members opposite are going to ask me.

2885 I am here to provide information. The question is, has a second opinion appointed doctor been appointed? In addition, the answer is yes, a second opinion doctor has been appointed and there is a second opinion doctor in place.

2890 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, perhaps if I rephrase the question, for what time period has that individual been appointed rather than under what type of contract?

2895 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, we can ask the question in as many different ways as we want. If that level of detail is requested, I am very happy and I always provide the information that the hon. Lady seeks. However, I need notice of the question in order to tell the hon. Lady exactly how many months, or indeed, if it is an indefinite contract that the second opinion appointed doctor has been appointed for.

It is not a complicated concept. If you want specific details, I see the hon. Members opposite complaining amongst themselves. It is not complicated.

2900 They have one job. If they want a specific answer, give me the specific question. It has not terribly complicated, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, this hectoring tone of Members on this side of the House, it is the hon. Lady, does she not realise that she is seeking to rewrite the Parliamentary practice?

2905 **Madam Speaker:** Is there a question?

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, the question is, does she not realise?

2910 **Madam Speaker:** A question that arises from the main question, not a general question on Parliamentary practice.

**Madam Speaker:** If there is a point of order, I will deal with it.

2915 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, if the hon. Lady is allowed to make the hectoring comment and we are not allowed to ask the question back, then it is a one-sided political chamber. I assume we are not.

2920 We are not in a one-sided political chamber, but the hon. Lady has from time to time these afternoon-hectored Members on this side about Parliamentary practice. Does she not realise that she is seeking to rewrite Parliamentary practice? It has always been the case, as long as I have been a Member of this House, that Members of the Opposition ask and probe the Government and Ministers prepare themselves for obvious supplementaries.

2925 That is what they do to try to be helpful to Members on this side of the House who are seeking to hold the Government to account. That is what I did when I was holding her job as Minister for Health. Does she not understand the basic rules of Parliamentary practice that she is seeking to rewrite in a hectoring tone?

**Madam Speaker:** Perhaps I may interject to remind both sides of the House that supplementary questions are permissible for further elucidating any matter or fact arising out of an oral answer. I say that for point of reference. The supplementary question has to be related and the Ministers will prepare those supplementary questions that they reasonably foresee are going to be asked.

If they have the answer, they do. If they do not have the answer, that is the answer.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for that. Madam Speaker, the GHA has a workforce of *circa* 1,400. It is impossible to be on top of the contract terms of 1,400 individuals and I do not think anyone expects a Government Minister to be on top of the contracts of 1,400 individuals.

The question is has a second opinion appointed doctor been contracted for? The answer is yes, a second opinion contracted doctor has been provided for. Now, if details were requested about what type of contract they wanted, again I am very happy to provide that level of detail.

I do not have it on me now. I can try to make up the terms as I go along but I do not think that is in anybody's interest, Madam Speaker. I think that I am here to provide Parliament with facts and in fact in previous occasions where I have facts incorrect or have been inaccurate and I have answered a question in the interest of trying to be as transparent as possible, I have later found myself in hot water because of the hon. Members opposite.

In order to answer the question accurately, I would need notice that that is a question that is going to be asked. If the hon. Lady had notice and the report was placed in front of her and she read the report and she knew that that was a question that was going to be asked, I mean what was expected in that case was I would say that no, the second opinion appointed doctor hadn't been appointed so therefore she didn't prepare the next question in that level of detail.

Madam Speaker, I have in no way, shape or form tried to avoid answering a question. I always answer all of the questions that I am asking for but if a level of detail is asked on the contract terms of an employee of the GHA, I would expect it reasonable, despite the hon. Leader of the Opposition's protestations, it would be reasonable to give me notice of the questions. I will happily answer the questions. I will happily provide the hon. Lady with the information that she seeks but for goodness sake, there is a huge workforce and just give me notice of the question.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

#### Q485/2025

#### Ocean Views –

#### Mental Health Nurse Presence on Duty

**Acting Clerk:** Question 485, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** What is the minimum registered mental health nurse presence on duty required at any given time? Is Ocean Views currently operating with a mandatory minimum presence of RMHNS at all times and in the past 12 months have there been instances when Ocean Views was operating with less than the mandatory minimum presence of RMHNS?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, one registered mental health nurse is currently the minimum duty at any given time at Ocean Views. Yes, Madam Speaker, Ocean Views is currently operating with a mandatory minimum of presence of registered nurse practitioners at all times. There have been two occasions in the last 12 months

2975 whereby Ocean Views has operated with less than the minimum due to sickness and inability to cover due to resilience but this was mitigated by relocating staff during this period.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, could the Hon. Minister perhaps detail what staff were relocated in order to bridge the gap in service at that point on those two occasions because my understanding is that there is a shortage of RMHNS.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I have explained previously in the session, there is a global shortage of RMHNS and it is a global problem that the GHA, along with every other medical institution worldwide and every trust in the UK is facing. So yes, it is accepted that there is a problem with the recruitment of RMHNS. For that reason, we are training 14 RMHNS in order to have the local workforce here to provide resilience on an ongoing basis and that is very proud of. We are training Gibraltarians to be RMHNS.

In the interim, we have recruited two RMHNS in order to cover for these issues. On the two occasions that there was a shortfall, staff would have been brought in from an alternative facility or a charge nurse would have been brought in from an alternative facility but there would have been staff covering during those periods.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we have heard that there is always one on duty. What is done or what is in place in order to mitigate when a person is sick? For example, is there an on-call in the background?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the on-call would operate the same as throughout the rest of the GHA. There will be an on-call for RMHNS and it will be operated on an as-and-when basis.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister say that the shortage of RMHNS has resulted in services being at any point overstretched or potentially unsafe?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, again, the shortage of RMHNS is something that, despite the GHA trying to recruit persistently, has been a shortfall. Again, I am assured that this is because of shortfalls globally of registered mental health practitioners. The GHA has now partnered up and now has a facility to advertise for jobs on NHS jobs and, because of advertising on NHS jobs, has now been able to recruit members of staff for this.

Therefore, it has not been brought to my attention that the facility has been operating at a dangerous level, so I would not agree with that comment.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q486/2025**  
**Ocean Views –**  
**Mental Health Matron**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 486, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** When was the post of mental health matron at Ocean Views done away with, and why? Will a reinstatement of this post be considered following the recommendations set out in the Mental Health Board's Annual Inspection Report 2024?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the matron post at Ocean Views was transferred to St Bernard's Hospital in 2022. Currently, there is no immediate need to reinstate that position, as the senior management team comprises the divisional nurse manager, head of talking therapies, clinical medical lead and the director for mental health, who collectively provide efficient leadership and oversight.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, again, I would refer the Hon. Minister to page 15 of that mental health report, where it basically states that various staff have commented that the role of divisional nurse manager has become much more complicated, and that balancing responsibilities across OV, CMHT and occasionally SBH, along with numerous daily meetings, makes it challenging to connect with her regularly. They go on to say that, the Board recalls the appointment of that mental health matron in 2019, who was based in OV alongside the clinical nurse manager at the time. It strongly believes that reinstating a similar position in Ocean Views would be highly beneficial in providing the support that we were talking about earlier, in fact, to that divisional nurse manager, who appears to be overstretched.

What response will the Minister be giving to that point made in the mental health report? Is it that it will be considered, or is it simply that it will not be reinstated?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am incredibly grateful to the Mental Health Board's annual inspection and the report that they therefore provide. This is an ongoing process where they discuss it with the divisional lead and the clinical leads, indeed, throughout the facility. Now, we take our compliment from the divisional leads, we take our compliment from the clinicians in the workforce, again, as I have explained to the hon. Lady, and indeed, the compliment that they have, we are being told by the divisional lead of the service that it is stronger than ever, and that actually it works particularly well. Therefore, the compliment, we are told by clinicians, that it should remain as it is.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q487/2025**  
**Charge Nurse Positions –**  
**Mental Health Team**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 487, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Have the charge nurse positions in the community mental health team and the mental health liaison teams been filled?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, yes ma'am.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the Hon. Minister have a date on which those positions were filled?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the charge nurse position within the community mental health team was filled since 17 March 2025. The charge nurse position within the mental health liaison team has been filled since 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q488/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Psychological Services**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 488, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

3075 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** In relation to psychological services provided by the GHA, how many missed appointments have there been since 1 January 2025, to date, broken down by month?

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

3080 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the number of missed appointments are as follows: In January 2025, there were 26; In February 2025, there were 23; In March 2025, there were 48; In April 2025, there were 47; and from 1 May to 14 May, there were 25.

3085 Madam Speaker that means 169 missed appointments. The value of those missed appointments is approximately £10,000. People who need these appointments have not been able to use them because, unfortunately, they were wasted.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, on page 25, again, I refer to the Mental Health Report.

3090 It states that anecdotal evidence suggests that up to a third of individuals who offered appointments failed to attend. Why was there no data collected on this pre-January 2025 to give a clearer picture as to trends and to address the issue?

3095 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the GHA is consistently looking to improve its data collection system with the employment of a data analyst, so I can only speculate that prior to this date, the information was not collected.

3100 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** And what is in place in order to remind people that they have an appointment? For example, reminders sent out regularly or texts, for example, sent out to individuals?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I would imagine that texts are regularly sent out to individuals. What we found, for example, in the PCC is that people are no longer responding to texts. People are now used to getting WhatsApp and, therefore, sometimes texts go ignored.

3105 This is something we are actively looking into. In the PCC, when we actually actively started calling individuals to remind them of the advanced appointment, that is when we have seen a significant drop in the number of missed appointments. We are looking at implementing this throughout different services in the GHA.

3110 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Is there any impact or perhaps a consequence of missing a number of appointments?

**The Hon Arias-Vasquez** No, Madam Speaker. To date, there is not an impact on each individual user for missing an appointment.

3115 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q489/2025**  
**Second Psychologist –**  
**Gibraltar Young Minds Service**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 489, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Has the temporary arrangement of the addition of a second psychologist for one day per week to the Gibraltar Young Minds Service been continued post-December 2024, and is this arrangement still in place? If not, what alternative arrangement has been put in place?

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

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**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the addition of a second psychologist for one day a week to the Gibraltar Young Minds Service was not continued after December 2024. However, this is currently under review. Work has taken place to reduce duplication, improve joint working and streamline provision of psychological support to children and young people through working in partnership with the Department of Education.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, for what reason was it not continued because, again, referring to the Mental Health Report at page 30, it was in fact complementary of the fact that this individual had been appointed, because it states that it resulted in a noticeable reduction in the waiting lists. So, for what reason was that not continued.

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I would agree that it was beneficial. The original psychologist who left in 2024 was on a locum contract, and the original post holder returned from maternity leave and then went off sick. So, we are in the process of actively trying to address that issue.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the Hon. Minister have a time frame within which that issue should be resolved?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker. It is with occupational health, and therefore there is no time frame.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q490/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Psychology Workforce**

3155

**Acting Clerk:** Question 490, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** When is the review of the GHA psychology workforce expected to conclude?

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

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**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker: by the end of July of this year.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q491/2025**  
**Registered Mental Health Nurses –**  
**Short-Term Contracts**

3165 **Acting Clerk:** Question 491, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** What is the Government doing to address the short to medium-term challenges posed by the shortage of registered mental health nurses and the continued reliance on agency cover through short-term contracts?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, as I have said on numerous occasions in this session of Parliament, there is a shortage of mental health nurses in many countries. To address the challenges posed by this shortage, the GHA have recruited three agency nurses on a two-year contract, which will cover the RMN shortfall up until the local students studying at the University of Gibraltar qualify. Again, Madam Speaker, the three agency nurses on a two-year contract is only an interim measure, as there are currently 14 registered mental nurses training for their positions locally.

3180 We have identified the problem and acted on it to ensure that Gibraltarians are now in those posts going forward.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

3185

**Q492-94/2025**  
**Community Mental Health Development Group –**  
**New Model of Care**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 492, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

3190 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Who is the Community Mental Health Development Group, which focused on the implementation of the new model of care comprised of, and when was the group put together?

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

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**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 493 and 494.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 493, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

3200

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How long will the new facility for the relocation of CMHT's services from Colling Island take, and can the Minister provide details as to whether CMHT will be the only department relocating to that new facility?

3205 **Acting Clerk:** Question 494, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**The Hon J Ladislaus** What is the envisaged cost of completing the new Community Mental Health Hub at the Sir Joshua Hassan House site.



3210 **Acting 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 492, the Community Mental Health Development Group was established in April 2024 to advise and support a new model of community mental health delivery. The group consists of  
3215 mental health professionals and members of the Mental Health Board, senior staff from the GHA, Care Agency and other relevant agencies, as well as local charity representatives.

In answer to Questions 493 and 494, Madam Speaker, it is still too early to give an exact completion date or cost for the CMHT. However, we are planning on a two-year period for the point that the planning permission is granted.

3220 Madam Speaker, regarding the relocating departments, this information is already in the public domain.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, in respect of Question 492, I have no questions. Madam Speaker, in respect of the completion of the new Community Mental Health Hub at the Sir Joshua  
3225 Hassan site, this now dates back several months, perhaps years now, as to when this hub was conceived. Does the Hon. Minister not have any idea as to what the cost will be in respect of this and, for example, whether there are any big-ticket costs like asbestos removal, for example?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the new hub was actually announced in March of this year, so I am not sure that there is a significant period there. As the hon. Lady will be aware, we  
3230 need to consult with professionals in the industry in order to make sure that everyone is happy. If, indeed, we were not consulting, we would be criticized by the hon. Lady for not consulting with all the relevant groups.

We are therefore taking the consultation process very seriously to make sure that everyone is  
3235 satisfied with the process and with the outcome of this. There is a lot of time, energy, effort and, indeed, money being spent on this facility for it not to be compliant with the needs and wants of the professionals in the community. Now, we are engaged in a consultation process and, after that process, the design will be finalized depending on the consultation process.

Otherwise, we would have been designing without consulting or, indeed, we would have been  
3240 designing ignoring the consultation process. I am very happy to say that we are currently now consulting with professionals in order to ensure that everyone is on board. Once that consultation is done, the designs will be finalised.

Once the designs are finalised, we will engage with contractors in order to get some. There is  
3245 a process in this. We are unable to get costs until we get final designs. We are unable to get designs until we do the consultation period.

Much though I would like the construction of the new site to be built, unfortunately I do not have a date and I do not have costs and I do not have knowledge of any big-ticket items such as the asbestos removal in the premises.

3250 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q495/2025**

**GHA –**

**Supernumerary Posts/Salary**

3255 **Acting Clerk:** Question 495, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Broken down by month, how many supernumerary posts have there been in the GHA from 1 May 2023 to date, and how many of those posts have a salary of £50,000 or more

per annum? Please provide the job title of all supernumerary posts with a salary of £50,000 per annum or more and the salary attached to each post.

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Other than, as already provided for in the complement reflected in the estimates book, it is not possible to provide an answer to this question that I can assure the House is accurate.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** For what reason can that answer not be provided accurately? Surely, the GHA keeps records of its employees.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker the GHA does not keep records of which of its employees are supernumerary and therefore I am unable to provide information relating to which posts are supernumerary and which posts get paid a salary of more than £50,000. What I have requested is that on an ongoing basis from today's date, we get the information breakdown in order to be able to provide me with information relating to supernumerary posts detailing out the exact salary of these supernumerary posts, but unfortunately, I am informed that I cannot provide an accurate answer to this question at this time.

**The Hon J Ladislaus** Does the Hon. Minister have perhaps a period within which I could pose the question again.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, we can begin to collate the information at today's date. If that question is posed in six months' time, we can have an accurate reflection of that six-month period.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, does the Hon. Minister agree that having that data provides a more accurate snapshot as to the needs of the GHA in terms of complement? Because if that data is not readily available, then there is no way of knowing whether there are too many supernumerary posts, which would in turn suggest that perhaps more permanent individuals are required to be employed within posts.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, again there is a snapshot of the supernumerary posts that are in the GHA in the estimates book, so we have that snapshot of how many supernumerary posts are contained within the complement. We do not have the breakdown of the exact salary on a month-by-month basis, which is why I cannot provide that information accurately, but we do have a snapshot of those supernumerary posts. What I have asked from today onwards is that the breakdown is given to me in terms of the salary of each of those individuals and the breakdown of that data, so that we can indeed keep track of what the hon. Lady is suggesting.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q496/2025  
GHA Staff –  
GDC/Contracts**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 496, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister provide breakdowns of financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25 as to the number of staff working at the GHA who are employed by the Gibraltar Development Corporation? When the successful employees started working for the GHA and under what types of contracts?

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**Madam Speaker:** All right, we will come back to this in due course. Next question in the meantime.

**Q497/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Administrative Staff Recruited**

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 497, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Please provide a breakdown as to when the 30 additional administrative staff members recruited by the GHA to support clinical services commenced their employment with the GHA.

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the additional administrative staff members were recruited by the GHA to support clinical services on the 1st of April 2025.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, there are concerns being raised by clinicians that workforce has not instructed the sudden transfer of admin officers who are being replaced, or has instructed the sudden transfer of administrative officers who are being replaced by GHA junior clerks. Are the Minister and the GHA concerned, Madam Speaker that this will lead in some instances to a lapse in organizational or institutional memory through the loss of accumulated knowledge and experience?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, throughout the Civil Service and the Public Sector, staff are transferable. In instances where there is a clinical need, the GHA will try to respond to that in that particular instance. However, as the hon. Lady will be aware, staff throughout the Civil Service and indeed the Private Sector, the Public Sector, is transferable.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, have clinicians been consulted as to the impact on their own caseloads of this transfer?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, this is an administrative matter, which the management of the GHA are actively involved in. Therefore, I assume that they probably have not been consulted on this. However, it should not be controversial, Madam Speaker.

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For years, there has been the creation of GHA clerks, GHA junior clerks, and a system of admin within the GHA, which is what the GHA has been calling for. Let us not forget this. This is at the request of the GHA.

The GHA has wanted its own staff within the Authority in order to be able to retain that staff. What has now happened is that the tidying up exercise has commenced so that Civil Servants who are not GHA clerks are transferred. Now we are getting complaints that the Civil Servants should be retained within the GHA.

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It should not come as a surprise to anybody that the GHA clerks were going to stay within the GHA, because indeed that is what the GHA has consistently asked for, for there to be that continuity within the GHA. Of course, as with any change, as we have experienced and as the hon. Lady opposite pointed to earlier, as with any change, there will be initial difficulties. However, the idea is what the clinicians have indeed, or the clinicians and the support staff and the executive management committee, has been requesting for years that they are able to retain GHA clerks within the system.

Therefore, the question comes as somewhat of a surprise that it is surprising to individuals within the GHA that the GHA clerks are now going to take positions within the GHA.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we have heard that the current contracts are dated 1 April 2025. What are the dates of the initial contracts? How far back do those dates go?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, apologies, I do not understand the question.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, so the question is when the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 is when the 30 additional, so termed additional, administrative staff members, which were recruited to the GHA, may have started their contracts within that role. However, when did their initial contracts within the GHA start?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately I do not have that information available with me.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q498/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Working Without a Contract**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 498, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many people employed by the GHA were working without a contract between 1 May 2024 to date, broken down by month? Of those individuals, how many were bank staff and for how long were they or have they been in their roles at the GHA?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, none.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, let me rephrase that then. How many of those people who were contracted have had access to ETB contracts and not just a letter inviting them, which is my understanding is is good in contractual terms, so the invitation. ETB contracts I am talking about. How many of those individuals have not had access to ETB contracts?

**The Hon Arias-Vasquez** Madam Speaker, I am unsure of how many of the individuals have not had ETB contracts. Many of the individuals I believe the hon. Lady may be referring to are bank individuals and the nature of the bank relationship would not necessarily necessitate the usual understanding of an ETB contract.

3400 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, the initial question does ask of those individuals how many were bank staff and for how long were they or have they been in their roles at the GHA? I do not believe that the Hon. Minister has provided an answer to that part of the question. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps provide an answer to that?

3405 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the question is how many people were working without a contract and of those how many were bank? None were working without a contract.

3410 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** In the rephrased question, does the Hon. Minister have any information as to how many of those bank individuals were working or rather how many of those individuals who are not bank were working without an ETB contract?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker, all the individuals would be locums or banks and they would have their equivalent contracts.

3415 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q499/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Non-Contractual Allowances**

3420 **Acting Clerk:** Question 499, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** As from the 1st of May 2024, what non-contractual allowances have been given to employees of the GHA and to whom have they or are they being given?

3425 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, allowances granted from the 1st of May are as follows: responsibility allowances on a personal to holder basis; additional duty allowances; ambulance service crew leader allowances; additional clinical sessions; clinical director allowances; fostering medical allowances; loss of earning allowances; medical educational lead allowances; and GP additional on-call allowances. These have been given to individuals who have been approved as falling within the definition of each allowance.

3435 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we have had a list relayed of the different allowances. Within those allowances, were there loss of earnings allowances for example conveners who were part of Unite and have since stood down? Were there allowances in place for those conveners and the loss of earnings?

3440 **The Hon Arias-Vasquez** Madam Speaker, I do not have individualised information and I am unclear whether I would be able to give individualised information such as that that the hon. Lady is seeking across the floor of the House. I have not got with me the information as to whether there were conveners of Unite that is quite a specific question.

I do not have information with me as to whether there was a convener of Unite who has been given a loss of earnings allowance.

3445 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, the information provided to my hon. Colleague earlier had a breakdown, which stated that one of the allowances, were loss of earnings allowances. Therefore, I would expect the same answer to be available to the Hon. Minister in this case. So I

ask not specifically but within that list that the Hon. Minister has provided, is there a loss of allowance given to anyone just generally? Is there a loss of allowances given for being a Unite convener?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, one of the headings of the allowances that I read out was a loss of earnings allowance. Now whether that loss of earnings allowance has gone to a Unite convener or otherwise is information which one, I do not have and two, potentially could identify the individual. Therefore, I am not clear on whether I could provide it even if I did have it but it is not information, which I have available and I am not sure that the information provided earlier would identify the Unite convener either.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** But Madam Speaker, we have heard that the Hon. Minister has just said that it is accepted that the information was provided to my learned colleague and that the Unite convener, the Hon. Minister says that she is not sure whether that convener could have been identified. Is it the case therefore that the information hasn't been provided in this instance because if there is there could be a Unite convener that could be identified? Is that the case?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No Madam Speaker, the information has been provided following the question that has been asked. So a list of the non-contractual allowances has been provided and the individuals that have been that are awarded these allowances are given. Therefore, Madam Speaker, it is not because an individual would be identified that the answer has not been provided in the format that the hon. Lady wanted.

It is there is a there is a category of allowance which is a loss of earnings allowance. I do not know if that loss of earnings allowance has been given to a Unite convener.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q500/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Employment via an agency**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 500, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the GHA currently employ or has it in the past 24 months employed any staff whether directly or via an agency or as bank staff who have been medically boarded in the past and were or are in receipt of a monthly pension, gratuity and community care? If so, why is this the case and have pension, gratuity and community care payments cease to be paid to that or those employee or employees whilst they are in receipt of a salary?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, not to our knowledge.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, in asking the supplementary I am more specific in that it is important I think to make a distinction between those who are medically boarded for example just to give an example as a staff nurse but are brought back in an admin role perhaps because they are able to carry out the admin role. Is the Hon. Minister encompassing those such individuals or simply individuals who have been brought back within the same role?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that in the GHA if someone is a staff nurse and is unable to carry out their duties as a staff nurse they would go through an occupational health procedure and then be reassigned to an admin task so they wouldn't be medically boarded as a result of being unable to carry out their duties as a staff nurse. Medically boarded is something that is reached if the individual involved cannot perform the duties and cannot be assigned to an alternative task. To my understanding if a staff nurse were unable to carry out nursing duties they would go through an OH process, an occupational health process, and then they would be reassigned to a different role but they would not be medically boarded and then reassigned to a different role if that makes sense.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q501/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Bank Staff**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 501, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many GHA staff members are currently employed out of the bank staff cohort or via an agency and have been working continuously and uninterrupted for a period of over three months? Please provide breakdowns as to when they commenced working and their current roles.

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker we currently have 53 bank staff members who have worked uninterrupted for over three months. The breakdown requested is in the schedule, which I now hand over.



**ANSWER TO QUESTION 501**

Grade	Start Date
Biomedical Assistant	12/06/2023
Charge Nurse	10/03/2020
Dental Nurse	04/06/2020
Enrolled Nurse	01/05/2017
Enrolled Nurse	07/11/2012
Enrolled Nurse	02/02/2014
Enrolled Nurse	14/09/2014
General Operative	08/01/2024
General Operative	01/07/2024
General Operative	24/06/2024
General Operative	24/06/2024
General Operative	24/06/2024
General Operative	30/08/2024
General Operative	24/06/2024
General Operative	24/06/2024
General Operative	24/06/2024
General Operative	24/06/2024
General Operative	24/06/2024
General Operative	24/06/2024
Jnr GHA Clerk	05/02/2024
Jnr GHA Clerk	08/08/2024
Jnr GHA Clerk	20/02/2024
Jnr GHA Clerk	05/09/2023
Medical Secretary	21/08/2024
Nursing Assistant	01/01/2023
Nursing Assistant	22/02/2015
Nursing Assistant	15/01/2023
Nursing Assistant	06/05/2020
Nursing Assistant	09/12/2019
Nursing Assistant	28/03/2020
Nursing Assistant	06/05/2020
Nursing Assistant	06/04/2020
Nursing Assistant	19/03/2024
Nursing Assistant	26/05/2020
Nursing Assistant	24/11/2023
Nursing Assistant	26/04/2024
Nursing Assistant	06/02/2023
Nursing Assistant	06/02/2023
Nursing Assistant	10/08/2020
Nursing Assistant	23/11/2020
Nursing Assistant	02/06/2020
Nursing Assistant	20/02/2024

**CONTINUED**

Grade	Start Date
Registered Nurse	05/08/2024
Registered Nurse	04/09/2023
Registered Nurse	07/11/2023
Registered Nurse	20/09/2023
Registered Nurse	11/05/2023
Registered Nurse	28/11/2022
Registered Nurse	01/12/2013
Registered Nurse	24/01/2022
Registered Nurse	28/05/2020
Registered Nurse	13/09/2021
Registered Nurse Child	28/03/2023

Cont...

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**Madam Speaker:** Right we will come back to this for supplementaries in due course. In the meantime next question.

**Q502/2025**

**GHA –**

**Mental Health Facilities as Bank Support**

3530 **Acting Clerk:** Question 502, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many employees working at GHA mental health facilities as bank support staff have completed 24 months or more of continuous service to the GHA and why have they not been offered permanent contracts?

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

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, two bank employees have worked for over 24 months continuously within the GHA mental health facilities. They are covering gaps in the service due to issues such as sickness and vacancies.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, if it is the case that they have been working for 24 months or more, isn't the Hon. Minister of the view that it goes over the use of bank staff because bank staff are to cover short temporary positions? This is leaving two individuals in a position whereby they do not have permanent contracts, they are up in the air, and they do not know whether they are going to continue in employment long term, they cannot for example access mortgages. Would the Hon. Minister agree with me that these individuals should perhaps be provided with permanent contracts given that they have been needed for such a long period?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, whereas I agree in principle that all bank staff should be tidied up and if they needed in a permanent post that should be tidied up and that is an exercise, which has been carried out. I disagree with the hon. Lady that three months is the cut-off point. There will be instances, for example maternity cover, where an individual is needed for longer than three months.

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**The fact that an individual has been employed for three months permanently on bank does not necessarily suggest that that individual needs to be in a permanent position in the GHA because they could be covering long-term sick, maternity cover etc. There are instances where beyond maternity cover there is an individual who is in the job who is suffering from a long-term illness.**

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**Bank is meant to be covering a position properly. If that is for an extended period of time then Occupational Health should step in to see whether the individual will be coming back to work and if that individual isn't envisaged to be coming back to work then they should be looking to make that post a permanent post or indeed open the vacancy for interviews in order to determine whether that individual is the best for the job.**

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3565 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q503/2025**

**GHA –**

**Employees Overtime**

3570 **Acting Clerk:** Question 503, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister provide details as to the total number of GHA employees earning more than 20 percent over their basic salary in overtime broken down by: (1) direct employees of the GHA; (2) employees working on behalf of the GHA via the Gibraltar

3575 Development Corporation; and (3) employees working for the GHA via Government-Owned companies?

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

3580 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the total number of GHA employees earning more than 20 percent over their basic salary in overtime for financial year 2024-25 are as follows: Direct employees of the GHA, 258; employees working on behalf of the GHA via the Gibraltar Development Corporation, one; employees working for the GHA via Government-Owned companies excluding the GHA, zero.

3585 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, again I ask the question. I note that earlier on my hon. Colleague Mrs. Sanchez was provided with a more detailed breakdown so that we could actually have had sight of the figures and precisely how much over and above the 20 percent or the 30 percent that she had asked individuals were earning over and above their basic wage. For what reason has it not been possible to provide the same in respect of this schedule?

3590 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the question that was asked by the hon. Lady was far more specific and in that so the answer that was provided was far more specific and detailed. The answer that is required here is the answer in respect to this question is an answer in terms of the direct employers of the GHA which I have provided the hon. Lady with. If the hon. Lady wants additional information again please feel free to ask me and give me notice of the question and we will provide you with the details you request.

3600 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, in the earlier schedule it was obvious that there were a number of individuals earning more than 100 percent of their basic wage in overtime. Can the Hon. Minister confirm whether this is the case under this as well under the direct employees of the GHA or any of the three breakdowns that I have asked for?

3605 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am unsure whether that is the case or otherwise. I would however highlight the point that in an emergency setting such as the GHA it is inevitable that overtime will be incurred by individuals working within the organisation. I am unsure of whether there is similarly figures of 100 percent overtime being earned by individuals but I would consider that it is normal that overtime is incurred but this is to be managed properly.

3610 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, can I ask, is the Hon. Minister saying that she would expect that normal overtime or rather 100 percent over and above basic wage in overtime is what is to be expected in this area?

3615 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No Madam Speaker, what I am saying is that if overtime is required then overtime will be done. here need to be proper controls managing the overtime that is being done but in an institution such as the GHA it is perfectly normal for doctors, nurses, even admin staff to be earning overtime.

3620 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, does the Hon. Minister not agree that in the event that such an individual is earning perhaps over and above 100 percent of their basic wage it would just make more sense to employ somebody else and add it to the cohorts which is the point that we have been making that there are shortages within the GHA's cohorts and these figures certainly seem to suggest it.

3625 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, again I have explained the procedure numerous times to the hon. Lady. The complement of the GHA is exactly what the GHA have requested from the

Government. The funding for the complement of the GHA has been given exactly as requested by the GHA.

3630 So again, there is a procedure, which has gone through internally in the GHA, and they put together the complement that they require. The complement then goes through a budget session internally and in this instance, in this year and in the previous year, the GHA have been given the complement that they request. I would assume that part of that process is the managing of overtime, the managing of expectations within the complement but it is not up to me, as I am frequently reminded, to determine what the complement should be.

3635 The GHA itself tells me what complement they want and we have granted the budget for the entire complement the GHA has requested.

3640 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Just a final question. I accept that the GHA would tell the Hon. Minister the complement that is required. The question is in the view of the Hon. Minister, would she accept that it appears from the figures given that we have seen today some are in fact earning over 100% over and above their basic wages that the complement is under and other individuals could be placed within the same role and therefore it avoids people needing to carry out so much overtime?

3645 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am not in a position to be able to determine that because I do not have oversight of why exactly that clinician was required to do overtime in those circumstances. Therefore, the people that are in the best position to determine that is the Executive Board of the GHA, which I am frequently reminded requires independence from your clinical decisions.

3650 Therefore, if the GHA is telling me that they need complement X, then funding will be required for complement X and what was given on the last occasion, this year's budget and last year's budget was exactly what the GHA have requested.

3655 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q504/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Recruitment/Employment Contracts**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 504, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

3660 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Minister provide details as to the systems in place at the GHA to:

1. Create a post;
2. Approve recruitment for that post and;
3. Approve employment contracts?

3665 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

3670 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the internal process for the GHA to request recruitment into a substantive post for the temporary cover is as follows - A recruitment request form or cover request form is submitted and considered by the relevant Director and Director General. If approved, it is submitted to Ministry for Ministry consideration and approval.

It is then submitted to Employment for registration purposes and on receipt of the approved notification of GHA workforce advertiser vacancy and the vacancy are advertised internally, externally local and or externally abroad depending on the grade. Terms of engagement and or

3675 variations relating to a process notification of vacancy are considered and approved by the Director of Workforce and Director General and submitted to Employment for registration purposes.

3680 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, does this apply to the recruitment of established vacancies existing in the estimates book as well?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** The question relates to the creation of a post and approved recruitment for that post. If there is an existing vacancy, the vacancy will go straight through. It will come to me for approval and it will go straight through to the ETB.

3685 The procedure is far more complicated when the post is not contained within the complement.

3690 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we have heard comments made by Unite in past months that this, in fact, process seems to unnecessarily delay matters and increase bureaucracy. Does the Hon. Minister agree with that and, if so, is anything being looked at or considered in order to cut down the bureaucracy?

3695 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** I appear in Parliament in the budget session in front of yourself and the members opposite to bring to the House a budget with a complement that is agreed. That complement is agreed in this House through a Parliamentary procedure. If there is a post, which is not in complement, then there is a procedure to go through in order to increase the complement beyond that agreed by this House.

3700 It may be bureaucratic but, unfortunately, there is a process because this is public money and, as I am frequently reminded, there have to be controls on public money. If there is a post which is not in complement, which was not requested in the complement as will be discussed in this Parliament in the coming month or so, and I do not know the dates before anyone asks me, if there is a process and that process has gone through in this House and the budget is approved, any post that is required over and above that complement needs to go through a process. If it is bureaucratic, it should have been included in the complement.

3705 It is not as if the complement is approved once every five years. The complement is approved once a year. Therefore, every single year, in June or July, this House approves a budget and approves a complement.

3710 For legislative purposes, that complement and that budget have to go through throughout the year. If there is a requirement that is surplus to the complement and, for example, it is deemed to be urgent or there is deemed to be a financial advantage to obtaining a post and, therefore, cutting down on repatriation of services, then that post may be approved. However, there is a process and procedure simply because it goes outside the budget debated by this House and, therefore, unfortunately, the process is a necessary one.

3715 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, yes, I accept that the process of budgets occurs once a year and requirements are voiced at that point in time. The Hon. Minister will be very familiar with the fact that the Service may have to respond to unprecedented issues that may come and, as a health service; those needs are evolving throughout the course of the year. Therefore, can the Hon. Minister perhaps detail or confirm whether the process would be just as bureaucratic in the event that, for example, a post needs to be approved quite urgently because it is needed, because it does seem like posts are taking quite a while to fill, and it may be the case that this is part of the issue.

Can the Hon. Minister provide answers as to whether this is the process that is followed in every case?

3725 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, if there is something that is urgent, it will be brought to my attention, usually by the entirety of the Executive Team, and that will be approved as and

when necessary. There is a distinction to be made here, and it is a distinction, which I frequently discuss with the Executive Team of the GHA. If the post is in complement and the post is funded, or if, for example, there is a theatre nurse that is retiring and that post needs to be filled, the process is far more streamlined and it does not have to go through a particularly bureaucratic process in order to fulfil that vacancy.

However, if the GHA decides, for the sake of argument, that it needs a new post, let us use a post that is not in existence in the GHA. If the GHA tomorrow were to decide that they need a neonatologist, then there is a process in place to approve that neonatologist, because it is not in the complement that was debated in this House. Therefore, if there is a vacancy and that vacancy is fully funded, it should and usually does go through immediately.

If the post is one, which is out of complement, and it is a need that the GHA determines it requires and that is urgent, we will normally try to push it through quite urgently. However, if it is a service that the GHA deems would improve the service, then there is a process there, and the process has to be followed through in order to satisfy ourselves that we can go beyond the complement as debated in this House.

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

**Q505/2025**

**GHA –**

**Occupational Health Services**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 505, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the GHA have a contract for occupational health services? If so, (1) Whom was the contract awarded to? (2) When was the contract awarded and for how long? (3) Was there a procurement process prior to awarding the contract? (4) What is the value of the contract?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the GHA does not have a contract for occupational health services. However, the GHA benefits from the contract entered into by the wider Public Service.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, does the Hon. Minister have any of the information outlined there in respect of that wider contract that the Civil Service actually benefits from?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately the GHA does not hold this information as a contract process conducted by the Office of the Chief Secretary.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q506/2025**

**GHA –**

**Bullying Allegations**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 506, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

3775 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many bullying allegations have been made within the GHA in the past 24 months and how many of those allegations were considered: (1) unsubstantiated; and (2) substantiated? What action has been taken by the GHA in respect of the substantiated allegations?

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

3780 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, there have been 13 bullying allegations made within the GHA in the past 24 months, all of which were found to be unsubstantiated.

3785 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we are in receipt of information, which suggests that there were further allegations made which have not made it onto those statistics and were, should I put it this way, swept under the carpets. Can the Hon. Minister confirm whether that is the case?

3790 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, bullying allegations in the GHA are not swept under the carpet. Bullying allegations are dealt with by, via workforce or by the appropriate leads in the department.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q507/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Head of Sponsored Patients**

3795 **Acting Clerk:** Question 507, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

3800 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Was the role of the Head of Sponsored Patients at the GHA advertised ahead of the current Head of that department having been appointed? In addition, were they put through a formal interview process before being appointed? What involvement, if any, did the GHA Executive Board have in the decision to appoint the current Head of Sponsored Patients?

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

3805 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, no, the post was not advertised as an individual was transferred from another department in the public service at the equivalent grade into this role. This predates my time as Minister for Health, but I am advised that the former GHA Director General was involved in the transfer.

3810 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, does the Hon. Minister have any information as to the reason behind the post not being advertised, even internally?

3815 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I have discussed previously, Civil Service posts are transferable within the Civil Service. Therefore, at that senior level, a Senior Officer can be transferred across into the GHA.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister confirm whether the individual received a salary increase compared to their previous role?



3820 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I am happy to provide that information if I am given notice as a question, but I do not have the information to hand.

3825 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, surely the Head of something like Sponsored Patients within the GHA would have some prior knowledge of GHA workings. Can the Hon. Minister confirm whether this individual had any experience working within the GHA prior to being appointed?

3830 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, not only did this individual have experience working in the GHA, this individual has managed to control the budget of Sponsored Patients in the years that he has been there, to an extent that has previously been virtually unheard of. The budget of Sponsored Patients, this year, is actually under control. Therefore, I congratulate the individual involved on his ability to control the budget for Sponsored Patients.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q508/2025**

**GHA –**

**Director of Personnel and Development**

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 508, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

3840 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Is the GHA's Director of Personnel and Development receiving additional allowances for his role as Director of Workforce? If so, please set out what those are.

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

3845 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar Director of Personnel and Development receives an additional responsibility allowance in respect to the additional duties associated with the role of Director of Workforce of the GHA. In essence, the number of people under this office's remit more than doubled when he took over the GHA role. In addition, as a member of the GHA Executive Team, the Director also receives the Executive On-Call Allowance, consistent with the entitlements of other members of the Executive Team.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Does the Hon. Minister have any information as to the amount that these allowances would add up to?

3855 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the Additional Responsibility Allowance is £30,000 per annum, and the Executive On-Call Allowance is £4,500 per annum.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Just for clarification, £30,000 or £13,000?

3860 **The Hon Arias-Vasquez** £30,000.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q509/2025**

**GHA –**

**Conduct of a GHA Employee and GHA Standard Policy**

3865 **Acting Clerk:** Question 509, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Why was the Hon. Minister for Health in attendance at a meeting to discuss a report as to the conduct of a GHA employee and is this GHA standard policy?

3870 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I have not been present at any such meeting.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** For the avoidance of doubt, the Minister denies being present at any such conduct meeting that was in respect of a GHA employee.

3875 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I repeat for the avoidance of doubt and clearly, I have not been present at a meeting to discuss a report as to the conduct of a GHA employee, because this would go against standard policy. Again, just in case I am accused of mumbling, I have not been present at any such meeting.

3880 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Is it the case that the Minister plays any role in any of these meetings or has played at any point in time?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I would not be present at a conduct meeting to discuss a report on the conduct of a GHA employee.

3885 **Madam Speaker** Next question.

**Q510-13/2025**

**GHA –**

**Cervical Screening**

3890 **Acting Clerk:** Question 510, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many women have been screened through the GHA cervical screening program since January 2018 to date, broken down by month?

3895 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 511 to 513.

3900 **Acting Clerk:** Question 511, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Since the 1st of January 2018, how many women who were screened through the GHA cervical screening program have been affected by issues surrounding testing and recall errors?

3905 **Acting Clerk:** Question 512, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** What concerns have been raised internally at the GHA about cervical screening of women at the GHA in the last seven years?

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 513, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Following communications from the GHA, how many women have made appointments for cervical screening at the GHA since January 2025 to date, broken down by month?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, a working group was established in August 2023 to review the cervical cancer and cervical screening pathway following the concerns regarding the death of a lady with cervical cancer. This working group identified concerns with the call and recall of the women and with the quality of cervical screening tests taking place outside of the GHA. As a consequence of the concerns raised, the current detailed call and recall exercise is currently taking place and cervical screening now takes place within the GHA.

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In answer to Question 510, I now hand over a schedule with the information requested in respect of Question 510.

In response to Question 511, it is not clear what the hon. Lady means by issues surrounding testing and recall errors. Eight women have had cancer from all the patients who have been screened to date since 1 January 2019, which is the period covered by the look-back exercise conducted by clinical governance.

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In answer to Question 513, the number of women who have had appointments for cervical screening at the GHA since January 2025 to date are: 174 in January 2025; 175 in February 2025; 192 in March 2025; 333 in April 2025; and 142 from 1 May to 14 May 2025.

3935

**ANSWER TO QUESTION 513****ANSWER TO QUESTION 510**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Individuals</b>
2018	January	190
2018	February	184
2018	March	179
2018	April	217
2018	May	175
2018	June	169
2018	July	130
2018	August	169
2018	September	153
2018	October	180
2018	November	151
2018	December	124
2019	January	209
2019	February	204
2019	March	174
2019	April	135
2019	May	223
2019	June	146
2019	July	185
2019	August	151
2019	September	165
2019	October	221
2019	November	193
2019	December	122
2020	January	147
2020	February	154
2020	March	69
2020	April	3
2020	May	46
2020	June	238
2020	July	249
2020	August	200
2020	September	218
2020	October	353
2020	November	244
2020	December	108
2021	January	2
2021	February	46
2021	March	108
2021	April	114
2021	May	248
2021	June	123
2021	July	7
2021	August	41
2021	September	204

Cont...

**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 513**

**CONTINUED ANSWER TO QUESTION 510**

Year	Month	Individuals
2021	October	89
2021	November	137
2021	December	50
2022	January	45
2022	February	149
2022	March	123
2022	April	94
2022	May	166
2022	June	100
2022	July	118
2022	August	245
2022	September	233
2022	October	159
2022	November	248
2022	December	104
2023	January	135
2023	February	157
2023	March	230
2023	April	71
2023	May	148
2023	June	102
2023	July	156
2023	August	131
2023	September	141
2023	October	133
2023	November	125
2023	December	62
2024	January	209
2024	February	231
2024	March	289
2024	April	254
2024	May	179
2024	June	188
2024	July	177
2024	August	135
2024	September	147
2024	October	175
2024	November	138
2024	December	81
2025	January	162
2025	February	172
2025	March	193
2025	April	335
2025	May	122

**Madam Speaker:** We will leave supplementaries for Question 510, but are there any for Question 512?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I do not believe I heard an answer for Question 512, which was what concerns have been raised internally at the GHA with regards to cervical screening of women at the GHA in the last seven years. I do not believe I caught that, so I am not sure whether that was answered.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it was explained that a working group was established in August 2023 following the concerns regarding the death of a lady with cervical cancer. It was because of that that the working group was established.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** And have any other clinicians raised any concerns within the GHA within those seven years prior to that working group being put together?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Not on cervical screening, Madam Speaker. Not on cervical cancer screening, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Who chaired that working committee, if the Hon. Minister has that information?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I believe it would have been the Director of Public Health, but I can have that confirmed.

**Madam Speaker:** We will take supplementaries to Questions 511 and 513 also, when the hon. Member is ready.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** May I start the question as to Question 512? Madam Speaker, information received does suggest that the Government had been aware of the shortcomings in the cervical screening program for some years now, and issues had been brought to the attention of clinical leads before then. Indeed, Madam Speaker, the GSD raised this in 2021, and there are exchanges in Hansard in 2021 between my predecessor, Mr Phillips, and the Hon. Minister's predecessor, as to the cervical screening programs and the issues that those cervical screening programs were being experienced.

It is a surprise to me that the Hon. Minister had not heard that any issues had been raised internally. Aside from clinicians, did anybody else raise those issues within the GHA that the Hon. Minister is aware of?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it is not surprising at all. I took office in October 2023. By August 2023, the issues were already starting to be reviewed.

So, as far as I am concerned, and as far as the information provided to me is concerned, the Working Group was established in 2023, obviously because of issues raised before that. Otherwise, the Working Group would not have been established. However, I am not aware; it has not come to my attention, that any clinicians or anyone else has raised concerns prior to that date.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything for Question 511?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Yes, Madam Speaker. That question specifically relates to whether, so I got an answer of eight women. Is it the case that those eight women, or has there been any link found to the issues with cervical screening, with the fact that these eight women have been found to have cancer, and could that have been caught earlier, if screening had been up to date and the processes had been functioning as they should have?

3990 **Madam Speaker:** That is bordering on the hypothetical, could that have been caught earlier.  
The first part of the question is valid, but could it have been caught earlier is too hypothetical.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I have information. I do not have specifics on the eight, but I have specifics on the fact that some did not attend screening and fully recovered, some had  
3995 previous smears but were not recalled, and some of them had no previous smear history. Some of those results were false negatives, which is something which I stated quite clearly in the press conference that we spoke about.

Some of those had false negatives because of the tests that were done at the time. Therefore, at the time, PAP smear tests were carried out, and those PAP smear tests gave false negatives.  
4000 The test carried out today in the GHA is the HPV test, and the HPV test gives far more accurate information on smears.

What I would say as well on that is that at the time the PAP smear was considered the gold standard test and was indeed the test that was used in the NHS and other institutions globally, and as soon as the NHS moved over to the HPV testing and it was globally accepted, that was far  
4005 more accurate for cervical smears, the GHA then moved to the HPV smears as well.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, is it the case that before the introduction of this new program that we have seen in recent months, is it the case that before then people were not being reminded or women were not being provided with reminders that they were overdue a smear  
4010 test? Is that the case, because 12,000 seems an inordinate number of women who are over the allocated time within which they should have had a smear?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I explained at the time, the net was cast very widely in order to capture the maximum number of women possible. In fact, women over the age of 65  
4015 would not ordinarily be recalled for a smear. On this occasion, women over 65 have also been recalled for a smear.

The GHA is exercising an abundance of caution in this exercise and is reaching out to a huge number of women, some of whom would not ordinarily be contacted for a smear test, in order to make abundantly sure that it catches as broad a net as possible of the individuals concerned.  
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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Is it the case, or would the Hon. Minister accept that 12,000, whether the net was cast widely or not, the GHA hasn't kept records up to date and it is endemic of a more systemic issue within the GHA of record keeping? This is the reason why 12,000 women have the net has  
4025 been cast so widely, because there is no way of knowing how many of these women have not had smear tests, how many are over the recommended time within which a smear test is to be taken. So is that the case?

Is it the case that it is a systemic failure on behalf of the GHA to keep proper records?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the GHA is carrying out an enormous exercise, and indeed it is carrying out an enormous exercise, encouraged by me, in order to make sure that as  
4030 many women as possible are caught by the tests. We would rather that the net be cast incredibly wide in order to catch as many women as possible by this. Women who have already had smears will be recalled. Women who have fallen out of the smear program will be recalled.

Again, Madam Speaker, this is an exercise to catch, as many women as possible, and indeed I  
4035 will take this opportunity to encourage women, when they are called for their smear test, to actually go to their smear test and actually actively engage with the GHA, because screening captures people that are symptomless or women that are symptomless. I would actively encourage, I would use this opportunity to encourage as many women as possible to attend the GHA in order to have their smear done.

The program is meant to capture as many women as possible, and in order to encourage as  
4040 many women as possible to engage with the GHA in order to have their smear tests done.



**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, I of course echo what the Hon. Minister has just said, and would encourage women to take screening up regularly. However, it is still, would this exercise and casting the net have been necessary if the GHA's systems and record keeping had been kept up to date?

**Madam Speaker:** Again, that is hypothetical.

**The Hon J Ladislaus** Is it the case, therefore, that the screening program was not satisfactorily been carried out previously, and that is the reason why we have to cast the net so widely now?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, again, I would encourage the members opposite to listen to the answers when they are given. The working group identified concerns with the call and recall of women that is stated in my answer. We wanted to make sure that every woman was called and recalled.

We want to make sure that as many women as possible. If what the hon. Lady wants me to do is to stand here and self-flagellate, I am not going to do that. We are here to make sure that as many women as possible are captured by the program.

We are here to ensure that the duty is to make sure that as many women attend the screening program. Indeed, the working group identified that there were issues with the call and recall, and therefore we are casting the net as wide as humanly possible to make sure that any previous issues are now covered by the current campaign.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on Question 513?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Yes, Madam Speaker. I note that numbers have stayed consistent of women making appointments, but they shot up in the past couple of months to 333 from 175, 122 in previous months. Is the GHA ready and set up for a potential influx, given that, of course, the net has been cast as wide as 12,000?

Is the GHA prepared and able to cope with such an influx of potential appointments?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the screening program has been set up specifically to make sure that we are able to cope with the influx. The screening program is set up so that every single day until the early evening there are individuals there that are able to carry out the smears. The campaign has been carried out ensuring the staff is available in order to deal with the influx that we knew we were going to get.

Therefore, yes, I am confident that the GHA is able to deal with the influx of appointments being made.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** I do not know whether the Hon. Minister would have this information in front of her, but how many appointments are available per day within this screening program?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** The hon. Lady is correct, I do not have that information in front of me, but I can obtain that information if the hon. Lady gives me notice of the question.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the hon. Member in a position to ask supplementaries on Question 510, or would she like some time to consider the schedule? We can revert if she would like. Next question.

**Q514/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Business Cases**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 514, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How many business cases were submitted by departments within the GHA for:

1. The 2023-24 financial year; and
2. The 2024-25 financial year?

Please provide a monthly breakdown to cover the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years of:

1. The number of business cases submitted set out by department;
2. The total cost per department in respect to the business cases it submitted; and
3. How many of the business cases submitted were approved and when?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker we have an annual cycle of business planning whereby we ask for business cases in October to be submitted between October and December as part of the following year's estimates process. Occasionally we may get business cases outside of this cycle if the need arises.

We therefore do not collate business cases monthly. This is internal GHA information and we do not feel it is appropriate to disclose across the floor of this House.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, for what reason is it felt that it is not appropriate to communicate this across the floor of the House and to the public because this of course business cases are in respect of requested resources for departments which of course the public and I would ask does the Hon. Minister not think that the public should have that information as to resourcing?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, this is an internal procedure, which the GHA goes through in order to approve and assess what the GHA requires for the following year. It is an internal process and therefore we do not feel it is appropriate to share across the floor of the house.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, am I correct in the assumption that business cases deal with and can show where resources are potentially lacking if a business case is not approved? Am I correct in my understanding of that?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No Madam Speaker it is what an individual department administrative believes that is required. That then goes through a process so anyone and everyone can submit a business case that then goes through a process. It is correct that the outcome of that procedure of that process be disclosed in terms of the budget but the business cases that everyone throughout the GHA submits we do not feel it is appropriate to share.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker I am not asking about the processes I am asking about numbers specifically it says a number of business cases admitted the total cost so I'm asking about general numbers so what is it that the Hon. Minister finds so inappropriate about the public being given that information?

4140 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker it is simply not possible to provide accurate and reliable information on the either number of business cases month-by-month or otherwise. Business cases as I have just said can be submitted across the GHA by anyone and on an entirely free basis, therefore, to provide a business case that has not been vetted through the executive team in fact the team that I am told should be frequently controlling the GHA is not appropriate.

4145 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q515-16/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Out-Of-Court Settlements**

4150 **Acting Clerk:** Question 515, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** How much has the Government of Gibraltar paid out since 2011 broken down by year in respect of:

- 4155
1. Out-of-court settlements following pre-action letters to the GHA and or its legal representatives in respect of claims against the GHA excluding negligence claims;
  2. Out-of-court settlements following discontinued legal proceedings against the GHA in respect of claims excluding negligence claims; and
  3. Court orders arising from claims against the GHA excluding negligence claims.

4160 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker I will answer this question together with Question 516.

4165 **Acting Clerk:** Question 516, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

4170 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Aside from negligence claims how many claims have been issued against the GHA annually since 2011 broken down by year of those claims how many: (1) concluded an in and out in an out-of-court settlement; (2) concluded following a trial; (3) were discontinued by the claimant or claimants; and (4) were struck out by the courts.

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

4175 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker the Gibraltar Health Authority has been undertaking a significant exercise to update and consolidate its data management and reporting systems. This work is essential to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information provided to Parliament and the public. Although it was initially anticipated the relevant data would be available by February 2025 the process has taken longer than anticipated.

4180 I am assured by the GHA that the exercise is actively ongoing and every effort is being made to complete it as a matter of parity. At this stage, however I am unable to provide the information requested as the data the GHA holds is not is not fully verified. In any event, I am also aware there may be a legal bar in sharing this information arising from the terms of the relevant insurance policies on such disclosure.

4185 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker I in fact left it for various months following the initial indication in order to avoid the scenario which we find ourselves in now because I initially filed

the questions I believe it was in December and I was told to refile them by February and here we are in May and we still do not have any clear answers. Does the Hon. Minister have an estimate as to when we can expect that information to be provided?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker I am grateful to the hon. Lady for providing a leeway of a few months. Unfortunately, I do not have an estimate of when that information could be provided although I am chasing the GHA to provide that information constantly.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Supposing that the budget session is of course around the usual time in June, would the Hon. Minister be able to confirm whether information will be forthcoming ahead of that budget session.

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker as I have just confirmed I am unable to provide confirmation that that is the case. When the GHA have that information available, I am very happy to share with the hon. Lady.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

4205

**Q517/2025**  
**GHA –**  
**Backup Generators**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 517, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

4210

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** For what reason(s) did the GHA's backup generators both trip simultaneously during the power cuts on 8th April 2025. How often maintenance is carried, out on them and when was the last date prior to the power cut on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025 when maintenance was carried out on the GHA's backup generators?

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

4220

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker during the power cut on the 8th April 2025 both electronic controllers logged false positive high exhaust temperature conditions. Consequently, the generator's self-protection kicked in and the generator stopped. Following investigations by the GHA's electrical engineering team, it was determined that the common denominator of the two controllers failing at the same incident with the same false condition is the external 11 kV mains power supply by the provider.

4225

Both generators performed as expected but controllers were subject to a spike causing damage to both programmable logic controllers. Maintenance to the generator is done monthly. The generators were checked by a GEA maintenance member on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March as part of the routine monthly checks.

Water, oil and fuel level checks were done which took approximately 30 minutes.

4230

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker it is somewhat technical and therefore I would ask that the Hon. Minister bear with me on the question asked if it is obvious. We have heard that the external main power supply provider failed. Is that also part of the monthly maintenance checks?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker I am not sure I understand. Therefore, there was a power cut and the backup generators failed. That was it.

4235        There was a power cut and the backup generators failed but there is a backup to the backup in the form of UPS generators. So all critical areas throughout so the CCU, theatres, pediatrics etc. all relied on the backup generators and that definitively did not fail. What failed in that instance were the backup generators, which is the second line of defense.

4240        **Hon J Ladislaus:** Yes, I completely understand that. It is just that the Hon. Minister has given a technical answer as to the reasoning behind the backup generators seemingly failing and the question is relating to is the reason for the backup of generators failing, which I believe is something to do with the external main power supply provider failing, which is what I took down as notes from what the Hon. Minister said. Is that element of the backup generators maintained monthly as well? Is that part of the monthly checks?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker I understand that there are monthly checks on the generators or on the entirety of the generators.

4250        **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q518/2025**  
**GEA –**  
**Diesel Used**

4255        **Acting Clerk:** Question 518, the Hon. C Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker I'd like to wish the Hon. Minister a very happy birthday and sorry that she's in the chamber rather than at home enjoying it but the encouragement too that she'll soon be home enjoying a glass of wine with her family and on to my question.

4260        How is the GEA's target of diesel only being used for 10% of the time coming along? Please provide a monthly figure of diesel used as a percentage of the total fuel consumed per month for the last 12 months.

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

4265        **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker I am delighted to confirm that this is going extremely well. Madam Speaker the 10% target is of course an annual one. Diesel is in fact only being used at the GEA's North Mill power station an annual average of 6.23% of the time. This is well below the 10% target. Additionally Madam Speaker this percentage is influenced by the natural gas stoppage in the period in March 2025, which naturally caused a spike in the use of automotive gas oil. For comparison purposes, the 6.23% is reduced to 3.38% if this event is eliminated from the calculation due to this being an anomaly to the GEA's normal operations. Therefore, Madam Speaker I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will join me in congratulating the GEA on this. I now hand over a schedule with a breakdown by month.

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**ANSWER TO QUESTION 518**

Month	% of Diesel
April 2024	1.72%
May 2024	4.57%
June 2024	3.29%
July 2024	1.67%
August 2024	1.04%
September 2024	1.36%
October 2024	1.90%
November 2024	9.14%
December 2024	1.99%
January 2025	7.65%
February 2025	2.84%
March 2025	37.57% (LNG stoppage period)

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you. Madam Speaker I am very happy to hear that the GEA is achieving their targets. I have just seen from the figures what I was just about to ask what the period included and I presume that the figure of 6.23% includes the months provided in the schedule. Could the Minister please just confirm that?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** That is correct Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q519/2025**  
**GEA –**  
**Power Outage**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 519, the Hon. C Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** The power outage which occurred on Saturday 29th of March 2025 at around 10.30pm affected the east side and the upper town areas according to comments from the GEA at the time. Why was the south district not included in this report when it too was affected?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker I can confirm that although the GEA's social media updates did not specifically mention the south district, the area around Rosia Plaza was indeed affected by the power outage. Initial investigations revealed that the outage in this particular area was not immediately apparent on the GEA's monitoring systems. It was only after affected customers contacted the GEA that the loss of power was identified and addressed.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for her answer. Does that infer that the failure to identify it as a problem delayed the addressing the problem and fixing it? Has the reason for the non-identification of the problem been identified so as not to have a repeat occur in the future?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker I am informed that the power outage affecting this area lasted 61 minutes. The outage time was exacerbated due to a technical glitch on the automated systems, which resulted in the engineers having to attend on site to restore power manually. So in answer to the hon. Member's question, no I do not think it delayed the addressing of the issue, but the fact that they had to attend on site was what delayed the restoration of power in that area.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker can I ask the Hon. Minister why the details of that report are not available for the public to view on the GEA's website?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker I would imagine that they are collating the information. I am not aware of any particular reason why it would not be available on the GEA's website if that is their normal customer practice.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker this was actually something we discussed in the House following the 7th of January 2024 power outage and I believe it was the Chief Minister who around that time mentioned that it wouldn't be a problem going forward for the GEA to register the power outages and the reasons behind the unplanned ones on their website. This is something which I have been following with interest and since that date, I have not seen any. Would the Hon. Minister please address that if indeed that is their policy and would she agree to perhaps request that the GEA updates all the previous unplanned power outages and the reasons for all of the press releases on the website so they are visible for all to see should they look?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker above and beyond the social media posts is the hon. Gentleman referring on the website. I have no issue with this and I am sure they have a team in order to post those reports.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q520/2025**  
**GEA –**  
**Damage to a High Voltage Cable**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 520, the Hon. C Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** The power outage on Saturday 29th of March 2025 was initially presumed to be attributable to a loss of gas supply but was later deemed to have been caused by damage to a high voltage cable in the distribution network. Can the Minister please confirm what actually caused the damage?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker the power outage on the 29th of March 2025 was initially, within a matter of minutes of the outage being reported, attributed to a loss of gas supply due to the LNG storage plant having been having resumed a supply of natural gas on Friday the 28th of March 2025 following a 10-day period of scheduled maintenance. Since the resumption of the national gas supply 24 hours prior to the outage experienced the GEA has suffered several interruptions to supply. These interruptions did not manifest themselves in power outages as they were contained by the available power.

I am informed by the GEA that upon further investigation it was identified that the actual cause of the power outage had been a high voltage cable insulation fault on the cable running from a substation close to the entrance to Eastern Beach to the substation located in the former Caleta Palace Hotel site. The damage on the cable was located at the entrance of Eastern Beach.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q521/2025**

**GEA –**

**Press Release by the ESG**

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 521, the Hon. C Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** According to a press release by the ESG on the 31st of March 2025, fuel was used continuously for two weeks at the GEA power plant due to maintenance and repair being undertaken. Why was the public not informed in advance or even at the time or even after the event?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker the public was not informed in advance at the time or after the GEA having been running generating sets on automotive gas oil given that this was entirely an operation matter from which it did not expect any interruptions to the delivery of power to Gibraltar to occur. The GEA's North Mole power station has been designed to operate on alternative fuels to natural gas catering for precisely this planned event and the possibility of a lack of natural gas at any point in time.

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**Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker I think the importance the important point behind my question was one of public awareness and public information. If we look at the schedule that she handed out that the Hon. Minister handed out a short while ago. March which is that month equated to just short of 40% of the time being used with diesel. Now the area is within a conglomeration of residential schools the biggest school in Gibraltar and businesses.

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There are a huge density of people there that you know some suffer from respiratory issues and others do not but they all deserve to be informed if there is a problem going on or if there are higher levels. Will the Minister not agree with that principle?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker it is remarkable to hear someone that is standing with the GSD to criticize the Government for using diesel during a 10-day period when actually they were going to build a diesel power plant. The irony should not be lost on members of the public. However Madam Speaker what I would say is that of the six engines in the power station three are LNG engines and three are dual purpose engines so they are able to run on diesel and on LNG.

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To say that a power plant that is built to run part of the time on diesel when LNG is not running so it runs by default on diesel so the majority of the time it runs on LNG but three out of the six engines actually are built to run on dual fuels so if there is ever an issue they can run on diesel so that is the very purpose of the power plant. So what exactly is it that we are meant to notify people of that the power station is fulfilling its original intentions? If we were going to run on something that's completely different I would accept that perhaps a notification should be given but the fact that a power station is running on precisely the methods that were meant to be run on when the reality is that 90% of the time in fact 94% of the time as has been provided to the hon. Gentleman it runs on LNG the fact that it run for a 10-day period whilst maintenance was carried out to the

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LNG plant that that should have been notified to the general public would have been a bit absurd  
4405 absurd given that the purpose of the the very reason that the power plant was built the way that  
it did is to for it to have an ability, if required, to also run on diesel but once again Madam Speaker  
it is somewhat ironic for the hon. Gentleman to point this out when they were indeed going to  
build a power plant that was running solely on diesel.

4410 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, I mean how much longer do we have to go and look at the  
past this is almost 14 years ago as it happens I happen to to agree with with with having an LNG,  
I'm not stuck on on any commitments in the past so in future you know that that those type of  
comments whilst that the hon. Minister's free to direct to me aren't really relevant in in my  
4415 particular situation but you do not have to take my view on the importance of the provision of  
this information to the public Madam Speaker the ESG came up with their own press release in  
which they said that the power station had to run on diesel for close to two weeks which was  
unexpected and a great surprise after having been given another explanation altogether. It is  
clear from the tone of that press release and from comments we've heard of people and in the  
4420 area residents in particular but also parents of people at the school that they feel they have a right  
to know what is going on and if Government fails to do that Madam Speaker doesn't this the Hon.  
Minister not see how keeping information from the public increases uncertainty and it increases  
the amount of doubts that people have and confidence they have in their own administration

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, again, the power plant is run 94% of the time on LNG.  
4425 The 2015 campaign was run on a no to LNG. I am delighted that the hon. Member has now seen  
the light and is now determined that actually LNG was the way forward because that is exactly  
what this party stood for at the time. Madam Speaker, again, should there have been notification  
of what exactly that the purpose of the power plant was going to be produced? I am unclear of  
4430 exactly what the purpose of the notification should have been. We can engage with the ESG  
directly if they are so concerned but the power plant has three engines which are dual purpose  
engines which can run on both LNG and diesel, therefore, it is within the very essence of the power  
plant that it may sometimes run on diesel though we choose to have it run on LNG normally. We  
believe LNG is a cleaner and better fuel and it is better for the Gibraltarian population to have a  
power plant run on LNG.

4435 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

#### Q522/2025

#### BESS –

#### Power Outage Caused by a Contractor

4440 **Acting Clerk:** Question 522, the Hon. C Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** The power outage on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025 was caused by a contractor while  
working on the BESS. Is the Minister satisfied that there is adequate supervision of such high risk  
and critical works

4445 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker I can confirm  
that I am satisfied with the accuracy of all records maintained by the GEA in respect to the  
4450 electrical network infrastructure I am also satisfied with the process in place which requires the  
contractors request a site service clearance from the GEA ahead of undertaking any works on

highways, pathways etc. The site service clearance process results in a report being issued to the respective contractor advising them of any GEA services or infrastructure in the location requested. This report details the exact location of the services and infrastructure, including the depth at which the said services and infrastructure can be found. Recommendations are made for the contractor to follow which also include the types of machinery or other ways that should be used whilst digging within certain distances of the services and infrastructure. It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that the recommendations of the GEA made in the report provided are followed and that its staff are adequately trained and supervised when carrying out the works.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Well Madam Speaker; as a dog returns to its vomit, so fool repeats his folly. It appears to me that these things entirely

**Madam Speaker:** I am sure that that is a pleasant analogy but I should leave it at that.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Forgive the unpleasantness yet it is a well-known and I believe biblical phrase. Nonetheless, the message, being one of repeating history, repeating our own mistakes, time and time again. There are large numbers of incidents where the contractor has cut through a cable. We all remember the incidents happening pretty much yearly. What I would ask the Minister is; despite the reassurances that she has received from the GEA, despite her belief in the rigidity of the process, the fact is that these events keep occurring. Would it not make sense, as a polite suggestion, obviously one which she can take whichever way she wants and change it and modify it into her own Government's policy. Would it not make sense to charge the contractor, or the party concerned carrying out the works to pay for the services of a GEA supervisor in the areas of critical grid dependency. We are not talking about an area which might wipe out this we are talking about areas which will wipe out as this did the whole of Gibraltar there are far too many people who depend on the supply of electricity to allow the process of simply handing out schematic diagrams to allow the contractor to determine where the cables are and where they should and should not dig.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the contractor is a professional body who should be able to follow the designs and should be able to see where the cables lie. The contractor was provided with designs and drawings which determined exactly where the cable was and unfortunately this incident did occur. We are taking steps in order to try and remedy that situation but what I would say is that the GEA provided them with drawings determining where the cables were and it is not that we are saying that those drawings were incorrect, those drawings were entirely correct, probably more correct than your biblical references. I have never heard that before but anyway. The reality is that it will no one or it is certainly not the case that the drawings provided were incorrect, the drawings provided were accurate drawings as to exactly where the cables were and yet this happened. Short of standing there and breathing over someone's neck, which I do not think is advisable 24-7, especially at a cost to the taxpayer, there should be consequences for that and I'm saying that is exactly what I do not think should happen. I think that there should be consequences on any contractor that does it, absolutely, but whether it is a good use of taxpayer expense to stand beside a man that is drilling a hole 24-7 I am not sure that that is best use of taxpayer money.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Well Madam Speaker, I'm happy to forgive the Hon. Minister for not hearing what I said properly. My actual explanation was to charge the company behind the work - the contractor or whoever contracted them to pay for the work. So, this would not come at any cost at all to the taxpayer, hence my suggestion. It is up to the Minister whether she would like to take it forward or do something alternative. The fact of the matter Madam Speaker is that millions of pounds in business money are lost, hundreds of people are inconvenienced, some get stuck in

4505 lifts, the hospital was nearly in crisis, and all of this is avoidable Madam Speaker by simply sending  
a competent worker from the GEA to supervise the critical areas of drilling. Not to spend a week  
there having cups of tea with them but to actually say, when they are about to break ground they  
will be present to ensure that these faults do not occur because at the end of the day Madam  
Speaker, does the Minister not admit or does not agree that these are avoidable incidents with  
huge ramifications

4510 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, through the construction process there are many  
instances where maybes where individuals have to drill. Is the hon. Member suggesting that at  
every one of these points we have to have someone standing beside them breathing down their  
4515 necks to make sure they are doing things correctly? The reality of the matter is that throughout  
the entire construction industry there are processes, you are provided with drawings, you are  
made liable for not abiding by those drawings, you are provided with documentation which shows  
you exactly where cables and pipes are, where absolutely everything is underground because  
otherwise construction would not be able to occur. It is perfectly ordinary factor within the  
4520 construction industry, that you will have to break ground, that you will have to drill holes, and if  
you are provided with accurate drawings, those accurate drawings should be sufficient for you not  
to drill holes through cables. I see that the hon. Member is looking to jump up. Whilst I take on  
board his suggestion, that suggestion throughout the construction industry and throughout the  
GEA and every site at which people would be working would probably be unfeasible. However,  
4525 what I would say is that whilst I sympathise entirely with the businesses, companies and  
individuals who were put out throughout the power cut, unfortunately in this instance every effort  
was made to ensure that the contractor knew exactly where the cable was and unfortunately, he  
drilled through the cable. Are we looking at different ways in order to mitigate that risk in future?  
Absolutely. Are we looking at different remedies to take to that issue? Absolutely. However,  
4530 should we have someone standing on every construction site to make sure that a cable isn't hit or  
a pipe isn't hit may be an unrealistic solution.

**Madam Speaker:** I am not going to I am not going to have a debate so if it is a separate  
question.

4535 **Hon. C Sacarello:** That is exactly what I was about to say. I do not want to be drawn into a  
debate, I understand the rules. I thank the Minister for agreeing to look into it. Does she not agree  
then that because they are looking into other ways to mitigate the circumstances that it is not a  
perfect system and that these incidents are avoidable and can and ought to be looked at?

4540 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, contractors are provided with drawings - a standard  
practice in the construction industry. There are pre-site meetings for clearance on the site, every  
mitigating factor is tried to be put in place. Unfortunately, these things do sometimes occur. I am  
not saying that it is acceptable. I am not saying that I applaud it. I sympathise with every business  
and every individual that suffered the power cut but unfortunately, I think the construction  
4545 industry would probably grind to a halt if we had to have someone looking over their shoulder  
each and every time that a hole would be dug. There are plenty of people that know plenty more  
than I do about the construction industry and if this were the case it would have been  
implemented elsewhere. So, short of pre-site construction meetings, drawings and then telling  
the contractor where the cable is, there is not much more that can be done to try and mitigate  
4550 these circumstances.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q523/2025**

**GEA –**

**Lack of Resilience in the Grid**

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 523, the Hon. C Sacarello.

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**Hon. C Sacarello:** Is the Minister worried about the lack of resilience in the grid as displayed by the effects on the entire network caused by one isolated accident of the nature of the outage on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025?

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

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**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the outage that occurred on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025, i.e. the contractor damaged the high voltage cable on North Mole Road, unfortunately triggered a second event on the electrical network within four seconds of the damage being caused resulting in the total blackout. The protection systems on the electrical network responded as expected upon the contractor causing the damage however the system was unable to cope with the second event.

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Given the explanation provided I am not worried about the lack of resilience in the electrical network as the systems in place reacted to the events that took place as expected. The Government has invested millions over the last decade to upgrade and reinforce our power network and will continue to do so. I will take no lectures from the hon. Mr Sacarello on resilience, especially not on a problem his party is responsible for creating through a consistent lack of investment. Throughout the 16 years they were in Government they failed to deliver any resilience.

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**Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, the point is that the catastrophic events did happen and it did happen in an area which caused an entire blackout. My question really is; what measures are being taken to avert such a similar incident from occurring in the future? Is the GEA taking action by, for example, ring-fencing these critical pathways at these points critical points, not everywhere in the in the grid, and also by adding alternative options to circumvent any potential future faults?

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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the GEA provides drawings. The GEA provides on-site meetings. The GEA tells a contractor where the cable is. Again, the blackout was extremely unfortunate and we are looking at different ways to take action against the contractor. However, there is not much more than the GEA can do in order to prevent these they physically took them to the site and pointed to where the cable was - there is not much more that can be done.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q524/2025**

**GEA –**

**Penalties or Financial Consequences for Damages by Contractors**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 524, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, are there any penalties or financial consequences when a contractor accidentally damages an electric cable or any part of the electric infrastructure in terms of recovery of cost of damage from the contractor?

4600 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health, Care and Business.

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I can confirm that when contractors accidentally cause damages to electrical cables or any part of the electrical infrastructure all materials and labor costs associated with the repair of said damage are charged  
4605 back to the contractor.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** And that happens as a result of a requirement that the contractor should have specialised insurance to cover that that specific risk because they are say drilling or working in the on the public highway or is it as a result of a specific provision in the legislation?  
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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, whilst I do not have information in front of me, I would imagine that is as a of any negligence is attributable to the contractor. If the contractor is told the cable is there and it drills through the cable, I would expect that any direct loss attributable to that incident is directly recoverable from the contractor. I am speculating here but the confirmation  
4615 that I have is that all costs directly attributable are recovered from the contractor. I imagine that that is because, again as I pointed out to the hon. Member, if you are told the cable is there, you are provided with a drawing saying the cable is there and you are then told at several meetings where the cables are, if you then drill through the cable I am not sure that you can escape the fact that it is actually negligence. Therefore, all direct costs will be recoverable.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I imagine in that scenario that's right. I wonder if the hon. Member has information with her on a slightly different scenario. There isn't a scenario where perhaps it is so obvious. Is it is it the case that that if someone works on the public highway irrespective of some kind of attribution of faults damage then gets passed on to the person doing the construction works as a matter of like strict liability? That is really what I was asking in whether that was in fact  
4620 the case either because there is a requirement to have specialist insurance in that particular field or not or does it actually depend on proving liability?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I do not have that level of information but I would expect is attributable to actual fault rather than to strict liability.  
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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Perhaps, I appreciate the hon. Member doesn't have that information that it is. I appreciate also a very specific question. When I was reading around this subject it struck me - this is quite a big issue worldwide. Perhaps the Hon. Minister agree that perhaps she can discuss it with her officials and if it is something that requires a policy decision or indeed legislation requiring contractors to acquire insurance in a particular area as a matter of fact before they start working on the highway. Maybe that is something that the Government can consider in the future  
4635 as an introduction of a requirement.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, just from previous knowledge, the contractor is always required to have public liability insurance so for every project, whether it is a private project or a public project, the contractor will always be required to have a particular policy for public liability.  
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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I appreciate that and I this is my last intervention. I am not talking about about having some kind of liability insurance but rather some kind of insurance that goes beyond the requirement of any other party to prove fault. This is that this is the issue that is what I am asking the hon. Member perhaps to consider.  
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**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, where I am happy to consider that I think it would be difficult to get someone to pay for repairs or to pay for the costs associated with a fault if there weren't a an element of faults involved. Otherwise you would simply go pinning faults on other  
4655 on anybody that is available so I think there has to be an element of fault in order to pin it on.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q525/2025**  
**ERS –**  
**Bed Shortage**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 525, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker why are there 34 beds less in ERS and compared to when  
4665 precisely?

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

**Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, there are 41  
4670 beds less since the handover of Calpe Ward from the ERS to the GHA together with the phased handover of John Cochrane Ward.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** And that happened when precisely?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I do apologise to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition  
4675 because he did ask that specific question but I do not seem to have information specifically on when that handover was done so I do apologise and I will write the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and provide that information because I do not have it to hand.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I am grateful for that but so that I understand it. The 34 beds less in ERS  
4680 is put down to the handover of well there are 41 beds less the Minister says and partly in because of the handover of the Calpe Ward that's how I understood the answer but the Calpe Ward is in St Bernard's isn't it so perhaps she can she can explain that to me.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** The Calpe Ward is a ward in St Bernard's hospital which used to house  
4685 ERS patients in the same way as John Cochrane currently houses ERS patients. During the Covid pandemic the Calpe Ward was converted into an infectious disease ward so I imagine it was on or about the time of the Covid pandemic. Henceforth it has been determined that actually it is very useful to have the Calpe Ward as an infectious disease ward to have patients in isolation who so  
4690 require it, therefore, the handover the Calpe Ward was for precisely that reason.

**Madam Speaker:** All right I make that the end of the questions but do not celebrate because we have supplementaries to deal with the hon. Member nearly did not let me finish the sentence but all right, we will take supplementaries to Question 462.

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**Q462, 466, 468, 496, 501/2025**  
**Supplementaries**

4700 **Hon J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, just one brief question. Is it the case that the software used by the PCC and the software used by the hospital can communicate? On occasion, I have actually had to do it myself, but patients are asked to take a hard copy letter from one side from the PCC to the hospital for that to be to be looked at. If the software communicates that surely shouldn't be the case? That is why I ask it.

4705 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the clinicians are able to view both systems so the clinicians have access to both systems but indeed it happened to me fairly recently that a nurse was unable to access my records from the GHA. I am not sure if all levels of clinicians are able to access it but certainly doctors are able to access the EDMS system but there as well as the EMIS system which they use there is also the HISS system which is a system that collates blood results  
4710 scans and everything which is available to the book and in fact that is a great benefit that the GHA has because it means that primary care and secondary care are able to communicate. For example, in the NHS primary care is very separate to secondary care and therefore the systems are entirely separate.

4715 **Madam Speaker:** Supplementaries to Question 466.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, just a question as to the information provided. I know that I asked for a breakdown as to what the money was used for or the donation that was made was used for. I have not been provided with that information on this table. Is there any specific reason  
4720 why that information is not forthcoming?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No Madam Speaker, in fact it was provided in an earlier table it was probably in a tidying up exercise of the table that it was not provided. I am very happy to provide that information because it does highlight the specific items that it went that the donations went  
4725 to.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, the Hon E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, one small thing I think it is a typographical error on donation number nine  
4730 which was beneficiary was radiology in my printout it just has a letter p which but no actual figure p for pence but no figure.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** I think this table was provided last minute. The figure there should be £81,766.66. What I will do is I am happy to recirculate the table providing updating that figure and  
4735 providing the description of what it was put to the hon. Lady.

**Madam Speaker:** Supplementaries to Question 468?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** None Madam Speaker.  
4740

**Madam Speaker:** Questions 496 and 501?

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we heard earlier that this relates as to how many GHA staff members are currently employed out of the bank staff cohort via an agency and I have been  
4745 working continuously and uninterrupted for a period of over three months. We heard the Hon. Minister say earlier that two years was not an inordinate amount of time for somebody to be working out of bank or agency covering. The table that I have just been provided with shows 53

employees employed out of the bank cohort or by an agency. Out of that I note that 12 have been employed for five or more years and five of those employees have been employed under those conditions for 10 years or over and some up to 13 years Madam Speaker.

For what reason is the GHA employing so many staff for so many years out of bank cohorts or from agency staff? Surely those individuals should have already been made part of the permanent cohorts.

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, from the information available I am not able to make the determination that the hon. Lady is suggesting. There are some so this is a list of bank staff, and it is bank core bank, so it is proper bank. Because someone is employed from 2012 does not mean that they are in permanent employment since 2012. It means that they have been on the bank system since 2012. They may have worked uninterrupted for over three months at some period of time, for example covering a maternity leave. It might not be the case, but I am speculating from the information I had in front of me. It might have been the case that at some point in time they were employed for a three-month period of time but what this table provides is information as to the bank the GHA. Because someone is employed in bank from 2012 my understanding is it does not necessarily mean that they are in continuous employment since 2012.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, the question that I posed specifically states and have been working continuously and uninterrupted for over a period of over three months specifically because I knew that that that may arise that the information given may not be distinguishable between those who have worked continuously and those who have been recalled back. Can I assume that that the information provided, therefore, based on the answer asked isn't is inaccurate?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No Madam Speaker because you can work continuously and uninterrupted for a period of three months within any period from 2012. You may have worked from June 2015 to September 2015 in an uninterrupted and continuous manner but that does not necessarily mean that you have been in employment since. I think the hon. Lady understands what I mean. You have been in employment continuously since 2012, you could have been in employment for a period of three months without continuous employment since that period.

**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, by any chance does the Hon. Minister have the information in front of her as to how many of those individuals may have been employed for five years or more continuously and uninterrupted?

**Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** no Madam Speaker, I think that given the volume of questions asked the GHA limited themselves to answering the question put in front of them so unfortunately I do not have that information available.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon C Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you very much for your indulgence, Madam Speaker. Just on this topic and for the avoidance of doubt. Are any of these individuals on the bank system open or willing or even keen on accepting a full-time contract were they to be offered one? Obviously, this is something that you may need to that the Hon. Minister may need to go and find out I think that would add clarity to.

**Madam Speaker:** I think that's a hypothetical question would any, might they be interested if they were given. It may be too late in the day to redefine that but any other supplementary that is now the end proper to questions would anybody like to move an adjournment.



4800      **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, by default I would like to move an adjournment to the house tomorrow at 3 p.m.

4805      **Madam Speaker:** I propose the question, which is that this house to now adjourn to tomorrow at 3 p.m. I now put the question that is that this house to now adjourn to tomorrow at 3 p.m. Those in favour (**Members:** Aye) those against. Passed.  
This house will have this house will now adjourn to tomorrow at 3 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.*



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

**AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.00 p.m. – 8.50 p.m.**

**Gibraltar, Thursday, 22nd May 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*]

[ACTING CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: K Balban Esq *in attendance*]

## Questions for Oral Answer

**CHIEF MINISTER**

**Q589-90/2025**

**Eastside Project –**

**Responsibility for beach nourishment; Impact of breakwater on beaches and village**

**Acting Clerk:** Meeting of Parliament, Thursday, 22nd of May, 2025. Answers to Oral Questions continued. Questions to the Chief Minister. Question 589, the Hon. G. Origo.

5      **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, in light of the DPC meeting held on the 24th of April 2025, and  
with respect to the East Side Project, it was confirmed that “beach nourishment” would be  
undertaken by the developer, every two years over a 10-year period at both Eastern Beach and  
Catalan Bay. Given the admission that there will be beach deterioration; can the Government  
confirm who will be responsible to “nourish” those beaches once this 10-year period is over and  
10 what are the expected costs?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

15      **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question with Question  
590.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 590, the Hon. G Origo.

20      **Hon. G Origo:** Following a site visit at Catalan Bay, members of the DPC confirmed that they  
had not been provided sufficient assurance that the southern end of the breakwater would not  
have an impact on the beaches and the village. The peer was described as an encroachment on  
the view of the village; however, the developer argued that the peer was necessary in width to  
protect the new proposed marina. Is the Government supportive of the marina aspect of this  
project, given the concerns raised?  
25

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

30      **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Yes, Madam Speaker, the Government is supportive of this  
project and the marina element of it, which is, incidentally, smaller than the marina the GSD  
supported when they were in Government, which would have destroyed our beloved Caleta. This

project, the marina arm of which is smaller, will not. Additionally, Madam Speaker, no Lords of the Realm are expected to be deployed in this development.

It will, nonetheless, be possible for members of the public to see over the seawall and peer into the Mediterranean Sea beyond. Madam Speaker, in relation to Question 454, a coastal dynamics report was submitted by the applicant of the Eastside project, which predicted that there would be changes to the south side of Eastern Beach and to the beach at Catalan Bay. Initial re-nourishment of critical beach areas is proposed with periodic maintenance of re-nourishments for ten years.

The purpose of these re-nourishments is to allow the beaches to reach their state of equilibrium. Beach monitoring through topographic and bathymetric surveys will take place twice a year for a minimum period of ten years by the applicant and the results of these will inform what, if any, maintenance requirements there are. The developer is responsible for undertaking the monitoring and beach nourishment.

There is also a condition in the contract between the Government and TNG that the developer will be required to share the monitoring results of the relevant Government departments, these being the Technical Services Department and the Department of the Environment, and that all proposed re-nourishment activities would need to be carried out in consultation with and to the satisfaction of these departments. Whilst it is anticipated that the beaches will have reached their equilibrium state within ten years, assessments of the beach will go beyond the ten-year period and further nourishment and monitoring will have to be undertaken by the developer if it is deemed necessary at the time.

The contractual obligation extends beyond the ten-year period and was made on advice that the beach would, in any event, likely reach the state of equilibrium in ten years. The Government is not aware of what the expected costs of these works are, as the Government is not required to pay for the works.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon. Chief Minister for his very in-depth reply to my initial question but can I ask, in respect of the first Question, which is Question 589, to do with beach nourishment, whether beach nourishment of this nature has taken place as often in the past with respect to Catalan Bay? Is this something, which is a normal procedure or is this something that is being done because of the development of this marina?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, I am sorry to have to tell the Hon. Gentleman that is a matter, which is in the public domain because no Government of any particular complexion has ever re-nourished the beach in secret. It has been done in the sight of the 32,000 Gibraltarians. I wonder why he would want to come to this Parliament to ask me something that he should know.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, the purpose of my question with respect to whether beach nourishment is a common occurrence, which takes place in our beaches, is brought about on the nature that I think, and I take the view, that the beach nourishment, which has taken place, indeed constitutes harm. Can I ask the Hon. Chief Minister whether he thinks that the nourishment taking place in this nature, happening twice, I think you said, every year, does indeed constitute harm to our beaches?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am sorry to break it to the Hon. Gentleman, but the purpose of his question is really quite irrelevant. Really, the issue is whether his question is about something, which is in the public domain, and if it is in the public domain, then whatever the purpose of it may be, then the question is not one that the Government is obliged to answer.

Neither with respect, Madam Speaker, would it necessarily be a proper question in keeping with the rules of the House because if something is in the public domain, then it is not something

that can be the subject of a question in this House. The Hon. Gentleman then says to us that he would consider that beach nourishment of this sort is somehow not a positive thing.

Well Madam Speaker, given that what I am telling him is that the answer to his question is in the public domain, he might like to refresh his memory about how often it is happened in the past from the public sources and indeed, not just in this beach. Then he might realise that there is nothing akin to a relationship to this marina, which is going to cause anything which is unusual in respect of this beach, and which has not happened before.

Now having said that, Madam Speaker, and just referring to the things which are in the public domain, perhaps the Hon. Gentleman is blessed with youth sufficient that he cannot remember when the Mamela was out in what looked like the middle of Catalan Bay and yet there are years when it is completely covered in the sand because without even a thought of a marina, that beach gets bigger and it gets less big, depending on many atmospheric or environmental aspects.

That is before the GSLP/liberals do a deal with the TNG Foundation for a marina that is not there yet. That is even before the GSD do a deal for a much larger marina with a marina-arm, a pier, P-I-E-R, which extended all the way across where Catalan Bay is. So that when, on occasions during National Day, we have hosted parliamentarians here, including some peers, P-E-E-R, they have been able to observe the beauty of Catalan Bay without that obstruction which the GSD sought to construct, and which will not be there on the basis of the plans that we have approved.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, and if I may, the Hon. Chief Minister questions why I query whether or not the beach nourishment of this nature constitutes harm, but I will also want to put it to him other things which are also in the public domain. One of the things that the Hon. Chief Minister said during the last Election campaign was to the residents of Catalan Bay, and he spelt out this to them.

He would not allow any harm to be done to Catalan Bay because of the development of this new marina. So I ask, what does the Hon. Chief Minister have to say to those residents who he promised he would not allow harm of this nature to take place, and reconcile this position with the fact that there is an admission that deterioration to the beach is in fact taking place?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** That the Hon. Gentleman is trying to construct a case where there is none. The Government is complying fully and entirely with its commitment with the people of Catalan Bay, and indeed the people of Gibraltar as a whole, that there will not be harm to Catalan Bay. That in fact in the long term this will be better for Catalan Bay.

That in fact, the fact that Catalan Bay needs to potentially have its beach re-nourished is something that has happened in the past, and cannot be said to be something that simply arises from this marina because as I have told the Hon. Gentleman, or perhaps he didn't appreciate that this is what I was telling him, because he is perhaps blessed with sufficient youth that he has no memory of this, during the lifetime of this Government, that is to say since 2011, we have had to nourish Catalan Bay. Not only have we had to nourish Catalan Bay, before this marina was even thought of, indeed their marina was thought of, which was much bigger but we hadn't approved, we had to completely, completely, completely re-nourish Sandy Bay, which was properly at that time more adequately referred to as Shingle Bay, and indeed a few shingles bay.

We then had to create, believe it or not, a marina arm, perhaps better called a pier, P-I-E-R, or a groyne, and fill it with sand at a cost of approximately from memory, don't quote me, check my Hansard, £13 million, with nothing to show for it in terms of an east side development. Therefore, the Hon. Gentleman is seeking to create a link between concepts of harm, which are obviously, objectively, unrelated. But Madam Speaker, I can understand that the Hon. Gentleman is sitting with a party that says one thing at general Elections and actually means the other.

As we saw yesterday, at least I saw in Technicolour, that now they believe that LNG is a good thing. When they went into a general Election in 2015 saying that we were going to blow up Gibraltar, the only thing blowing up is their credibility.

135 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, and if I may take the issue just back to Catalan Bay, which is a  
premise of this question, when the beach nourishment, which takes place in the DPC plans, they  
referred that it would happen at two yearly intervals, but now the Hon. Chief Minister says that it  
will happen twice a year, can the Hon. Chief Minister confirm whether public access to the beach  
will be affected as a result of these beach nourishment projects and what is being done as a result  
to minimise that disruption?

140 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am surprised that for somebody so young, the Hon.  
Gentleman should be taking the view that history will teach us nothing. It is quite dangerous to  
take that approach. Indeed, if I may say so with respect, and it is not up to me to give him any  
advice in respect of his burgeoning political career, he would do better to look at history in order  
145 to better inform his questioning.

Indeed, given what I have had to point out in respect of his questions, which obviously were  
not necessarily checked by anyone for him, he would do well to check the dictionary when he puts  
his questions, let alone Hansard. Madam Speaker, the history of Catalan Bay shows us that actually  
the nourishment does not in any way affect public access, because as I have told him over and  
150 over again, perhaps over a coffee I can be more explicit and explain it to him in more layman's  
terms, but he'll forgive me for being a bit formal across the floor of the House. We have re-  
nourished Catalan Bay in living memory, not history, living memory.

When we did it, it did not affect public access to the beach. Look, there were people who were  
concerned it was a bit dusty. There were people who thought that they were finding scorpions.

155 There were people who loved what was happening. That is politics, I guess. You do something  
just over half like it.

In 2015, Madam Speaker, when we were accused of being about to blow up Gibraltar, about  
two-thirds liked it, I seem to recall, and some don't but I don't know why the Hon. Gentleman is  
asking me questions about things that have happened already, and he should know the answer  
160 to. Not from even having to go and check *el Chivatito*, Hansard, but from knowing what has  
happened in the beach.

Because he is blessed with youth, perhaps he does not remember seeing it here, but I would  
have thought, given that when we are all blessed with great youth, we spend most of our time in  
Catalan Bay, he would remember from sunning himself there.

165 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** On this question, Madam Speaker.

170 **Madam Speaker:** I have called the next question. Well, there has been four supplementaries  
on this, one brief one and no more.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** None on 590. There has not been on 590, anyway.

175 **Madam Speaker:** No, I am taking the two together.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, I understand. I just wanted to ask on this. So, this question, surely  
Madam Speaker and the Chief Minister must see that it is not about whether Catalan Bay has been  
provisioned before, nourished before, or indeed whether Sandy Bay was nourished before, or  
180 there was a building of the GSLP's groyne, G-R-O-Y-N-E, at Sandy Bay. I mean, surely it has about  
correlating the beach nourishment with the development because if the development was not  
going to have an effect on Catalan Bay, why is it the developer's obligation to nourish the beaches  
for 10 years and beyond?



185 My hon. Colleague's question was about the 10 years. The Chief Minister's original answer explains that the contractual obligation will lead to monitoring results that will then bite on the developer beyond the 10 years. Clearly, someone in Government thinks the development is having an effect on the beach, doesn't the Chief Minister?

190 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has to get up all of the time during the course of this session to bolster his junior questioners, I see. Watching yesterday's session from afar was instructive, given that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition obviously has to earn his pay.

195 It is a pity he doesn't check people's questions before they are put, sufficiently to see what it is that's being said, given that I didn't need groyne spelling out for me, but the Hon. Gentleman to his left obviously needed peer spelling out for him. Successive Governments of Gibraltar have re-nourished Madam Speaker, for many generations, Catalan Bay. What we have been able to achieve in the arrangements with the TNG Foundation is that in future, if Catalan Bay needs to be re-nourished, it will be re-nourished not at the taxpayers' cost.

200 So Madam Speaker, it is not, in my view, purely simply an issue related to harm arising from the redevelopment of the area. It is the need for re-nourishment that is going to be funded by the TNG Foundation. In any event, Madam Speaker, Hon. Members opposite need to remember that if you are a serious political party and you have been in Government and you have done a deal that goes further than the deal that you are criticising now, you damage your credibility by pretending to now be more papius than the Pope.

205 Because if Hon. Members had said, we are never going to redevelop the east side, there will never be a marina on the east side, we will insist that for the sake of Catalan Bay, the reclamation as it is when we have entered Government in 1996 is as far as it is going to go, then I would take the criticism from them on the groin, Madam Speaker, G-R-O-I-N. But when they, Madam Speaker, approved in a DPC that was secret, not public, plans which provided for a marina pier, P-I-E-R, which extended all the way across the front of Catalan Bay, and that is, and the Hon. Gentleman is saying from a central position that is not true, the Hon. Gentleman should know that if the Hon. Mr Origo wants to ask me about the things I said at Catalan Bay, he should accompany that recantation of my electoral statements at Catalan Bay with the leaflet that we issued, which included the designs that they had approved in the DPC.

210 Turn the page and show the other part that shows the plans that they approved. They completely cut off the mouth of Catalan Bay and they sit there and open their mouths now in defence of Catalan Bay. Madam Speaker, I have not seen such political hypocrisy in my life.

215 The Hon. Gentleman who started this line of questioning is young enough to not have to tarnish himself with that level of political hypocrisy. What a pity that he is.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

225 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, on this...

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** The Hon. Chief Minister has...

230 **Madam Speaker:** I have called the next question. We have explored this subject enough. We are moving on to the next question.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the Chief Minister has made a statement. Has made a statement that I want to give him the opportunity to correct.

235 **Madam Speaker:** All right.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, doesn't the Chief Minister accept that what he just said, that the development that was proposed by the party on this side when we were in Government, that was going to cut across the entirety of Catalan Bay, is a misstatement because... And I give him the opportunity to correct the record, because whatever differences we have politically as to the impact of the development, because we take a particular view about the impact of this development on Catalan Bay, and it is the only one that is happening because the GSD development did not actually happen, the accompanying photograph on his electoral leaflet shows that it does not cut across the entirety of Catalan Bay. Will he withdraw that statement?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the old chestnut of a point of order in order to camouflage the further supplementary. No, Madam Speaker, I do not accept that. The Hon. Gentleman is the one who is raising matters which are far from accurate, and therefore he is wrong, Madam Speaker.

What is certainly, absolutely, I hope, common ground between us is that that was approved in ADPC, which was secret, which is the DPC that he presided over when he was in Government, and the DPC, the GSD, insisted to us when we made it public, we should keep secret, that it was a much larger project, Madam Speaker, that whatever the merits or demerits of the extent of the closure of the mouth of Catalan Bay, their project would have had the same effect in terms of the beach, if not worse, and that is my point and Madam Speaker, therefore, I salute the Hon. Gentleman with the ingenuity that he has been able to ask a further supplementary whilst pretending it was not, but nothing else.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

#### Q591-2/2025

#### Borders and Coastguard –

#### Frequency of machines operated by Officers at Gibraltar Airport; Staff shortages

**Acting Clerk:** Question 591, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, at the start of my supplementaries, I did say that I was taking supplementaries to 589 and have not been given an opportunity to deal with 590.

**Madam Speaker:** I explained that they were both very connected. The answer had not been given separately. There's a ruling on this where I said that when the Government Minister groups questions together and refers to each question in their answer, then I ask the Opposition member to say which question they are on.

If they are grouped together, I take an overall view, and certainly with a question like this, which is so interrelated, that is the view I have taken. Therefore, we are moving on to the next question.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 591, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, I will take it because I know my hon. Colleague is in a meeting right now. I will take it on her behalf.

When were the machines operated by Borders and Coastguard officers at the Gibraltar Airport purchased? Please provide details as to the maintenance carried out on those machines and the frequency and whether there are any plans to replace the machinery in the near future.

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Which I will do with 592, Madam Speaker.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 592, The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Hon. J Ladislaus.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, have the Borders and Coastguard Agency raised any issues in the past 12 months as to staff shortages? If so, please provide details as to the exact issues raised and what is being done to address this.

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, no staff shortages have been raised with Government by the BCA in the last 12 months. Additionally, in relation to Question 591, BCA officers operate all of the security equipment at Gibraltar Air Terminal. The equipment can be divided into various categories, namely passenger cabin baggage and hold baggage screening X-ray machines.

There are also different types of specialised equipment used for explosive trace detection and liquid explosive detection systems. The cabin baggage X-ray machines were handed over to HMGOG in November 2011 as part of the new air terminal project. In those days, I think it was called GOG because it was November 2011.

These are in the process of being replaced by new equipment, which uses CT technology to meet the new standards in aviation security. The hold baggage X-ray machines were also handed over in 2011 but were replaced in 2019 to meet new security standards. The last batch of five explosive trace detectors were purchased in 2024 in line with increased screening requirements.

Every item of equipment is tested every day before it is placed into service and they each have to pass a detection test, which is set by the Civil Aviation Security Regulator in the United Kingdom with the UKCAA and two UKCAA and DFT standards. Preventive maintenance is carried out on every item of equipment on a twice-monthly basis by specialist contractors. These same contractors provide a 24-hour on-call reactive maintenance service with a 12-hour on-site response time.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, in relation to 591, can I ask that the Chief Minister has given an indication about the replacement of some of the equipment when that replacement is intended to take place?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Imminently, Madam Speaker, and no extra machines will be required for the cruise liner terminal that is no longer going to be on the east side pier as was the case under their plans.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** In relation to 592, can I ask if the answer to the Borders and Coastguard Agency raising issues as to staff shortages is no, is the Government aware whether the staff representatives have raised issues with the Borders and Coastguard Agency as to staff shortages?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Not in a manner, that has made its way up to me, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q593/2025**

**HMGOG, Government Owned Companies, Agencies and Authorities –  
Payments towards legal fees**

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 593, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition on behalf of the Hon. J Ladislaus.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** What payments have been made by HMGOG, Government Owned Companies, Agencies and Authorities towards legal fees incurred by its employees during financial years from 2018/2019 to date, broken down by:

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- (i) Value of payment;
- (ii) Entity; and
- (iii) Date of payment?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

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**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, the information requested by the Hon. Gentleman on behalf of the Hon. Lady is too voluminous to provide with any degree of reliable accuracy in the timeframe available or at all. My officials advise me that answering this question will require large manual exercise on an invoice-by-invoice basis going back to 2018. In any event, I am told that invoices are sometimes anonymised so it will not be possible to provide an accurate answer.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So can I just ask, when the Chief Minister prefaced that within the time available or at all, given the tail end of his answer, are we in the realms of the or at all? In addition, that my hon. Colleague should reframe her answer in a different way. Her question, sorry.

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I have been in Opposition, I know how these things work. If Hon. Members are trying to find one particular thing, if they are more precise we might be able to give it to them, but if they are trying to find that particular thing but they don't want to indicate that and they cast a very wide net, I am told it is impossible to do that exercise without bringing the Civil Service almost to a halt.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q594/2025**

**Government Departments –  
Inter-departmental transfer of personal information**

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 594, the Hon. C Sacarello.

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**Hon. C Sacarello:** When will the Government address the need to allow reasonable and restricted inter-departmental transfer of personal information to unshackle the public and the business sector from the repetitive and unnecessary need to submit the same information repeatedly to each department they approach?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

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**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Yes, Madam Speaker, we already have.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, there is a concept which is endorsed by the UK and an eGov concept endorsed by the UK and the EU called the once-only principle, which is certainly not endorsed by the Government of Gibraltar to date, despite there being a certain move towards eGov and a certain move towards streamlining, granted, some of the submissions, particularly in the business sector, from his fellow Minister.

Nonetheless, there are still many areas where the same information is required to be submitted repeatedly. Will the Government make moves to introduce legislation, regulations and the correct working practises within the Civil Service to reduce this burden on the public?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Every aspect of that, the Hon. Gentleman's prepared supplementary, is wrong, Madam Speaker. We do subscribe to this principle and we are in the process of doing so already.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q595/2025**  
**MOD –**  
**Radar maintenance**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 595, The Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is the Government in contact with the MOD to prevent further disruption to flights, more recently in connection with radar maintenance?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, may I start simply by going back to the question I answered a moment ago and referring the Hon. Mr Sacarello to a press release of the 16th of March 2015, which is headed the launch of the Tell Us Once scheme. I omitted to refer to that. However, the Hon. Gentleman said we had not subscribed to it.

It is there. It was a statement issued over two months ago. Sorry, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there any supplementary on that?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker: Well, make it.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Will the Chief Minister not agree that my comment was actually saying that they were making steps, but that much more steps were needed and that it was so far so insufficient? That was my point.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** I will not agree with that, Madam Speaker, at all, because the Hon. Gentleman actually said there is a principle, which the United Kingdom and the European Union subscribe to, which the Government of Gibraltar does not subscribe to. That is what he said. Hansard, *el Chivatito*, will show that, Madam Speaker, sooner than he might wish now, given that it has been done so effectively and so efficiently in-house.

When he checks *el Chivatito* and sees what he said, he will realise that there was actually a Government press release issued two months ago that does the opposite of what he said in his prepared supplementary. That is the point I was making, Madam Speaker. Was it a prepared supplementary, Madam Speaker?

430 As he is saying from a sedentary position, I do not know what it is that he was reading from. It must have been his palm.

**Madam Speaker:** All right. We were on 595, and I cannot remember where we were. Was it a supplementary?

435 **Hon. D J Bossino:** No, Madam Speaker. I think we were waiting for the Hon. Chief Minister's response, and I must say that I have really missed him yesterday. He was absent for most of the proceedings, and I really did say that to him yesterday.

**Madam Speaker:** Well, it is nice to be laughed at, but let us carry on with the process. The Hon.  
440 Chief Minister was about to answer.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** I was, Madam Speaker.

**Chief Minister:** And I was about to deliver my prepared answer.  
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**Hon. D J Bossino:** I am not pressing the button.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** I was, Madam Speaker, and I was about to read my prepared answer when Mr Bossino got up and confirmed to me that it appears to me to be his ambition not to be Chief  
450 Minister anymore or Leader of the Opposition. It appears that he wants to be Speaker, Madam Speaker, given that he gets up and speaks out of what the procedures require and allow. Madam Speaker, Government is permanently in contact with the MoD on all aspects of airfield operations that may affect civilian flights into Gibraltar Airport.

455 **Hon. D J Bossino:** As I said, I really have missed the Hon. Chief Minister and when he is finally gone, I will continue to miss him, assuming I am still here and I do not make any pressure of the Speaker or whatever capacity. Madam Speaker, that response, if I may say, is a very general response.

I would ask him, please, to descend into particulars insofar as this particular most recent  
460 incident is concerned, where we saw a significant disruption of flights, I think for a period of two or three days, which had a significant impact on the ability of planes to fly to and from Gibraltar Airport. Is he able to provide any information in respect of the radar maintenance issue?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, I cannot give any information about the radar  
465 maintenance issue. It is not an area of Government responsibility. I have told him we were in touch with the MOD.

The MOD was in touch with us and with the airlines to deal with how this contingency will be dealt with. The Hon. Gentleman has to understand, as the world sometimes forgets but is crudely reminded, for example, the huge power cut affecting southern France, Andorra, Spain and  
470 Portugal, that technology has to be understood to both be fallible, require maintenance, etc. and if you want radar to be there to assist you, you have to maintain it.

You do that in a way that advertises the fact to the airlines and then the airlines make the decisions that they may wish to make. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, airlines might sometimes make decisions which we, as consumers might not think are the ones best designed to suit our  
475 needs or that we as a Government might not think are the ones best designed to fit Gibraltar as a tourist destination or as an airport destination.

They make commercial decisions which are designed to look after their pockets because at the end of the day, they have shareholders and they are businesses and they might decide to bus people in particular directions. They might decide to cancel flights. They might decide to change  
480 the timing of flights.

That is in the nature of industry and, in particular, an industry as cost-intensive as the airline industry.

485 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The Hon. Chief Minister is waffling and is rambling, I get the sense, and the impression that he is not actually prepared for it. His mind is clearly on other things and we wait with bated breath what his Ministerial statements will contain after he completes his questions.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** May I ask him...

490 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, that is a point that the Hon. Gentleman has made which is very unfair and contrary to the rules. He is pre-empting something on the Order Paper. If there is to be a Ministerial statement, it is later in the Order Paper for a reason and to refer to it now is inappropriate in parliamentary terms and he should know that because, although he is very much my junior in terms of the years that he has been here, he has been here for more than most of  
495 the others on his side except for the Leader of the Opposition.

**Madam Speaker:** Let us not refer to what is on the Order Paper. Let us proceed with...

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, I...

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** The criticism remains insofar...

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Do I sit down or...? Insofar as the Chief Minister's, waffle in his response. The issue is not focused on what airlines do commercially or what they may not do commercially. The  
505 issue is focused very specifically in respect of another incident, in respect of Gibraltar's airport, which emanates from the Ministry of Defence, which has caused a disruption to the ability to these commercial airlines to come to Gibraltar. That has an effect potentially on our economy.

We cannot on the one breath say, oh, it is an MOD airport and then on another boast, as I am sure the Hon. Minister for Tourism will no doubt do during the course of the Budget Address that  
510 we have more flight arrivals and his efforts in relation to that. In relation to the supplementary, I ask him again, in respect of this particular incident, I am not asking about general contact that there has been, what pressure is he putting to bear on the Ministry of Defence to ensure that something like this does not reoccur so that therefore we have no further disruptions on commercial flights?

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** The Hon. Gentleman gets up to accuse me of waffling. I mean, it is really quite remarkable. The Hon. Gentleman would like to pretend that things are black and white.

That is the politics that gets nations into trouble. That is the politics that gets nations obsessed with whether Brussels is going to permit a bent banana or not. Whether baseless Brussels  
520 bureaucrats are going to require us to have sprouts that look one way or another.

That is the sort of politics, Madam Speaker that is not the politics that made the GSD a party of Government. The complexity of operating a military airfield that extends into the sea on the western side and which takes aircraft into the eastern side, or the western side, and is run by the MOD, but is operated daily as a civilian terminal, is huge. Now, if the hon. Gentleman thinks that  
525 he can get up and simply put it strenuously that the Government should be putting more pressure on the MOD, and he thinks that that is useful for the airlines, for the MOD, for the Government of Gibraltar, for Gibraltar's tourist industry, he is much less deserving of being given the opportunity to be in charge of Gibraltar's affairs than I might otherwise have thought and I already thought.

530 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, we have gone from commercial airlines to bananas, and I attribute the bananas fruit to him, because the Hon. Gentleman seems to have gone bananas. This is something that needs to be addressed, and the sooner it is addressed, the better, and it is his

and his Government's political responsibility to ensure that things like this do not happen again. However, look, if the Hon. Chief Minister has not come well prepared and well briefed to deal with this issue that is a matter for him.

By way of a question, and I predicate this question on this information that we have been given direct from the horse's mouth, we are told that these are pre-planned maintenance works, which occur on a three-yearly maintenance basis. Therefore, that must beg the obvious question. In fact, there are two.

Why on earth does the Government not know this and have this information and intelligence to hand? And two, why is it that they do not put proper and greater efforts to ensure that these things are done in a pre-planned way so that the commercial airlines can be warned about this in advance and not have to make eleventh-hour changes, which has an impact not just directly on passengers, but also more nefariously and potentially more dangerously to our sustainability as an economy? Does he not appreciate that, as the Minister responsible for finance, for goodness sakes?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, I am sure his fan will tell him that he has done very well today, just as he used to tell me. However, really, it is really quite remarkable that this community is paying for that sort of question. The Hon. Gentleman has managed to contradict himself during the course of asking his question on a number of occasions.

Let me point out why. He says that he has it from the horse's mouth. Well, I put it to him, Madam Speaker that black beauty also spoke to us.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, black beauty told us months before the radar was going to be maintained that it was going to be maintained. Black beauty told the airlines. The airlines, Madam Speaker, told their customers.

And so all of the things that he has said that we should have known, we knew because black beauty told us, Madam Speaker, just like it told the airlines who he said should have known, so that they could have planned, except that the airlines planned and told their clients. That is what I told him in my first answer, Madam Speaker, before referring him to the bananas that seem to be what inform his questioning.

However, Madam Speaker, if I had got up and said the contradictory things that he has said in his question, I would, having had the opportunity to reflect upon such a convoluted, dog-eating-its-own-tail question, later get up and apologise to the public for being such a waste of their money. Madam Speaker, what a disrespectful response from the Hon. Chief Minister.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** What a usual below-the-belt response from the Hon. Chief Minister, where the Hon. Chief Minister gets personal but that is a matter for him and as I always say, it is up to him and his conscience but let me ask him this.

The Hon. Chief Minister and he cannot get away with, well, that is for the airlines to answer, and it is not for me to answer. He has said, the Chief Minister has said, that he knows, on authority, he has information, he says, that the airlines told their passengers that this was going to happen. Does he not appreciate that that may be accurate to one extent, but it doesn't deal with the point that I made, is that they did tell their passengers at the eleventh hour, once these things had been booked, that this matter has featured in the press, where we have had interviews of passengers complaining about the effects it is going to have on the Gibraltar economy, how bad an effect it is going to have on our reputation. Does he not understand, and I ask him this, does he not understand that the information was passed on to customers and to clients at the eleventh hour, which then caused a disruption, which is precisely what we need as a community to stop from happening ever again, because if it is not this, it is phone lines to Sevilla, it is always something.



**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, well, the MOD. know that they have a friend in him. Remarkable. The Hon. Gentleman's style, Madam Speaker, seems to be that he can come here and punch as much as he likes, but whenever a fist flies back in his direction, it is always aimed below his belt.

*Angelito*, Madam Speaker. *Pobrecito* Madam Speaker, *pobrecito*. I have no doubt, Madam Speaker, that his fan will tell him that he is right. I have no doubt about that, and he should have that comfort, no doubt, tonight.

Madam Speaker, of course it is down to the conscience of the individual churchgoer to decide how it is that they should run their parliamentary life as much as their personal life. In the way that I have run my parliamentary life, I have enjoyed the support of the whole of this community sufficiently to be able to pip him to this post repeatedly on four occasions. Well, sorry, not on four occasions.

He bottled it once. I think on three. For that reason, perhaps I have a better relationship with the M.O.D. and for that reason, Madam Speaker, Black Beauty, to ascribe to the MOD the nomenclature that he has chosen of the horse that spoke because it can only have been the MOD if you had it from the horse's mouth and there was only one entity doing maintenance for the radar, it must have been the MOD, unless he is trying to lead us up a garden path.

I have it from the MOD that they informed the airlines. The airlines have accepted that they were informed by the MOD The airlines then informed their customers. Who is he criticising, Madam Speaker?

The airlines for when they told their customers. Therefore, Madam Speaker, perhaps at the end of this torturous road, what there is a criticism by Mr. Bossino of the airlines because they informed their customers late. By the way, operational changes are nothing new.

I have booked a summer holiday with my children. No sooner had I booked it, I had a notification that actually our departure time has changed for one of the legs of one of the flights. In good time and quite inconsequentially.

However, if hon. Members look at the terms and conditions of carriage that you sign up to when you buy an airline ticket, the hon. Gentleman is a lawyer, he understands that he is entering into a contract for carriage under the Chicago Convention when he buys a ticket to fly on an airline. The airline tells you that they can tell you at any time that the conditions might change. Therefore, when the airlines chose to tell their customers, may not be down to Black Beauty and it is certainly not down to us.

So, perhaps, Madam Speaker, on reflection, but again, it is a matter very much for the conscience of the individual churchgoer, he might wish to think that he's got this line of questioning completely wrong. Madam Speaker, he should have no doubts. His fan will tell him he was right.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q596/2025**  
**GibDock –**  
**Service to aircraft carriers**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 596, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, has Government discussed with GibDock its plans to provide services to aircraft carriers and the various economic and other implications of the same?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, yes, ma'am.

635 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Sorry, I thought there was going to be more trouble after that. So, can I ask, then, the Chief Minister, can he give us a bit more detail about the discussions that have been had with GibDock? Some of it, some of the plans, obviously, are in the public domain because there have been stories.

640 Indeed, the UK, one of the UK Government Ministers has been quoted in the press about this. Can I ask the Chief Minister, can he give us a bit more detail about those discussions and has there been discussions between the Government and the UK Government in respect of this matter?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, yes, GibDock has delivered a presentation to the Government on its future plans and we have discussed those also with the Ministry of Defence.

645 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Apart from receiving the presentation, did part of the presentation refer to possible economic consequences, in other words, benefits that might be derived from the project? In addition, did the presentation contain also material in respect of possible impact on the residential environment and if not, to that extent, has the Government considered the possible environmental impact or other impact of the development of the proposed project?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes to all, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see and do I take it from the Chief Minister's rather contained answers, which is not his normal style, sometimes his style is to give brief answers but then to be quite explanatory in following detail, but do I take it from his reduced answers that they are in very early discussions on these matters and that there might be developments in respect of those matters in coming months?

660 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I cannot win. When I am staccato, they do not like staccato. When I extend myself, they do not like that, I extend.

Either I waffle or I am too short. I mean, it is a good thing I was never trying to convince them to vote for me, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Hon. Gentleman is talking about a project, which belongs to a third party.

665 They have spoken to us about it. We have spoken to the MOD about it. They have not yet done anything about it.

Many of the things that the hon. Gentleman is talking about would be in the process of that third party delivering its project if it wishes to do so. There are criteria. This matter would have to go to the DPC.

670 There would have to be extensive consultation. The consultation would include environmental factors in the area. They would include more general environmental factors.

They would, of course, include very technical factors and consultation with the MOD at a technical level, not just at an economic level. There would be economic benefits. There would be other economic issues that would arise.

675 Madam Speaker, this is an area where it is fraught with issues in the detail, but those details are not yet engaged. The Government is alive to those details. We have raised some of those issues of detail with both the Ministry of Defence and with GibDock, but until the third party, whose project this is, takes the step forward, other than just to say that they would like to, it is really quite inappropriate for the Government to answer questions on it because this is not a Government project.

680 The Government is not answerable for what GibDock might seek to do and that is simply why I am being a little more staccato.

685 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, of course, the Government is not answerable for GibDock. It is  
answerable for its, to the extent of its discussions with GibDock, which is really what my original  
question was about and I appreciate that, the Chief Minister's explanation that of course, if  
GibDock were to proceed, there are all sorts of planning issues and at that point you'd have to  
consider environmental impact and residential impact, indeed security issues, etc., etc. but can I  
ask him this? To the extent of the current holding of GibDock, of lease or any agreement with  
690 Government, etc., does the proposed project, beyond the presentation it is made to the  
Government for information or for other reasons, does it require for it to happen a renegotiation  
with the Government of any aspect of its current status, its current agreement?

695 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker that is a question on which the Government is taking  
legal advice and so I would not like to be drawn at this stage.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

700 **Q597/2025**

**Waste collection –  
Reduction of personnel**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 597, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

705 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, is it simply a reduction of personnel that would account  
for the Government's expected savings of up to £900,000 in waste collection services or is it  
something else and if so what?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

710 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** No, Madam, the expected savings are not solely due to a  
reduction in personnel. The savings stem from a broader streamlining of the waste collection  
service under a new collective agreement.

This agreement has modernised operations by removing outdated processes and working  
practises, which has allowed for a reduction in personnel and a significant cut in overtime  
715 payments. Additionally, operational changes such as the adjustment of waste collection routes  
and timings, including the removal of the dedicated cardboard collection route and the mid-  
afternoon collection run are also contributing to the cost reductions. The cost savings, as  
calculated by the Department of the Environment on 26 March 2025, are circa £685,000.

720 These savings are based on the removal of covers for vacant posts, which are no longer  
required due to the reduction in complement, as well as the removal of the cardboard collection  
and mid-afternoon collection runs. The removal of the mid-afternoon collection run will also be  
closely monitored to determine whether this will need to be reintroduced, albeit with different  
conditions. The savings do not arise slowly or even primarily from a reduction in headcount.

725 They are the product of a comprehensive, carefully negotiated agreement between the  
Government, Unite the Union and Gibraltar Industrial Cleaners.

730 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** The press release that the Government issued makes clear that there is  
going to be a reduction in ten posts. I get from what the Chief Minister has just said that the  
savings are not just about that, not just the reduction of ten posts, it is about the reduction in  
overtime, but also he has been keen to stress a modernisation of practises and a streamlining, he  
said, of services. In fact, one of the things that is changing and in that context perhaps I ask him  
this, one of the things that is changing, and I believe because it is obvious from the press release,

that there are new collection times that will shift from to 8pm for the first round and 11pm for the second round, replacing the previous early morning start.

735 Is the Government satisfied, cost savings aside that that is the best way forward in terms of the service provided to the public to remove the early morning collection, especially in a period of summer, and then have two collections very close to each other in the evening?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Very much so, Madam Speaker, especially in the period of summer, 740 because this will mean that waste will not fester overnight in the heat. Most people put out their waste in the evening or late at night, but usually no later than about 11 o'clock. I mean, the run, when we say 11 o'clock, it does not start and finish at 11 o'clock.

It will start at 11 o'clock and it will go through. This is actually, we think, a much better way of doing it, based on the advice that we have from the people who are professionals in the field, both 745 in GIC and in the Department, who believe that this was a better thing to do. Indeed, it is not a secret; I am delighted to see future generations of politicians with us at last, Madam Speaker.

Let us not put them off, Madam Speaker, quite right. There is unanimity across the floor. We are told this is a better way to do things, and I can understand why, Madam Speaker, because I am often awake when the truck comes at the early time of the morning, but not everyone is, 750 Madam Speaker, and it is disruptive to some in the mornings.

Is there a perfect mechanism? Well, Madam Speaker, given, perhaps, some topical calls for a referendum, if you had a referendum about what time we each think our waste should be collected, it might be different. Some of us might say, well, we have all usually finished dinner by 8.30; we have put the rubbish out by 9.00, delighted if you could take it by 9.25 and others might 755 say, 9.25? We have not even sat down for dinner at 9.25. Please do not come and collect my rubbish until quarter to 11 and in summer, do not bother turning up before midnight. Look, Madam Speaker, this is about what is right in this community.

This community is very Anglo-Saxon in its approach, despite the fact that we live in the Mediterranean, with some allowances for how we eat compared to how others might eat in 760 Bournemouth or in Bilbao. Therefore, the experts tell us, the best system is this system. The thing that I was going to tell the Hon. Gentleman, before I was distracted by so much youth arriving, is that we in the department led by the hon. Member Prof. Cortes have long been seeking to negotiate these arrangements.

In addition, we have not been able to do so. So we are very satisfied indeed with the 765 cooperation that we have had from GIC and from Unite the Union, because we have been seeking to achieve this new timetable for some time.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Yes, Madam Speaker. I think the problem with the analysis and obviously they have the benefit of having taken the official's advice and we have not. However, seeing on 770 this side, given that the explanation is about modernisation and streamlining, it just occurs to us on this side of the House, when you consider all that in the round, that in effect what we are saying is we are not going to pick up rubbish for 21 hours. While there may be certain people who follow that kind of more Germanic or Anglo-Saxon view of life in terms of putting out rubbish, the reality is that it leaves a very big chunk of the day where there is no rubbish collection and while of course 775 it is annoying for there to be the noisy truck in the morning, perhaps a shift in times might have made that better from that perspective. Perhaps I imagine that the answer is that there must be flexibility in the agreement that has been negotiated to review those arrangements but because my question was about savings, can I just ask him, he mentioned in his answer, in his original answer, that apart from the reduction on posts and the streamlining, there will be a reduction of 780 overtime.

Can you give us an indication of the kind of savings that are being forecast on overtime?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, let me start where he started before I go to the element of supplementary that he's put because the way that he's put it, he has suggested that there's going to be a greater interval now between the collection of rubbish than there is today and that is not the case, Madam Speaker.

All that has happened is that we are changing when the interval occurs. So instead of occurring from 5 in the morning to 5 in the morning, a 24-hour interval, exactly the thing that he has said is the problem, it is now going to be from 11pm to 11pm. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I do not see how he can alight upon that being an issue.

Especially if he were to, give me a moment to explain to him how this has worked. Something, which I am sure, he would have been aware of. In the evenings, the practise was that one or two, one person from each of the runs would go around pulling out the rubbish between 8 and 11, and bringing all of the large bins out into the public highway.

So that at the time of the collection, at five in the morning, it would be easier and less disruptive, because at five in the morning it makes a lot more noise to open the doors, etc., etc., than it might otherwise have been. Therefore, I do not understand what it is that the Hon. Gentleman does not like about this system because now, the same thing will happen between eight and eleven o'clock at night, except that we will take the rubbish instead of leaving it on the highway.

So this is more hygienic, it is more environmentally in keeping with what we want to see, and as the Hon. Gentleman said, as he carefully, as usual, quite unlike others, prefaced his question, he has not had the benefit of having experts' advice. We have. And so with the benefit of the experts' advice, it would be the same experts that would be advising him if he had pipped us to the post at the last Election, and assuming that all of us think that we have experts for good reason, and we don't take the gavis approach, that we are sick of experts, and that they're experts who know more than us, but a mere inconvenience, then, Madam Speaker, he would be defending this position, if he had achieved it, as we have achieved it, after many years of seeking to negotiate it. Madam Speaker, on overtime, I do not have the exact figure, but it would be the difference between 685 and 900.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

#### Q598/2025

#### New Victoria Stadium –

#### Extent of any funding, contribution, financial assistance or loan

**Acting Clerk:** Question 598, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, can the Government confirm the extent of any funding, contribution, financial assistance or loan made to date towards the new Victoria Stadium development project by the Government directly or indirectly or any Government-owned company or the Savings Bank and to whom (which entity), by whom (which entity) and in what amount and on what terms?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, as per answer to Question 361 of 2024, his Majesty's Government is assisting Stadium Developments Limited in respect of management services, design and construction of the new stadium, and the basis that we will be repaid any such amount advanced in full to date an amount of £2,040,005.12 has been advanced for costs in this regard and repayment is anticipated before the stadium is built.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, before the stadium is built or before the stadium is commenced?

835 **Hon. Chief Minister:** I am told, Madam Speaker, built.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, perhaps the Chief Minister can check that, because in answer to Question 221 of 2024, he said, in answer to a question from me, that this was use of the taxpayers' money for the purposes of advancing, but to be repaid with interest. So by the time  
840 that the building of the stadium starts, we will have been repaid in full and with interest. So perhaps he can, if he does not mind, can check that and then confirm.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I think it would probably be inconvenient for both of us that I have to go away and check it. What I can tell him is that I do not believe there is any attempt  
845 to change the tense of the answer and that would probably be sufficient for Hansard. What was said is what is being said, although perhaps a different word has been chosen.

There has been no change in the terms and the terms were properly set out in the previous answer.

850 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** All due respect, start and end is not a tense. It is a moment in history. Does he not agree?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, because I do not think that the word built means finished building. It says built. That is why I am giving him the greater clarity that I thought he was  
855 seeking by saying that I am sticking to the terms of the original answer, which were the ones that referred to the agreement with Gibraltar Stadium Developments Limited or Stadium Developments Limited.

Therefore, he has the benefit of that certainty, Madam Speaker, although moments in history entertained us earlier when I was answering questions from Mr. Origo.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

#### Q599/2025

#### Eastside project / reclamation –

#### Complaint by environmentalists laid before the Spanish court

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 599, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Is the Government monitoring the progress of the complaint laid before the Spanish court (in La Linea) by a Spanish environmental organisation in relation to the Eastside  
870 project and/or reclamation?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, yes, ma'am.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** ...And monitoring it informally or doing so formally or in discussions with the developer?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, I do not know what it is that the hon. Gentleman means when he says whether we are doing so formally or informally. As a Government, I suppose everything we do is formally done. It is not being done informally.

It is not being done on the quiet. It is being done on the basis that we need to know what is happening there. Is he asking me in legal terms whether we are intervening in the proceedings?

The answer is we are not intervening in proceedings in a foreign court that purport to exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction, which we do not recognise. That is for sure... and the tail end of his question was whether we were doing so with the developer.

We are there, I could say, informally doing it with the developer in the sense that the developer and we have not got a contract to do this but, of course, we are working together with the developer because we are giving the lease for them to be able to develop and we are monitoring together that there should not be any adverse consequence in their ability to enjoy peaceful enjoyment and development of the land properly and legally ceded by His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar in respect of that area. Which, by the way, is the area, which they seem to be not in favour of us developing, given the earlier line of question.

Although I have no doubt that, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition will agree with me that we should defend Gibraltar's right to develop in that area, whether or not British peers join us in support of that.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Whether British peers or British groyne join us in that effort. He certainly can have our assurance that it is common ground between us that there is no jurisdiction of Spain in those waters or any attempt to develop that area which we believe to be sovereign Gibraltar territory. What I was asking when I said informally, and formally, what I really meant was, is he reading it in the columns of El País or are they going further and taking formal legal advice without intervening, are they taking formal legal advice in Spain in respect of the remit of that investigation and in any event is he aware whether the developer is being asked to attend the Spanish court?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, I am not one to fall for the trap of saying that you should never believe anything that you read in the newspapers in terms of anything because there are some things that you read in the newspapers which are true. Sometimes, for example, the date... but not always.

El País is one of the better newspapers in the world, one of the more reliable sources of information in Spain. Sometimes on Gibraltar, their views are contrary to ours when it comes to views but in respect of information, it is not fair to say that they are always wrong. In any event, the Government would not rely just on what it reads in the press in these matters.

The reliable press or the unreliable press which even though unreliable sometimes gives one useful tips a little like a clock or a blogger that is wrong most of the time but is right at least twice a day for example but Madam Speaker, of course the Government is diligently pursuing understanding all of the legal issues that could arise but in particular not just in Spanish law, in public international law which is what really matters here and the contest of jurisdictions that could ensue. A contest of jurisdictions, Madam Speaker, that I am sure he like I would relish because he will recall as I recall that it was the Spanish who refused to take the matter of Gibraltar's waters to the international tribunal for the law of the sea when it was offered by the United Kingdom.

It is the Spanish that have run scared of a determination by an independent international tribunal of the issue of jurisdiction in the waters and it is the Spanish that might end up putting it there if they were to seek to do something in their national courts that would make the matter justiciable in international fora either at the suit of an individual, perhaps a developer for example, that might find its rights somehow unfairly impaired or at the suit of a Government in some other guise, Madam Speaker, perhaps in terms of seeking an advisory opinion which doesn't require the other side to agree.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q600/2025**  
**UK GHIC style card –**  
**Extending the service to Gibraltarians/residents**

935 **Acting Clerk:** Question 600, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, has there been any progress in the possibility of extending a UK GHIC style card scheme to Gibraltarians and residents of Gibraltar so that healthcare in the EEA can be accessed if needed?

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**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, yes, the Government continues discussions with the United Kingdom on the possibility of extending a UK GHIC style card system to Gibraltar.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So let me understand that because I suppose progress can be made in one of two ways. They are not exclusively of each other. It can be made perhaps by an extension of a UK GHIC scheme in talks with the UK, as the Chief Minister has now alluded on in his original answer, by perhaps piggybacking on that scheme, extending it to the people of Gibraltar residents or there can be access to healthcare through, I suppose, an agreement with the EU.

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Are both options being considered or is it just the option of a discussion with the UK in respect of perhaps the extension of that scheme to Gibraltar?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, quite unlike Members opposite when I was in Opposition, I have never criticised them for being anything other than excellent professionals when they are exercising their professions. The Hon. Gentleman is a lawyer, he is a masterful cross-examiner and I am not going to fall for the trap that that question sets because if I answer in the way that he has suggested, I will be opening a door, ajar into one of the things that if I were to answer in one way might disclose something that might be at the negotiating table in respect of the treaty negotiation.

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Something which we will come to in a moment in the next question, but that I have been very careful not to do in any public statements that I have made and therefore the Hon. Gentleman will allow me to simply refer him to the answer I gave him a few moments ago which was about one particular strand of the two that he offers me and I was very circumspect and clear in the way that I answered.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Well, I do not think it was a closed door. I thought the door was at least a bit ajar because I have asked the Chief Minister about this before and he has danced around it but implied that he will not answer because it is related to the discussions that are being had. Therefore, I thought rather than it being firmly shut in my face under lock and key, there was at least a glimpse of light coming through the little crack of the open door that at least he would confirm that it might be part of the discussions with the EU. Does he resist even that question?

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I would ask him to leave my crack alone and to know that those of us who might remember the late 80s will know that I am a very bad dad dancer and he should not be asking me to do any dancing on this issue.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.



**Q601/2025**

**Treaty with the EU for Gibraltar –  
State of negotiations**

980 **Acting Clerk:** Question 601, The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, yes, my hon. Colleague says this is the classic question. Will the Chief Minister update the House on the state of negotiations between the EU and UK aimed at concluding a Treaty for a new relationship with the EU for Gibraltar?

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**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I do not know whether Mr. Bossino was here here-ing the question or the subject, but one never knows with him. Madam Speaker, as I said earlier this week, we are now excruciatingly close to securing a treaty between the UK and the EU on Gibraltar. Indeed, Madam Speaker, we have been 99.9% of the way there since mid-2023. That is not just my assessment. It is echoed by Antonio Costa, Kier Starmer, Jose Manuel Albares and Maroš Šefčovič, who all recognise we are very close to agreement. The meeting in Madrid earlier this month, with all parties present, delivered progress on the handful of issues still outstanding.

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Work continues daily to close those final gaps but Madam Speaker, let me be very clear, in case I have not been clear enough so far. No deal will be done that compromises our sovereignty.

Not now, not ever and if that means excruciating a little longer to get it absolutely right, then so be it, because getting it right for Gibraltar is what matters most.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Well, Madam Speaker, not everyone has been as excruciatingly close as the Chief Minister has. He mentioned a rattle of a number of names, including Antonio Costa, but Antonio Costa certainly wasn't 99.99% of the way there two years ago, because he took a journey of 0 to 100 miles in the space of one second in the press conference the other day from being very far to very close but that on an aside, can I ask you that whether there has been a lot of moved music in the last few days, not just about the EU-UK recalibration, but also about the possibility of an agreement.

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There have been statements by the foreign Minister in Spain, the British foreign Minister, and all that moved music is positive, of course but can he give us a sense of how long he thinks that these discussions need to go on for? More precisely, can I ask him, does he expect when the moment comes, and we hope the moment does come, that there will be an announcement that entails the publication of the treaty text, or will it be a political declaration with the treaty text to come?

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1015 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, can I start by just seeking to confirm that it was your view that we should be asked one supplementary at a time? Because that is a double header.

**Madam Speaker:** It was my view, it is my view, but I do not want to stop the flow. That was two supplementaries, but they will count as two supplementaries.

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Not in terms of counting, but two substantive issues, and I may therefore need to extend myself a little because they are two substantive issues. First of all, Madam Speaker, in relation to the first, I have told the Hon. Gentleman repeatedly in this House, it would not be in the interests of Gibraltar for us to say, well it is all going to be finished by X date, until we know that we can finish by X date because if I say it will be done by this date, or it has to be done by this date, and it cannot be done by this date, then my own statements would become the stranglehold around Gibraltar's lead negotiator.

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Now, I know that they would like to see a stranglehold around Gibraltar's lead negotiator, but they would not like to see it around Gibraltar and so, Madam Speaker, therefore, that is why I have always resisted setting a deadline that would be used against us all and I think that they agree with that.

In other words, although I think they wish the demise of Fabian Picardo, the politician, I don't think they wish to see the demise of Gibraltar's opportunities to land a safe and secure and beneficial deal, simply because it happened to be Fabian Picardo, the politician, that was Elected by the people instead of them to be the one leading Gibraltar's cause. Therefore, tortuous though that is, and torture me though they might wish to, I am not going to fall into the trap of making a mistake for Gibraltar. Which I am reminded by the Hon. Mr Bossino, as ever in biblical terms, is the principle of self-mortification, Madam Speaker. As one of the many other sacraments that he would like to remind us of today.

The other point, Madam Speaker, that the Hon. Gentleman raises, is whether the conclusions when announced will be announced as one, that is to say, we have reached an agreement, this is what the agreement is about, and this is how it is documented in the terms of an international treaty, because that's what an agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union would be. It would be an international treaty.

Although, Madam Speaker, if I can just as an aside, before I answer his question, remind the House that this is not a treaty like Utrecht is a treaty. The reason I say that does not arise from anything the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has said, but because in many publications there is the thought that what is, being negotiated is a treaty about the status of Gibraltar. When status is referred to, or indeed when somebody refers to the issue of Gibraltar, the immediate thing that springs to the international mind is something to do with the sovereignty of Gibraltar.

Nothing could be further from the negotiating table. What we are talking about, really, is a trade deal and this is why I think it is important to express it in this way.

Although it is a treaty because trade deals, indeed deals, that is to say agreements between states are treaties when they are reduced to writing and signed. This is not a treaty like Utrecht. This is not about the sovereignty of Gibraltar.

This is about how goods can get from north of the border to Gibraltar, and how goods that are south of the border can get back to north of the border, who can buy them, and what rates of taxation indirectly apply to them. We already have them. We call them import duties.

They used to be 16%, 12%. Many of them are now 6% or 3%. In addition, whether those duties change.

And on immigration, how you create a common immigration zone between Gibraltar and the Schengen area, so you haven't got to show your passport when you cross the frontier between Gibraltar and Spain, which is in effect the frontier between Gibraltar and the Schengen area, and how you would therefore be able to go from Europa Point to Rovaniemi in the Arctic Circle, without having to show your passport.

That is what we are talking about. It is a treaty that we are negotiating, but it is not a replacement to the Treaty of Utrecht, which is the treaty on sovereignty in respect of Gibraltar, and deals with the status of Gibraltar, and is a session in perpetuity, Madam Speaker. Therefore, when people think about a new treaty, it is not a new treaty on those issues.

It is a treaty only on the issues of goods and immigration and it is important that we remind people of that, Madam Speaker. That is the sound of my morning alarm, Madam Speaker.

It strikes fear in me. I feel I have woken up really late today. Madam Speaker, the question the Hon. Gentleman put was when we announce it, do we publish the treaty, or do we say we have reached an agreement the treaty to follow?

Madam Speaker, I will refer the Hon. Gentleman to the answer I've given him some time before, which is that even that at the moment is not something that I would wish to venture an opinion on. There are different possibilities, there are different periods in time that might apply to one text versus another text, but eventually, a treaty does have to be published, whether that is on the day that we think that we have reached the agreement on what is in the treaty, but there

1080 might be issues. In the context of treaties involving the European Union, Madam Speaker, the  
European Union is reticent on publication of a treaty if that treaty text has not already been  
subjected to what they call the legal scrub, the legal translator's scrub, and it is been translated  
1085 into the 20-odd languages of the EU and checked in each of those languages because the EU  
doesn't publish in English or in Spanish or in French, it publishes in all of the languages. So Madam  
Speaker, the Hon. Gentleman will understand that that is the reason behind my inability to give  
him a direct answer at this stage, but I shall at some stage, I believe soon, be able to provide him  
a clearer answer.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I mean, I get that, I understand that, but of course I have asked this a few  
1090 times before, and as the months go by, and because the Chief Minister had indicated to me before  
that in parallel with the discussions to unblock the principles, they were also drafting the text, I  
thought it might have arrived at a point where, subject to unblocking of the principles, the treaty  
text was sort of agreed.

His indication now is that I think we are still disconnected on those moments, but he can  
1095 confirm. I certainly understand the point he's made about the requirement to go through all the  
legal drafting and the translation into all the various community European Union languages, but  
is it that the delay to the publication of the treaty would be related solely to that issue, or does he  
consider that there would be some bargaining on text, because he will appreciate, I am sure, that  
everyone would, a lot of people would welcome the final conclusion and a political declaration,  
1100 but what people will really welcome is the clarity of the text, because that's when businesses can  
consider the text and its implications. So, can I ask him at this level whether he is actively briefing  
the business community on the travelling text and the implications to them of these issues?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Gentleman, again, as one of the leading King's  
1105 Council in Gibraltar, again, I don't denigrate them like they used to denigrate me, just because  
they're in Opposition, will no doubt not have asked a question he doesn't know the answer to,  
and therefore he will know, because he will have enough people in the business representative  
organisations, indeed some of them in his own law firm, who will know that they have been  
briefed by the Government. Madam Speaker, the issue on the text is not that we are for some  
1110 reason not continuing where possible to negotiate principles, which sometimes are translatable  
immediately into text of treaty. It is that for the EU, even if you were to do that, just, I mean,  
conceptually, I am not opening another crack into the negotiation, but conceptually, if you  
negotiate with the EU a treaty, and you negotiate it in Italian, the text negotiated in Italian is not  
going to be published by the EU once it is agreed in Italian until it is translated into the twenty-  
1115 odd other languages of the community.

I am not going to say twenty-seven because it probably isn't twenty-seven and therefore  
Madam Speaker, it is not that we are failing to continue the process of seeking to have as much  
text agreed as possible, it is that even if all the texts were agreed on the day that we were to make  
the announcement, the full political agreement has been reached on the treaty, it is very unlikely  
1120 that the EU would be comfortable in agreeing to it publishing or anybody else publishing a treaty  
text at that stage until it has been circulated in all of the scrubbed languages of the EU to all of the  
member states for them to consider and probably having to go through one of the processes, the  
Co-RIPA process, etc., etc. So Madam Speaker, I hope the Hon. Gentleman understands that this  
is not any failure on the part of the Government to want to have an agreed text that is, in my view,  
1125 now all of the potentially devil-in-detail issues are clear for treaty text purposes is what I am saying  
because as we have often said for Gibraltar, this could be an issue and let's be very clear Madam  
Speaker, there are devils in the detail. This is a negotiation.

This is a negotiation, Gibraltar is not the world's only superpower, and we have not gone to  
Brussels to negotiate the European Union's surrender to the people of the Rock. People should  
1130 not believe Rumours to the contrary.

**Madam Speaker:** I think that concludes the questions for the Hon. Chief Minister.

**Acting Clerk:** Suspension of standing orders. The Hon. the Chief Minister.

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I now beg to move under Standing Order 7(3) to suspend Standing Order 7(1) in order to proceed with the Government 's statement.

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour? (**Members:** Aye) Those against? Carried.

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has just announced that the United Kingdom has entered into a treaty with Mauritius for the exchange of the sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago. The United Kingdom, Madam Speaker, has made the right decision on the Chagos Islands.

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This is a decision that protects national security whilst respecting international law. For all of the reasons that the Hon. Sir Joe Bossano, the Father of the House, has set out so eloquently in Didili in Timor-Leste this afternoon at the seminar of the United Nations Special Committee of 24, the read-across to Gibraltar is positive and is particularly relevant in the defence of British sovereignty over the whole of the territory and the British territorial waters around the Rock.

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I am very clear that there is no aspect of this decision, the advisory opinion or the treaty being entered into, which has any negative read-across to Gibraltar. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Madam Speaker, Prime Minister Starmer, Foreign Secretary Lamy and Minister Doughty enjoy my Government 's full support in the implementation of this decision and I know that we enjoy their full support in the defence of full British sovereignty in respect of the whole of Gibraltar and its waters.

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I commend this statement to the House.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any questions for the purposes of clarification? The Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we note the statement that the Chief Minister has made and of course we share the position that he concluded on about the strength of the position on sovereignty of Gibraltar and he knows he always has our support on issues which go to the sovereignty of Gibraltar and of course we welcome any support and statements that have been made recently by the British Government in respect of our sovereignty and status, both in the context of discussions with the EU and outside the context of discussions in the EU, whether the statements are made in the UN or not.

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Can I just ask him in relation to the impact that he says that they have considered the advisory opinion and the agreement and whether it has any impact in respect of our international law rights and so on. When he says that, does he mean that they have considered it on a political level or does he mean that they have taken legal advice on it?

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well Madam Speaker, I am grateful for his commitment to support the Government in relation to all matters, which relate to the sovereignty of Gibraltar. It could not be otherwise. Successive Governments and Oppositions have always been together on this subject, except of course for the short period in which the GSD supported the Brussels process contrary to the GSLP Government of 1988 to 1996.

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Madam Speaker, we have both politically and legally analysed the advisory opinion in respect of the Chagos Islands. The advisory opinion is particularly helpful to Gibraltar and the Hon. Gentleman I am sure will have done his own legal and political analysis. But essentially so that people understand it Madam Speaker, what the advisory opinion says, what the International Court of Justice has said in its advisory opinion is that when you put as an administering power a colonial territory on the list of non-self-governing territories in the United Nations at the UN, you

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1185 must put it as administered on the day that you put the territory on the list and that territorial  
unit cannot be subject to division in the process of decolonisation. What that does Madam  
Speaker, in the context of Gibraltar is to preserve now as a result of international jurisprudence,  
the unit of Gibraltar in international law as we have all long argued it should be and others have  
argued it should not.

1190 This goes to the question of the plural in the Brussels process, the issues of sovereignty versus  
the issue of sovereignty where claimants have argued that they have a claim to the isthmus in  
respect of Gibraltar to the waters in respect of Gibraltar and indeed to the rest of Gibraltar in  
different degrees of legitimacy. So although we say they have no legitimacy whatsoever in any  
respect the argument is that Gibraltar from the base of the rock was ceded by treaty and Spain  
1195 would like it back, that Gibraltar's waters were never ceded and therefore in Spain's eyes they  
remain Spanish and that the isthmus was never ceded, it was usurped and should be handed back  
immediately that is the Spanish position, there is no secret there.

What the international advisory opinion does is not just take our position which has been  
consistently across the floor of the House and across many generations, that the whole of the  
territory of Gibraltar from where the frontier is today with Spain, out into the international  
1200 dividing line for the strait on the east side into the centre of the bay of Gibraltar and three miles  
out as provided for in the UNCLOS convention on the eastern side, the whole of Gibraltar is one  
unit and is subject to decolonisation that has been our position. That is now the position of the  
international court of justice in the advisory opinion because what it said is that the Chagos  
archipelago could not be cleaved off from Mauritius and have Mauritius put on the list and not  
1205 Chagos which was the position and then Mauritius decolonised by the UN special committee  
under the auspices of the UN special committee but not the Chagos archipelago.

That the whole of that area which was one British administrative region must have been put  
together must be deemed to have been put together and must be decolonised together that  
therefore, Madam Speaker, drives a coach and horses through any potential legal argument forget  
1210 the moral argument that we have but any legal argument that others might have pretended to  
have that the isthmus could somehow be seen as divisible from Gibraltar in international law  
indeed that its waters could be seen as divisible from Gibraltar in international law because of the  
UNCLOS was done in 82 at the time that we were put on the list, the United Kingdom was already  
claiming waters around Gibraltar on the basis of the older principles of the cannon shot rule which  
1215 gave rise to the three mile limit and so Madam Speaker this is a very, very, very welcome decision  
of the court which the United Kingdom is implementing now for national security reasons but  
which we from Gibraltar are particularly comfortable with and we think enhances and further  
protects in international law the positions that we have defended for generations and  
demonstrates that we have been right since Sir Joshua first appeared at the Committee of 24 in  
1220 New York to take the positions that we have taken that we have all consistently taken and I have  
no doubt we shall all for many generations continue to take.

**Madam Speaker:** Any other questions? All right, we will continue with the order paper.

HOUSING AND THE UNIVERSITY OF GIBRALTAR

Q529/2025

Halfway house –

Development of project; Establishment of working group; Eligibility criteria

1235

**Acting Clerk:** Answers to all questions continued. Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University. Question 529, the Hon. A Sanchez.

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**Hon. A Sanchez:** Regarding Bridge House – the halfway house announced earlier this year by the Government as a lifeline for men experiencing separation or divorce – could the Government elaborate on the following:

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- (a) How many official meetings have taken place to discuss the development of this project following the initial meeting that was publicised.
- (b) Whether a working group has been established, and if so, who forms part of it.
- (c) Whether the eligibility criteria for access to Bridge House been agreed and finalised.

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

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**Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, we have had four official meetings of Bridge House. We are still to appoint the official and final working group. The eligibility criteria has not yet been finalised. It will be determined with the advice of the working group.

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**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, grateful for that answer. Would the Hon. Minister be able to elaborate on who is being consulted in relation to the development of the project and the different stakeholders that are taking part in these meetings?

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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, not at this stage because now it is a charity and I do not think we can disclose that at this point.

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**Hon. A Sanchez:** Just by way of clarification, does the Hon. Minister mean that the meetings are taking place with a charity that the discussions are being held with a charity or that the Halfway House is going to be run by a charity?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, Bridge House will be run by a charity and at present, we are taking internal consultations.

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**Hon. A Sanchez:** Grateful, Madam Speaker. Could the Hon. Minister clarify whether this is a newly formed charity that is just being set up specifically for the Halfway House or is this a charity that is already established and the Government is consulting with?

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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, this is a newly formed charity. We must bear in mind one thing that what is important here is that it will not cost the taxpayer a penny and there will be many who will be benefiting from this.

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**Hon. A Sanchez:** Yes, I understand Madam Speaker but we are just trying to get a bit more information in relation to the project. Would the Hon. Minister be able to elaborate as to the name of the charity that she is consulting with or she is not in a position to give this information out?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, as soon as we are ready we will make an announcement.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Hon. Minister elaborate a bit more in relation to this charity? Is it expected somehow to fall under the auspices of the Government? Is there going to be any involvement from the Governing from her side in terms of the structure or the running of it?

Because I appreciate that she is not giving much information and is being rather coy in her replies, but I think my Hon. Friend is being absolutely reasonable in her line of questioning. I think it is only right that the public should know and have a bit more information at this stage as to what type of structure the Hon. Minister is considering in terms of running this new venture.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, I refer the Gentleman to my previous answer.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I ask the Minister which aspects of her previous answer she is referring us to. She has given various answers as a result of four supplementary questions that my Hon. Friend has posed. Which specific answer is she asking me to consider?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** The ones that pertain to the supplementary, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** No, no, no, Madam Speaker. The Hon. Minister simply cannot get away with saying that I am to refer to her answer. I am asking her specifically which answer is she asking the Opposition to consider in response to the question that my Friend and I have posed in terms of the structure of the charity.

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I would have thought it was obvious the part where she told him that she could not tell him any more at this stage.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Given that the Minister made an announcement in respect of this, I think some months ago, in respect of this interesting venture, we will reserve our views in relation to the venture until we get more information. But she was very quick, the Hon. Minister was very quick to make the announcement and to have the photo in the press, which he is very prone to do but at what stage will she be in a position to give us further details?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I confess that Hon. Members really have us on this one. They do always manage to get their picture in the paper sooner than we do and for doing much less than we do. However, as soon as we are able, Madam Speaker, we shall be saying a lot more.

This is a great venture; I commend the Hon. Minister for it. I think she is going to deliver in areas where others have failed to deliver before and she, I know, is dying to be able to say more so we shall soon be able to put the hon. Gentleman out of his obvious misery with more information.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Great, Madam Speaker. As Hon. Ministers opposite tend and are prone to do, they are always very keen, and we get this a lot from the Minister for the Environment, that it will not cost the taxpayer any money but where can she therefore tell us where in this House is the funding going to come from?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, either the hon. Gentleman has not heard properly or he is failing to understand my answer. It is a charity. It is going to be funded by a charity at no cost to the taxpayer.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q530/2025**  
**Queen's Hostel –**  
**Total number of residents**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 530, the Hon. A Sanchez.

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**Hon. A Sanchez:** As of the 1st of May 2025, could the Government provide the total number of residents officially registered as residing at the Queen's Hotel Hostel?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

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**Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, there are 80 residents in the Queen's Hotel as of 1 May 2025.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Apologies, Madam Speaker, just to clarify in case we have misheard. 80 residents.

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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Eight zero, Z-E-R-O.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for that answer and for the clarification because we have heard before in previous discussions in relation to the Queen's Hostel can the Hon. Minister confirm whether all of these 80 residents are residing in the hostel?

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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, no. Although we say that there are 80 registered, we have 61 floaters and 19 who are permanent. By floaters, I mean people who come and go on a monthly basis, etc.

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**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful, Madam Speaker. For the record, would the Hon. Minister be able to outline how this is monitored, how residency in the hostel is monitored and how the Government keeps a record of who is actually residing at the hostel on a daily basis?

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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Well, Madam Speaker, we have a very able security company that makes sure that they are on who comes in and who goes out and they of course monitor how many people are there.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful, Madam Speaker, but could the Hon. Minister perhaps be more specific how is this monitoring done? Is it through CCTV? Is a log kept of individuals?

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Do they have to sign in? Do they have to sign out? Is there a process for this monitoring?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Had the Hon. Lady given me this question prior to this, I would have made sure that I would have had the answer for her. More or less, and maybe I stand to be corrected, I don't want to give false information here. But I do know that there are CCTV cameras and there has been an extension to the reception area, which means that when they come in, they are seen and the gentleman who is there knows who they are now. Therefore, if they do not see someone for a while, they do go and knock on the door to see that they are okay.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** May I ask the Hon. Minister, and, you know, with the greatest respect to her, and we had a lot of this yesterday, I think the question does arise from the answer that the Hon. Lady has given. However, may I ask her this, what criteria does the security company, as she puts it, apply to make the distinction between a floater, as she puts it, and a permanent resident? What criteria does that distinction, how does that distinction arise such that one arrives at a perhaps more attractive figure, may I say, politically for the Hon. Member's opposite, to suggest that of

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the high number of 80 residents officially registered at Queen's Hotel is actually probably a lot less because we are talking about just one under 20.

1385 So what criteria, the question is, what criteria is applied by the security company? Does she know?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** No, Madam Speaker, I do not.

1390 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Well, can I ask the Hon. Minister to find out because I think if the Hon. Minister is going to be providing important statistical information for the House; would she prepare herself better and have, in an anticipatory way, these obvious supplementaries, answers to these obvious supplementaries to hand? So can I ask her to please investigate and provide this information, either by way of a further question by the Opposition, or indeed of my friend to my right in relation to the criteria?

1395 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** No, Madam Speaker, because we will take no such childish admonition from a person who is not empowered to determine whether or not one should have anticipated a particular question as an obvious supplementary simply because the Hon. Gentleman should wish to say that he thinks it was. That is a subjective matter. It is a matter, 1400 Madam Speaker that is up to those who are answering questions, not up to those who are asking questions.

We had this yesterday. We have had it now today. We can have it as many times as hon. Members want but if hon. Members want specific information, specific statistical information, specific factual information, they are actually required to prepare better. They are the ones who 1405 should be putting the questions, which are specific. They are the ones who are coming to this House to waste its time.

Therefore, none of what the Hon. Gentleman has said by way of childish admonition will be accepted by Hon. Members on this side of the House, and neither will I, as Leader of the House and Leader of the Government, ask anyone of this House to try and pretend to get into their minds, 1410 which is not a place where any of us would want to be, to seek to predetermine what they might ask us.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, this is a very adult and mature question, which has been posed. It is not childish by any stretch of the imagination. It is an obvious question, which arises.

1415 Now, can I ask the Hon. Minister opposite? Because of course, if we start to go down the route of asking specific questions on the Order Paper, questions which the Hon. Ministers simply are unable, or their officials are unable to anticipate are going to be legitimate supplementary questions that we can pose, we are going to be here for a whole month. As it is, my friend has filed something like 50 questions to the Government in this session, and Mrs Ladislaus has filed 1420 something like in excess of 70 questions to the Government.

If we all do that, we are going to be here for a very long time but can I ask this, when is it expected that the very large number of 80 official residents, whether floaters or whether permanents, are going to be rehoused in separate accommodation? As I understand it from previous answers, but I may be mistaken, that location is at the Sunrise Hotel in Devil's Tower Road. 1425

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I do not know what it is that the Hon. Gentleman is complaining about. He and all his fellow Members of Parliament stood for Election. When you stand for Election, you know that you might win the Election and become a Minister, or you might 1430 lose the Election and not be Elected at all, or become a Member of the Opposition.

If you become a Member of the Opposition, your job is to ask questions. So why is the Hon. Gentleman pretending there is anything wrong or improper or inappropriate about having to ask 50 questions? They get £35,000 a year to turn up nine or ten times a year and ask a few questions.

1435 They could at least ask questions, Madam Speaker, which are designed to elicit the answers they say they want. That is the reality. In addition, I did not say, as Hansard will show when he goes back, that the question was childish.

I said the admonition was childish. The purported admonition. Because for the third time today I will remind him, Madam Speaker, that he is not Mr Speaker.

1440 He is a Member of the Opposition. He can ask what he likes and we can answer whatever we think is appropriate and he cannot admonish us for answering in a particular way.

We have responsibility for the answers that we give, Madam Speaker. So no, none of that arises. In addition, if he wants that information, he can ask a specific question.

Even if he has to ask 12 or 13 or 71 or 50 questions or 51 questions. Yesterday we had the Hon. Minister for Health in this Parliament on her birthday answering 120 questions. It is her job.

1445 She made absolutely no complaint. How churlish of him to sit there and complain.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

### **Q531/2025**

#### **Queens Hostel –**

#### **Cost and details of repairs**

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 531, the Hon. A Sanchez.

1455 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide a breakdown of the total costs incurred for all repairs and works carried out at the Queen's Hotel Hostel within the last nine months, including a monthly breakdown and details of the nature, description, and type of works or repairs undertaken (including details of costs and works carried out by subcontracted entities)?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

1460 **Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** It would be difficult at this stage to provide a breakdown of the total cost as works are currently being carried out.

Electrical installations and cabling are being carried out and painting, tiling and general repairs are continuing on a daily basis.

1465 The General Repairs are being carried out by J T Security Maintenance Team and the Electrical is being carried out by Badaoui Refurbs.

I am happy to provide a costing of the breakdown as the Hon. Lady wants to once we are finalised.

1470 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister be able to provide the dates when the refurbishments started? We have seen a demonstration recently in relation to Queen's Hostel and one of the concerns that were expressed in the demonstration was a lack of progress in relation to refurbishments and refurbishments not having been carried out. Refurbishments that were promised before the Christmas period.

1475 Would the Hon. Minister be able to provide the dates on which these refurbishments started to be carried out?

1480 **Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, the refurbishment period started a couple of months back but the thing is that it doesn't look as though, they didn't feel, I suppose, that things were happening quick enough. Before you do things, you have to create the mess and then you start clearing up and you start painting and tiling etc. I have been to the Queen's Hostel on various occasions now. In fact, sitting down to have a coffee with one of the gentlemen there, with no

pictures taken by the way and yes, I have found that there has been quite a difference in the maintenance.

1485 **Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful for that Madam Speaker. Some of the issues that we are hearing about are very basic issues like issues with lighting, not enough light bulbs working, cooking hobs not working, not being enough of them for the residents. These are issues that can be resolved quickly and the effects of them can be appreciated quite quickly.

Are these issues still ongoing and if they are, why are they taking so long to be resolved?

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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, those issues are not there anymore. I have personally been there, the hobs are working, the lift does work, and the place is clean, much cleaner than it has been. So, no, those issues have been dealt with.

1495 **Hon. D J Bossino:** While the Hon. Minister has replied to my friend on terms that she will be able to provide the breakdown of the total costs, is she able to provide the House with the estimated costs? Does she have that information with her? Because this is a tax-funded refurbishment, so on that basis, if the works had been given the green light, I would have assumed that an estimate would have been provided which the Hon. Minister would have approved.

1500 So is she able to provide that information across the floor of the House?

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, no, for an obvious reason and I am repeating something that I have repeated on a number of occasions to the Hon. Gentleman and this is why sessions take so long. Not because they ask 50 questions but because they ask 50 questions many times over. The Government will not provide its estimate of costs because if we provide our estimate of costs and it were to be possible to bring it in below that, even though we have received a quote from a third party and they are doing the works, the third party will turn around and say, oh, by the way, footnote, without mentioning that I've heard in Parliament that you assigned £10,000 more than you were going to pay me for this project. I found things happening whilst I was doing the works and it is going to cost you £10,000 more. It is not in the taxpayers' interest.

1505 But the Hon. Gentleman just needs to get up on every question and he needs to get up to ask again this question about estimates, which I have answered him before House after House, Madam Speaker, and it is not in the interest of taxpayers that we should ever provide estimates of costs when we have given the job to a third party because all that is going to happen is that the taxpayer is going to pay more.

1515 However many times he asks for it, the logic of that would not change and if he were here, Madam Speaker, if he were here and I were to fall into dementia and were to ask him the same question from that side, I would commend to him, Madam Speaker, the answer I am giving now that he should give to me.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, we won't be dissuaded to continue to get up despite the frustration that it may cause, rather, the Hon. Chief Minister and ask questions. Indeed, we are being admonished for not putting the questions in the Order Paper. That is what we are being asked to do by the Hon. Minister for Health yesterday and now it seems by the Hon. Chief Minister today.

1525 Can I ask her this? Because we are waiting here on this side of the House with so much anticipation and with bated breath to find out what the costs of these works are. Can I ask, and I hope that on this occasion we may elicit a reply, not from the Chief Minister, but from the Minister who gets paid very handsomely, much more than us, and almost £110,000 a year to provide the answer on this occasion. When does she think that the works will be completed such that she can provide this information not just to us, but also to the people of Gibraltar and to everybody listening today?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker, for a simple reason. He will get the answer from whomever on the Government side the Government decides to field and given that this question does not stand in his name in the Order Paper, it stands in the name of the hon. Lady who is paid £35,000 a year to ask a few questions over 10 months at the Parliament or 9 months at the Parliament may sit. The fact that he has stood up should tell us that he is trying to deprecate the hon. Lady in the same way as he is de facto deprecating his hon. Lady, Madam Speaker.

And for a simple reason, Madam Speaker, for a simple reason, the hon. Lady gets paid £110,000 because instead of having to come to the Parliament 2 or 3 times a month 2 or 3 times a month, that is to say Madam Speaker, instead of having to come to the Parliament 2 or 3 days a month, 9 months or 10 months a year that is to say Madam Speaker, 30 odd days a year, the hon. Lady works 365 days a year as a Minister and has responsibilities for 365 days a year. In addition, that, Madam Speaker, does not mean that the salary is multiplied by 3 or by 12, as it should be, Madam Speaker. So if the Hon. Gentleman wants to be the one who gets up every time somebody else asks a question, he will forgive me if I decide that I am going to get up to answer him if I wish to.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I think he has just put them off here.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I think what put them off was the repeated questioning which is in keeping with the questions we have asked before because what I have not answered yet, Madam Speaker, what I have not answered yet are the other things that he said. First of all, Madam Speaker, there is no frustration on the part of the Government.

There is no frustration. We are delighted to sit here and answer the same question repeatedly, but we will do so. Asking us, the same question repeatedly is not going to change the answer that he gets.

The question that he should put on the Order Paper is the question he wants the answer to. If the question he puts on the Order Paper is one that we are not going to answer because he asks for an estimate, whether he puts it on the Order Paper or he does not put it on the Order Paper is not going to change the answer that he gets, Madam Speaker. He is always going to get the same answer that it is not in the interest of the taxpayer that we give out an estimate.

Does he not understand? Genuinely, intellectually, has he not done the exercise of seeking to understand what I am explaining to him? If I give him this number, the person who is potentially charging us less is going to charge all of us, all of us, more.

That is what we should be against, Madam Speaker. Which part of that does he not understand? Alternatively, is he too frustrated by having lost three successive General Elections that he just cannot get it into his head?

**Madam Speaker:** Before the hon. Member arises, I presume he wants to. I am just going to ask for a breath. I will allow one more question, if it is a question in its own right, not a debate on what has been said, not an answer.

I do not want toing and froing. If the hon. Member has a genuine question he needs to answer, I would allow it, but I am not going to have a debate continuing.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, is it possible that among all of that diatribe and going around the houses that I may have missed the answer to the question which was posed. I may have missed the answer. Therefore, I am humble enough to accept that in all of that woolly response and quite angry reply and despicable response that we have been subjected to by the Hon. Chief Minister, which in many respects borders on...

**Madam Speaker:** I am going to push the hon. Member for a question and ask him to sit down.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** ...of misogyny, quite frankly, because I intend...

**Madam Speaker:** The hon. Member cannot carry on where he left off when I am asked the question, I am being as patient as I can but I am not calling attention again.

1590 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, is the Government not the Chief Minister, is the Government and I would ask the Minister on this occasion who is responsible to please respond to the question that was posed able to say with any degree of precision please, when it is that these works which have been going on for so long and is having such an impact on the residents at this particular institution will be completed? I do not think we received an answer to that.

1595 **Madam Speaker:** Can I ask the Hon. Chief Minister to be brief in his answer.

1600 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes Madam Speaker, absolutely. Nothing that the Government has said through me or anybody else is a diatribe or despicable. This Government created the Ministry of Equality when we were first Elected in 2011 we have promoted gender equality and if I have been accused of anything legitimately in the past it is of promoting women too often to the top jobs where possible.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

1605

**Q532/2025**  
**Action of Housing Meetings –**  
**Non-attendance by Minister**

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Question 532, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1610 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Why did the Minister for Housing stop meeting Action for Housing for 6 months since September last year?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

1615 **Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, I have not met with Action for Housing because I have left these meetings in the very capable hands of my senior officials who in turn report back to me. I understand that meetings between Action for Housing and Housing senior officials have taken place in October last year and January, March and May of this year. In fact, it was the GSD who stood for Election in 2011 who stopped meeting with  
1620 Action for Housing and the GSLP/Liberals who reconvened them on a return to Government in 2011.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, the honourable will go to speak to her once again. The Hon. Minister has not responded to the question. The Hon. Minister has explained what has happened  
1625 during that six-month period but she has not said why she decided to stop the practise, which has been the case for many years.

Indeed, I would say during our time in office that Action for Housing, a very respected NGO in respect to this very important, still pressing despite the hon. Members being in office for the last almost 14 years social issue which is housing meets Ministers on a monthly basis. It has been the  
1630 subject of continuous public statements by this particular NGO who had complained very recently that the Minister refused to see them. On what basis has she taken that policy decision, which I am assuming, still exists?

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, the history of that question as posed by the hon. Gentleman is all wrong. When I was Elected in 2011, Action for Housing confirmed to me as they had publicly already that they had not had meetings with the GSD Government for many years. They had stopped those meetings so therefore when the hon. Gentleman has said the opposite, he should consider going back, checking and correcting the record at the next meeting of the House when he realises that what he has said is incorrect and I give him the opportunity to do that before I raise that he may have done something else in doing that.

The Government has met with Action for Housing since I was Elected directly, Ministerially and directly through officials in varying natures of meetings since 2011 and will continue to do so when there is Ministerial time available with Ministers, when there isn't Ministerial time available without Ministers on an issue that we have recognised repeatedly as a pressing one with a group that we have repeatedly recognised, although we sometimes disagree with them, is a meritorious one and in order to achieve our objective which is to reduce the housing waiting list to as low as possible, Madam Speaker, so the hon. Gentleman will forgive me for having to completely disagree with every aspect of the question as he has phrased it because it is factually incorrect.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** We are now being subjected to different criteria. We have heard from the Hon. Minister for Housing in, I think, in this House that she intends to reduce the housing waiting list to zero. Now we are hearing that the Chief Minister is saying that it will be as low as possible. There is already another of the hon. Member's U-turn but it seems that she has also subjected herself to what the Hon. Chief Minister has characterised as our policy.

It may be the case. I am not too sure. I stand by what I said before but look, if I am wrong, I am wrong and I am willing to accept that.

But is she therefore saying that she has adopted GSD policy if the Hon. Chief Minister is correct and even if that is correct or partly correct or wrong the Hon. Minister and I give her one further opportunity to please answer the question. The question in the order paper. This is not a supplementary.

The Hon. Minister has noticed we have done on this occasion what they ask us to do what they childishly and I think erroneously admonish us for not doing. We have put it in the order paper. Can she please state and if she will not I can read it to her again why did she stop?

Why? Can she give an explanation as to why the Hon. Minister stopped meeting Action for Housing for six months since September last year?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker. The hon. Gentleman thinks that he can do these twists and turns in the wind and recreate the facts as he goes along. There is no U-turn between us because Pat Orfila might say zero and I say as little as possible.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman needs to understand as again I told him before; these things are not black and white. You cannot get something to zero if on every day of the year people are going to turn of age. That is to say, if you have numbers reducing but people become 18 and are eligible to go on the housing waiting list, the number immediately becomes one.

That is why I have told him, Madam Speaker, that reducing the housing waiting list to zero means reducing it as far as possible. There is no U-turn. In fact, there is not even a scintilla of doubt between us that we mean the same thing but there should not be a scintilla of doubt between us that we should mean the same thing. Everybody says that Pepe Baldachino was the best Minister for housing in Gibraltar's history. I do not just say it.

I proclaim it and when there are Elections, I go around the estates saying, that Pepe Baldachino was the best housing Minister Gibraltar's ever had and that all of us are merely actors trying to imitate him. What was the housing waiting list when Pepe Baldachino left?

It was 480. That is what close to zero means. What is 480, Madam Speaker, in the context of housing?

It is one generation of Gibraltarians. Sorry, not one generation. One year of Gibraltarians. That is it. You have done it for everyone. What number of houses do you need to deal with one year of

Gibraltarians? 200. Because those 400 people end up getting married, etc., etc., or whatever and they end up in 200 houses. That is what we are talking about.

However many times you might try to twist in the wind, whenever I catch him out on something he said which is wrong, he gets up and says something completely different, turns it around, stands on his head and says the opposite. It is not going to change that, Madam Speaker and it is not a question of us adopting GSD policies.

The GSD had no meetings with Action for Housing. No meetings. It is different now.

What we are saying is we sometimes have Ministerial meetings, we sometimes have meetings with officials, and we sometimes have Ministerial meetings with officials, with Action for Housing. We are having meetings with Action for Housing in different levels of political and official engagement from time to time. They had, he needs to remind himself, no meetings.

No meetings. They stopped the meetings. GSD policy was do not meet Action for Housing, neither with officials nor Ministers. So this is not a question of us doing a U-turn, this is not a question of us being at loggerheads with each other, this is not a question of us adopting their policy, this is a question of him changing the goalposts every time I demonstrate to him that his question is factually and entirely wrong. Madam Speaker, he can try to do it again if he likes. I will simply point it out once again, not out of frustration, but out of desire to help him, Madam Speaker, to better fashion the way that he presents his case to the public in Gibraltar so that he might achieve which of his ambitions, I don't know, to be leader of his party, to be Chief Minister of this country, or to be speaker, which seems to be the latest fad.

**Madam Speaker:** I am allowing one more supplementary and then we are going to move on.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** We remain, despite all the words that have emanated from the Hon. Chief Minister's mouth, without an answer, without a response as to why it is that there was a stoppage of meetings for six months. Can I ask the Minister this question and ask her to reconsider perhaps the response that she has given me across the floor of the House? Is the Hon. Minister saying that although the Minister herself personally was not seeing Action for Housing on a monthly basis for the period of six months, her officials were seeing the representatives of this NGO for the period that I set out in the order paper?

Is that the Minister's response because I need to tell her that the information that I have is that that is not correct. That in fact, nobody within the Ministry of Housing, for which she is politically responsible, was seeing Action for Housing.

And they remain, we remain, therefore the people of Gibraltar remain, without an explanation, a reasonable explanation, as to why that stopped all of a sudden, and not for one month, but for six long months when they have pressing issues to put before the Ministry. Why was it stopped? Was it some sort of childish reaction to something that they said?

Was it something childish that I may have said when I have been accused of being the MP for Action for Housing, for goodness sakes? What was it? What was it?

Please let us have an answer once and for all.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** The hon. Gentleman really starts his question with a misnomer that means that everything else that he says thereafter is entirely without credibility. Why is it that there was a stoppage of meetings for six months? Madam Speaker, we do not accept that that is the case; therefore, everything else that he has said thereafter is entirely wrong.

There may have been delays in being able to fix meetings, there may have been other priorities in doing things, there may have been a meeting in six months, and there may not have been a stoppage for six months. We are saying, Madam Speaker, that the information that he says he has is not correct information as far as we are concerned, or not in any way driven by any desire not to meet for a particular period of time. There could have been a summer in between; there could have been other Government business in between, nothing absolutely, Madam Speaker, in particular, nothing absolutely to do with him.

1740 What makes him think, Madam Speaker, what sort of narcissism there is there at a political level in the hon. Gentleman's mind that makes him think that we would not meet with a third party because of something he said? Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is not half as important as he thinks he is.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

1745

**Q533/2025**  
**Government Housing estates –**  
**Security**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 533, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1750 **Hon. D J Bossino:** We are getting a reality check here. Which company has the contract for the security of estates and which estates does it cover?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

1755 **Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, the company that provides security of estates is OSG. The estates that are covered are Laguna, Glacis and Varyl Begg.

1760 **Hon. D J Bossino:** May I ask the Minister for how long these contractual arrangements have been in place?

1765 **Hon. P A Orfila:** They have been in place since the tenants came to us with complaints that they wanted peace and tranquilly in the estates and so therefore we have put in the patrols. Let me also tell you that in Varyl Begg they do patrol during the lunch times because of the proximity of the school and they tend to go into Varyl Begg and so therefore, they patrol the area during school times.

1770 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The Hon. Minister has given by way of response the rationality behind the decision to employ this company to provide security but that was not my question. The question was when, i.e., which dates, the Hon. Minister doesn't have to give me a specific date but can she give me an estimation of how long this company has been providing security in those particular estates?

1775 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I did it. I did it after a visit to Glacis Estate. I did it, I think, the year before the Elections must have been 21 or 22. There was serious antisocial behaviour and we contracted with the company that he represents.

1780 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, there are other housing estates which have been excluded in the Hon. Minister's response. She mentions three. Is it the case by way of deduction that the other estates do not have this facility? Is that a correct assumption to make because the question was put in very wide terms and the Hon. Minister has only mentioned these three estates. I am going to stick to the one question rule.

1785 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, because these are the estates that have the security. Nobody has been excluded. This is where the security was needed.



**Hon. D J Bossino:** That is fine. As I understand, it and I would welcome the Minister's response to this that representations are made to the Government. On this occasion, it seems, this is being done in a public chamber, which is being watched and reported upon.

1790 Therefore, people need to see from the Hon. Chief Minister's response. People need to go to him in order to obtain something because it is he personally who gave the contract in respect of these three estates but is she not aware that there are other estates?

I can think of one in particular. I think there was a representative of that particular estate at last week's Viewpoint programme who also complained, this is a Mid Harbours estate, about anti-social behaviour. Is this something that the Government would consider providing also for that particular estate?

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman can seek to trivialise the most serious matters however much he likes. This is not people having to approach me. This is that I went to see something that had been raised with the Ministry of Housing and with my office. I went to interest myself in how it might be resolved. It was extraordinarily serious. Extraordinarily serious and it had to be dealt with and people elect a Government. They elect Ministers and they elect a Chief Minister for us to be able to act to resolve things when necessary.

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We will not hesitate to act when we must. That is what we are here for. The hon. Gentleman seems to now want to make that something to be seen through a negative light.

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Actually, people watching will know and will understand it is absolutely positive. It had positive effects where we had to act. It will have positive effects if we have to act elsewhere.

We have already issued a tender for CCTV in these estates and other estates also to address current and burgeoning antisocial behaviour and we shall deal with it also in relation to our relationship with the Royal Gibraltar Police who should be able to deal with these matters also. However, Madam Speaker, if the hon. Gentleman would support that and subject that to a negative view also, no doubt he will.

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Despite the attempts that they have made to paint everything in a negative light, we are still here, they are still there.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Chief Minister keeps on reminding us that we are on this side of the House, did not win the last Election by a whisker, and that he won the Election, they won the Election and the Government Ministers. This is what we are tasked to do. He himself has said that this is what we are tasked to do and we are tasked to ask questions.

1820 If he wishes to characterise my questions or any of my friends' questions as being overly negative, so be it but we have to probe every statement that they offer by way of answer because we do not have clarity. He can characterise that as negative if he wants to, but that again, once again, is a matter for him.

In addition, he says that because he paid a visit to these estates and he received the representations personally that they were extraordinarily serious. Is he suggesting that the concerns and worries that residents of Mid Harbour's estate are not extraordinarily serious at all to be addressed?

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Madam Speaker. In fact, I have been to Mid Harbour's estate. I have considered the very serious issues that they raise. They are being dealt with in a different way because they are different issues. The hon. Gentleman does not know what he is talking about. He does not understand the concept of seriousness and some of the social issues that have arisen. He has no ability, Madam Speaker, it appears to me, to understand some of the things that happen in Gibraltar, how serious they are and the consequences that they have for people's lives, in particular children's lives, and how these things have to be dealt with and for the lives of elderly residents who have to enjoy peaceful existence of their properties that they are tenants of and the Government has obligations to and I didn't go to a visit and receive representations and act.

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I received very serious representations, not just from tenants' associations but also from social services departments, also from parents, also from people who could see that people were experiencing real-term suffering and that there were long-term consequences to young children about what was happening in the estates. If he wants to trivialise that, if he wants to try to make a political point, that is his politics, it is not ours. If he wants to try and scrimp a few votes in one estate because of something serious that was happening in another, pretending that we are not also acting in that estate, then, Madam Speaker, that's his politics, not ours.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q534/2025**  
**Housing rents –**  
**Increase**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 534, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Why have public housing rents increased by 5%?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing and the University.

**Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, the rent increases are yearly and this is required to cover the costs of estates upkeep and fund the refurbishment costs. As estates get older and are refurbished, the maintenance budget also increases because there is more to service and renovate. Housing rents did not increase from 1983 and the process of increasing them was met by support from members opposite whose support, I hope, is not going to start to wane.

Rent relief is, of course, available for those who need it.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, can I ask this question because it does not feature at all in the Hon. Minister's response. Is the decision, which is her decision, by virtue of the statutory provision, the relevant statutory provision, I can refer her; it is in Housing Miscellaneous Provisions and Regulations. In fact, it is interesting when I was looking at this in terms of preparation that the Minister only has the power to increase and not to go the other way.

Is it the case that the considerations which she brought to bear before deciding, one, on an increase and two, on an increase at that particular level, i.e. 5%, that it wasn't influenced in any way as a result of any contractual or other obligations that may be as a result of, if I can put it in these broad terms, the mortgaging of these estates which were announced by the Hon. Chief Minister during the course of his 2016 Budget address. I think that the relevant party, which I think is the beneficiary, because I haven't looked at the detail of this, but I am just putting it to her in these terms because I want to understand whether the increases as a result of the financial arrangements with Gibraltar capital assets limits, whether that had any bearing or any influence.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, not at all. These decisions are taken in Cabinet. They are not just taken by me. Therefore, if there was a 5% increase, it was a Cabinet decision, not just mine. Let me also remind the Hon. Gentleman that they did agree to this in 2017. The Housing Act was amended in Parliament to make provision for the variation of rent Government and rental stock annually.

This amendment was supported unanimously by all in the Parliament with both the supported Government and Opposition. This is in 2017. All parties indicated their approval for the bill before

this was debated and voted on in Parliament to make legal provision for the annual increase in rent.

Let me also remind the Gentleman that at the time of the amendment to the Housing Act 2017, it was noted that the modest increases would continue on an annual basis in a manner that would nonetheless remain considerably below where they would have been had they been increased inconsistently in line with inflation. Let me also remind the hon. Gentleman that it is the cause of nature that materials and labour has gone up, it has increased and therefore so has the rent got to go up. We have to maintain our housing stock of which we have over 5,000 and therefore it has to be furnished with the right rent.

So yes, I mean for the hon. Gentleman I know would very much like to see means testing which is something that I would not go into because then what he is saying is don't raise 5%. In fact, instead of raising 5%, let us give it market value rent. Let us means test people in Government housing and really put up their rent.

That is what the hon. Gentleman has always pioneered for. He wants means testing which is something that this Government is hesitant and certainly does not want to do.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I will try as best I can to unpack a lot of what the Hon. Minister has said and it is indeed absolutely correct and accurate to suggest that our policy since 2015 has been to means test social housing. We have no difficulty with that. Now, and there is clear blue water between them and us in relation to that issue.

How it is done and how it is implemented is a different matter altogether. Can I ask the Hon. Minister this? The initial question was whether the financial arrangements that I referred her to, and I think she has knowledge of that, had any bearing on the increase to 5%.

As I understand it, there is a fixed part of those financial arrangements, and she can correct me if I am wrong, that part of those financial arrangements are such that there has to be an annual increase of rent in order to finance the loan arrangements. So, is the 5% increase, and I think it was set at 3%, but is the, and indeed, according to the auditors' reports, there have been consistently 3% increases since 2017, which is the date that she accurately refers to the introduction of the regulations, other than in 2022 when there was also an increase of 5%, and then it went back down to 3% in July. I forgive Madam Speaker that the question is rather lengthy, but the response is also very long.

Can I ask her whether the 3% is included within the 5%, if what I have said is indeed accurate and correct?

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman that wants to talk about financial arrangements, and I am responsible for, not the Minister of Housing, but his question can be summed up as this. Is 3% inclusive of 5%?

Yes, Madam Speaker, 3 is less than 5, and therefore if you do something at 5, it includes 3. Mathematically obvious.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I know, the Hon. Chief Minister once again rises, and he has tried to characterise me as not understanding, and having to repeat things, and I know where he's, I know, I know where he's trying to get to with that, but look, water off a duck's back. One has developed sufficient thick skin with him and being in politics for so long that these things really do not bother me but I still miss him when he is not around. I still miss him.

Now, so, because I do not think the answer that the Hon. Chief Minister has asked the Minister on this occasion, this, fully clarifies the position. So, in effect, the 5% is the 3% which the Government is obliged as a result of these financial arrangements to increase on an annual basis, but on this occasion, because of the considerations that she referred to in her official initial reply, come into play, she's increased it by, she talked about repairs and all the rest of it, she's had to increase it by a further 2%. Is that description accurate?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, no, it is not accurate. It is not accurate in any material regard. There is no obligation to raise the rent.

1940 There is an obligation to meet the raised rent, but that can be met from general taxpayers' funds. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman is making connections, which are not there, and he is pretending that they are there. V-Day, the fact that we did not put the rent up during the period of COVID, it was not a contractual obligation that had to be pursued, so Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman needs to be reminded that they voted in favour of provisions to increase the rent.

1945 They supported that the rents should go up. The ombudsman called for the rent to go up. The rent is going up pennies a week. Pennies a week. They pretend to want to be fiscally responsible. They go to General Elections saying, we are going to do the hard things to be fiscally responsible, and they come here and challenge us about raising rents a few pennies.

1950 So, Madam Speaker, if they are resigning and U-turning from their position on the Housing Amendment Bill 2017, which they voted in favour of, if they are resiling from needing to keep housing rents current, if they are resiling from all that, I would encourage them to go back to the debates we had at the time, which show that even if we increase rents by 3 or 5 per cent every year over a period of 30 years, it will take 30 years for them to become current to the rate they would have been in 2017 if they had been raised by inflation from 1983 to 2017.

1955 He may have forgotten that. That is the rent that we are talking about. That is what he appears to be complaining about.

1960 Therefore, Madam Speaker, I hope that genuinely, fully clarifies it for him. If not, no doubt he will want to ask another incisive question, which will remind me that if it quacks like a duck and it asks like a duck, then it probably is a duck and the water will roll off its feathers because it simply won't understand complex finance because it is a duck.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q535/2025**

**Varyl Begg refurbishment –  
Measures to alleviate parking issues**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 535, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

1970 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, what measures will be taken to alleviate parking issues for residents of Varyl Begg during the current refurbishment and construction works?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

1975 **Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, the question from the Leader of the Opposition is prospective. In fact, measures have already been in place since the start of the refurbishment programme some 12 months ago in May 2024. The Midtown car park has been offered as an alternative parking where scaffolding intervenes with the parking bays.

1980 There are 66 spaces allocated to Varyl Begg during the refurbishment period and temporary passes have been given to people with disabilities to continue to use the area.

1985 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, always a pleasure to hear from the Minister for Housing. We have had discussions about this question before and I appreciate the background she's given on the Midtown parking but she'll recall that I have enquired about this issue before and the reason for the question is because months on I am still getting representations from residents because yes, there has been provision at Midtown car park but a lot of the residents there in Varyl

Begg are now elderly because they have been there a long time and Midtown car park may work for younger people but it doesn't really work for the elderly. So really the purpose of my question is having found that temporary solution but given the length of the works is there no other progress so as to alleviate the parking issues for the elderly so that at least they could identify whether there are some parkings that could be found much closer to the estate if not within the estate for the elderly citizens.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker we are trying at the moment what we are doing is instead of keeping the same parking area within the estate we are now trying to move as the scaffolding moves so we can now start bringing cars in back into the parking bays. It is a bit difficult because we have Morrison's car park very nearby but it is not viable anymore so the nearest we have is Midtown and at the moment it seems to be working but we are hopeful that as the progress of the building starts to bring down the scaffolding etc. we shall be able to get back parkings as soon as possible. That is our intention.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can I ask is there also work going on to consider whether some of the building materials that are deposited on site could be moved because the last time I went there was a huge amount of material there waiting for eventual use which could be months and some of the residents were complaining that that in itself you know led to a deposit of material that was just there and would eventually be used but it was taking a very long time and I wonder whether that also could that's a matter for the contractor clearly but with the agreement of the Government there can only have been that deposit but can there be thought given also as to whether that an alternative location for the material might be useful to alleviate the parking situation?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, yes. I do understand the plight of the people of Varyl Begg. Recently I had a meeting with the tenants and this was brought up and we are in the process of trying to establish some corner somewhere else out of the way that will not disturb any parking space that might be available to the residents. Therefore, that is at the moment being looked at.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, CIVIL CONTINGENCIES AND SPORT

### Q526-7/2025 Glacis Estate – Play area

**Acting Clerk:** Question to the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sports. Question 526, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Why is the play area within Glacis Estate closed?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sports.

**Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sports (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 527.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 527, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** When will the play area within Glacis Estate be re-opened?

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**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sports.

**Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sports (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, the play area at Glacis Estate is closed due to anti-social behaviour. The Tenants Association are in the process of meeting and discussing this with the relevant Ministers to consider the possibility of reopening the park.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** OK. Can I ask the Minister what the nature of the anti-social behaviour is such that, two things, it requires the closure of a much needed play area within the estate and also whether given the responses that we have had from the Chief Minister in respect to OSG who does have the carriage and responsibility of security in respect to this particular estate as well as to others, whether that is assisting in any way such that it will facilitate the reopening of this much needed activity.

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**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, as mentioned, a moment ago the Chief Minister visited Glacis on the 4th of November 2023 to see for himself the effects of the anti-social behaviour affecting neighbours, cleanliness and damage to the equipment and so on. As a consequence of the worries expressed by the tenants, it was decided that the best option at that point would be to close the park to stop children congregating in that area and causing problems.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** This presents a difficult situation because anti-social behaviour both the Minister for Housing and I in the course of last week's programme referred to that in many respects is symptomatic of underlying issues. Without wanting to, I am hesitating because I would be venturing into the hypothetical and expressions of views which are not allowed as part of asking questions but... Is the Minister confident that he will be able to reopen the play area or is it the case and is it within the possibilities that he is looking at that because of the reasons why this thing has closed that it may not ever reopen is that for me part of the decision making process?

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**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker the Hon. Minister for Housing and myself meet regularly with the tenants associations in my case I was at a different estate yesterday regarding parks as well we are seriously looking at how we can reopen the park and even when we do it will have to be with strict restrictions such as opening it during the day and closing it in the evening so that is what we are hoping for but at this moment in time we are not exactly sure on how to do it.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can one get from that answer that the focus of the problem is at night is that the issue such that a different opening time regime which includes closure for a part of the period during the day or night will be a resolution to the problem.

**Hon. L M Bruzon:** So Madam Speaker, the issue of vandalism and antisocial behaviour happens throughout the day obviously it is at night when it affects the neighbours the most during the quiet hours. We do have a regime in other estates where we close parks at night but that does not always have the desired results.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** If I may press him further in relation to OSG's contribution, is there something that can be done there by having a greater presence is that again another possibility beyond opening and closing times that the Minister may be considering?

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**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker that is not really a question that I can answer because I am not sure about the remit of OSG and so on perhaps once we have CCTV that will be the proper deterrent which will stop I think the Minister for Housing wants to add...

**Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker I can just interrupt here. OSG plays a vital role in the estates in that it monitors the behaviour. Let us not forget that education starts at home and it is the parents who have to educate the children. If you lived in a particular area where you are getting a ball being banged on your window every day, foul mouth interactions with people whenever you go out to tell them off, it is how shall I say it is inflicting pain in your quality of life and that is what we want for our tenants. It was for this decision that we took the decision to close and start monitoring the situation. Presently it has got a lot better. At the moment there is a youth club which is being built which I am sure when it is built it will attract the children or the young adults into a much better and safer place not to be bored and to get up to no good. But the bottom line is and I said it in the interview and I reiterate this again we are all in this together. We all have to put a little piece there to make sure that the community is going to be a peaceful place to live in and it is up to the parents to do a lot of this monitoring not OSG, not the police and not the Government Ministers it is certainly the parents who have to take now ownership of the actions of those children. Having said this I commend OSG for the job that has been done and I do know now from the meetings that we have been holding that the RGP is very much hands on too and all you have to do is when you have antisocial behaviour is report it to the police report, report and report.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can I associate myself with what the Hon. Minister for Housing has just said I couldn't agree with her more I think she is absolutely right, indeed it was the message that I was trying to portray in the course of the same interviews that the Minister is referring to, it starts at home she is absolutely right and I think it is an indictment on our society that this should be happening and that we are having to expend valuable taxpayers money it is bizarre the thought that in Gibraltar we have to contract security companies to sort out these type of problems. I know I am fully appreciative that I am really stretching it here because it doesn't arise from the original answer but it arises from the reply that the Hon. Minister I think, helpfully in her contribution, has given just now. The youth centre that she refers to which is being constructed is that the one that is being constructed as part of the Laguna... it is not going to be within Glacis it is going to be in the Laguna area is that the one as part of the national economic plan project?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, the new Laguna youth club has moved as previously discussed to the Glacis Estate there is an extension being built at the top so it caters for more young people.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q528/2025  
Rooke site –  
Fire Station**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 528, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I hope to have more than one Minister responding to this question. When is the Fire Station to be built at the Rooke site going to be completed?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sports.

**Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sports (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, the project to provide the new fire station is currently at design stage. It is therefore not possible at present to provide the completion date.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Given that the Hon. Minister refers to that it is at design stage does the design contemplate the location that is to say is the fire station going to be built where the hon. Members opposite said it was going to be built in the electoral programme which is the 2023 manifesto at the Rooke site.

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**Hon. L M Bruzon:** The project as I said is currently at the design development stage where various options are being explored in consultation always with the experts which are the GFRS themselves and the site developer. These so far have included, for example, the location of a training tower and the positioning of the fire station itself in relation to dock number 4. So basically, we have had to modify it slightly because we want to expose and use the dock, which is currently where the car park is. Once all designs are finished we will be able to submit further information but at present, it is all being done for the Rooke site.

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**Hon D J Bossino:** At one stage when the Hon. Minister was responding I thought he was going to leave open the possibility that it wasn't going to be built at the Rooke site but I think what the Hon. Minister is saying is that it will be built at the Rooke site because we have had in response to questions from Mrs Ladislaus an indication that the police station won't be built where it was originally envisaged at the Rooke site. Can I ask him this, have I understood this aspect of his answer correctly, is it called the training tower, is that going to be dislodged from where the fire station... so there are going to be two separate sites, is that correct? So we are going to have a fire station, I don't want to put words in his mouth so he can correct me, where it was originally designed to be built at the Rooke site but the training tower will be elsewhere and that elsewhere is round about where the dock? No, okay, then he can explain to me if he does not mind.

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**Hon. L M Bruzon:** As the plans stand at the moment, the plan is to have the fire station in one location and then have all the training facilities at a different location. Does that make sense? So basically, you will have all the training facilities separate

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** I know this is wholly inaccurate in the way I am going to pose this question but the Minister will understand. When the hon. Member says at a different location are we saying at a different location within the Rooke development footprint or thereabouts or could be anywhere in Gibraltar?

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**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Different site Madam Speaker.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** One more question I am really eager to try and extract that information from the Hon. Minister again I appreciate that he wasn't able to answer the question on the order paper which related in effect to a completion date because it is still at the stage it is but he has been very helpful I think in providing answers in respect of the design. Part of the design is the location so can I press him further is he able to say what options he is considering to establish where the fire station is going to be but he has helpfully said that the training aspects will be elsewhere. Where?

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**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker we are looking at more than one location so I cannot pinpoint or commit to one at the moment.

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**Madam Speaker:** One more question from the hon. Mrs Ladislaus because I am feeling kind.



2185 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful Madam Speaker. I just have a hands on open from March 2024  
where I know that the Hon. the leader of the Opposition in fact asked a question as to the fire  
station and the Rooke site and the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister stated at that point in time this is  
14 months back that there was a draft concept design which he understood had been cleared with  
the management at the fire station but the first step before there is a tender would entail the  
project going to planning going to the DPC first. Is it the case therefore that 14 months on, they  
2190 are still at the same point or has that moved on now because if there was a draft concept design  
14 months ago and we hear today that they are still at the design stage what has happened in the  
interim?

2195 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** So Madam Speaker the designs are far more advanced than they were 14  
months ago but the important thing here is that we are building a fire station which we have to  
futureproof and I can only take advice from the experts, which in this case are the Chief Fire  
Officer. I cannot tell them what their needs are with regards to training or facilities or anything  
else they have to tell me what they need. So I take advice from them and it takes unfortunately  
quite a while because it is a very unique and particular building that we are building again we have  
2200 to futureproof for the sake of our community.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2205  
**EMPLOYMENT, EQUALITY, CULTURE AND TOURISM**

**Q536/2025**  
**Bruce's Farm –**  
**Post of Homes Manager**

**Acting Clerk:** Questions to the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.  
Question 536, the Hon. A Sanchez.

2210 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government state whether there has been an expression of interest  
for the post of Homes Manager at Bruce's Farm? If so, could the Government provide further  
details?

2215 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker  
an expression of interest was released on the 8th of April 2025 for the temporary substitution of  
the homes manager post at Bruce's farm the EOI closed on the 11th of April 2025.

2220 **Hon. A Sanchez:** I am grateful Madam Speaker would the Hon. Minister be able to confirm  
whether individuals or the individuals actually expressed an interest for this post, were they  
actually interviewed for this post.

2225 **Hon. C P Santos:** No Madam Speaker there was a move within the ministry for that role it is an  
interim homes manager it was someone who was doing a similar role within another department  
and the person that was covering interim anyway wanted to move so we did, we moved people  
around both of whom were very adequate in the roles that we have assigned to them.

2230 **Hon. A Sanchez:** So just by way of clarification, it is my understanding that the bulletin went  
out with expression of interest for the role and individuals did apply, expressed an interest, but

then the expression of interest was withdrawn or retracted and the reason was given that this post was going to be filled by alternative means or arrangements. Can the Minister clarify what was meant specifically by alternative arrangements?

2235 **Hon. C P Santos:** As mentioned what went out was an expression of interest, it was not a vacancy. It was to see who had interest in filling the homes manager role on an interim basis so we had people who expressed an interest and then we found that there were other people who were more adequate for the role and that is the person that is covering that role.

2240 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Did the individual who is currently covering the role express an interest in the original expression of interest?

2245 **Hon. C P Santos:** The person covering the role did not express an interest but as I said it is an expression of interest, it is not a vacancy, it is not a vacancy for a permanent role and we found that there was someone that was working within one of my ministries that was more adequate for the role.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

2250

**Q537/2025**  
**Skills for Care apprenticeships –**  
**Individuals enrolled**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 537, the Hon. A Sanchez.

2255 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Could the Government provide figures for how many individuals have enrolled to date on Skills for Care apprenticeships, broken down by each specific apprenticeship?

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

2260 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, the total number of enrolled trainees for the skills for care apprenticeship is 18.

2265 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Grateful Madam Speaker. Could this be broken down by type of apprenticeship or is there just one type of apprenticeship in relation to care that is offered

**Hon. C P Santos:** At the moment the skills for care apprenticeship is just that one. It is just that skills for care at the moment is just for the level one I think it is.

2270 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Would the Hon. Minister be able to elaborate on who provides the training?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, Madam Speaker, the training is carried out by the Care Agency.

2275 **Hon. A Sanchez:** At the end of the apprenticeship, I assume that there is a qualification that the individual receives. Could the Hon. Minister elaborate on who the accrediting body is?

**Hon. C P Santos:** I am afraid I would need notice of that question. I have other details with regards to the training but I am not the accrediting body. I can find that out and let the Hon. Member know.

2280 **Hon. A Sanchez:** In relation to when individuals complete or successfully complete the skills for care apprenticeships, would the Hon. Minister be able, to elaborate on any career progression opportunities or any partnerships or collaborations that are in place in relation to career opportunities in relation to these apprenticeships?

2285 **Hon. C P Santos:** Well the intention is for candidates who successfully complete their training period to be on boarded as part of the Care Agency once the six months are over and these will fill in current vacant positions within the complement of care workers.

2290 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q538/2025**  
**Youth Clubs –**  
**Little demand**

2295 **Acting Clerk:** Question 538, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Given the Minister's recent admissions that there is little demand for youth clubs; can the Government confirm whether it has any plans in place to reignite young people's appetite for youth clubs in general?

2300 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** I have not made a comment implying there is little demand for youth clubs the question is therefore misleading.

2305 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, and if I may I am quite surprised from the Hon. Minister's answers because within my notes I have an extract from what is commonly now being referred to as *El Chivato* which is a Hansard from a few months ago and when this discussion came about with respect to the opening times of closure on weekends, and I'll quote directly from Hansard, the Minister for Youth said:

2310 We started opening on Saturdays and the usage was hardly any, it was just negligible so we decided to use our resources in a better way.

2315 Madam Speaker, with that commentary which was given only just a few short months ago together with the fact that when asked whether or not the Minister could confirm whether the youth centre was going to remain in development with respect to the Rooke site having looked at the plans and seen myself that it wasn't included, both things together in my mind seem to me an admission that there is little demand in youth clubs. So, with all that taken into consideration and irrespective of whether the Hon. Minister thinks or not that there is little demand as I think that  
2320 there is, can he confirm whether there is an active plan in place which is, irrespective of his opinion, being carried out to ignite young people's interest in youth clubs in light of both statements which I've just made?

2325 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, where to begin. The question says that there is little demand for youth clubs. What we discussed back in March was about closing and opening times on Saturdays so Saturdays proved not to be the most popular date and we are instead using that time of the staff and our resources during the week when young people use the youth service a bit more. I will take it back to November when I received a question about the zone and the youth

and I told him that we are seeing a rising number of young people using the youth clubs. There is actually an increase of 8% of young people using the youth clubs. What we need to do is make sure that we actually ask a question within the context so, there was not a lot of interest for Saturdays, so instead we realised there was interest for the weekdays therefore we have moved our resources and our staffing to offer more opportunities during the week.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker as I said before, whether or not he agrees or disagrees with me, whether demand in youth clubs is diminishing or not, can I ask him to answer the question whether or not the Government has any plans in place to reignite interest whether this is on the basis that he thinks that there is a diminishing interest or generally is there a plan by the youth clubs in general despite uptake being up or down to garner interest from youths to attend youth clubs.

**Hon. C P Santos:** We go back to language. Why are we asking for a plan to reignite interest when there is clearly already interest? We have a plan that is working and consistently sees more and more young people involved. The hon. Member might want to rephrase his question or alternatively, accept that the youth centre is going very well the youth service provides great service for young people not just within the youth centre but during the daytime activities that they do in schools and they work with the Care Agency and they work with all the different organisations in Gibraltar. We therefore don't need to reignite something that is already ignited and working so we will continue with the plans that we are doing now which are clearly working because we are seeing numbers of young people engaging with the youth service more and more each year.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker given the Hon. Minister for youth submission that in his data appears that youth attendance seems to be on the rise, is it his intention to revisit the possibility of opening these clubs on the weekend given that there is a fire and appetite for youth clubs and members seem to be going up?

**Hon. C P Santos:** I seem to explain the same thing every month. The Saturday openings as a drop in did not seem to work. The appetite for a drop in centre was not there. We offer a lot of different activities for young people. What young people have available to them nowadays is not what was available to kids in my day when I used the youth centre. I am not sure what was available in his hon. Member's time I am not even sure he's even stepped into a youth club so the Saturday openings are usually for pre-determined outings or events so that we don't waste our resources waiting for someone to come on a Saturday morning in case they want to drop in. The youth service is not about a leisure provision it is about informal education and for children to engage in activities that are more meaningful so we are going to always use our resources in the best way possible.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q539/2025**  
**Youth Committee –**  
**Confirmation of existence**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 539, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm whether there is a Youth Committee, which empowers young people to organise activities at youth clubs or the youth centre?

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

2380 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, there is no specific youth committee to organise activities at the youth centres however, there is the youth symposium made up of young people from several sectors including the youth service, NGOs, schools and other organisations. The youth symposium has given way to a group of young people who have taken it upon themselves to form an organisation dedicated to arranging social and youth activities called the Gibraltar Students Society. They already began with a games night, 2385 which took place on the 5th of April 2025 for children aged between the ages of 10 and 11.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker I believe the Hon. Minister has confirmed that there was not such a youth committee in place so can I ask the Hon. Minister whether he thinks that there should be one and whether or not he thinks it is important to empower youth committees of this kind 2390 made up by youth members within their respective different youth clubs which they go to.

**Hon. C P Santos:** The youth clubs each have representatives all four clubs have representatives that shape the informal education curriculum within the clubs and it gives young people a voice in the programme development so there is a group of people, there is not a separate committee 2395 that just does leisure activities... The process of how activities come about are very much decided between the youth that attends the club and the youth workers

**Hon. G Origo:** Can I ask the Hon. Minister whether these youth club representatives are young people or whether they are made up of youth workers or people who are more senior and how 2400 do these representatives get selected is it by way of appointment or do the members themselves vote between each other just to have an indication.

**Hon. C P Santos:** The youth representatives are young people that attend the club and I am unaware of how they are selected. 2405

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q540/2025  
Youth Exchange –  
Last time event took place**

2410 **Acting Clerk:** Question 540, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Minister confirm when was the last time a youth exchange took place?

2415 **Acting 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 refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer to Written Question 131 of 2024.

2420 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I do not have access to that written answer right now here with me and I was unaware that there was an answer previously posed in this respect with relation to youth exchanges. However, from my research I can see that the last youth exchange, which took place, was in 2014. Does the Hon. Minister or does he have the information with him to confirm that that was indeed the last time a youth exchange of this nature took place. 2425

**Hon. C P Santos:** I would like to note that the question was asked by the hon. Member himself in October 2024 and the sentiment still stands. It is the last formal youth exchange organised by the youth service took place in 2024 with a group that went to Wales. In place of these long-term exchanges, the youth service has successfully shifted towards delivering alternative high impact travel opportunities that continue to support personal development cultural awareness and leadership.

**Hon. G Origo:** I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for his reply and for refreshing everyone's memory here. Can he confirm whether he thinks or, in his mind, are these youth exchanges going to now be given a priority given that they spent so many years without having been undertaken and whether any future youth exchanges are planned in the coming months?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Youth exchanges are not necessarily going to be a priority because as opposed to having one youth exchange a year that took a lot of investment and commitment from young people with regards to fundraising and that we have decided or the youth service has been for the past 11 years doing more regular shorter trips. So youth exchanges had a great value I remember when I was younger when we did not have access to holidays or meeting people from other countries and it was a very different time then and the value of the youth exchange was greater at that time. I feel that now we are able to give young people the opportunity to leave Gibraltar and not necessarily via a youth, exchange programme so at the moment in discussions with the team a youth exchange in the way that they used to work in the 90s and early 2000s is not something that we are prioritising at this time.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, next question.

**Q541/2025**  
**Youth Clubs –**  
**Number of trips**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 541, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Minister provide details on how many trips have been carried out by youth clubs on weekends broken down by month and for the years 2023, 2024 and 2025, to date?

**Acting 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 information is as follows:

<u>Weekend openings</u>			
<u>Month</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
January	2	2	3
February	5	0	1
March	4	0	0
April	4	3	1
May	5	1	2
June	4	2	
July	0	0	
August	0	0	
September	2	1	
October	2	3	
November	4	1	
December	3	3	

2465 **Madam Speaker:** Taking me back to the football pools when I was young and my grandfather used to buy the paper. Any supplementaries?

2470 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I would have been grateful for a table as it is normally handed over in the ordinary sense but no matter, I was able to jot down some of the numbers and given them tables so I know which years we were talking about. Can I ask the Hon. Minister whether he thinks this number is good enough? Is he satisfied with the level of weekend trips that have been undertaken? Not least because as we have dealt with the earlier supplementaries these weekend trips are supposed to make up for the fact that we are closing the youth clubs on weekends so instead of having 52 Saturdays a year where people would be able to attend youth clubs, the expenses and money was better directed to these activities. So given the number of activities that we have is he happy with the level of activities taking place?

2480 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I am not quite sure whether I may be speaking in English in my head but it is coming out in another language. I spend minutes of every month explaining the Saturday issue that the Hon. Member seems to have with the youth service. The youth service used to open on Saturdays not for trips because the youth service is not a tour operator. It provides different activities for young people, part of which are trips abroad because it is a great experience part of which are day trips in Gibraltar. The Saturday closing is not to... we have not closed just so we can do organised trips on Saturdays. For example, today they came and this is like an extra session that they have done so instead of using maybe the time on a Saturday, they have come today. They've used it for the zone, they've used it for a drug awareness campaign that we are doing a new drug awareness programme in collaboration with the Drugs Advisory Council, we use it for any extra sessions that we need because we find more value in organising... It could be a trip on a Saturday but this is not what the focus of Saturdays was because that is not the focus of the youth service. The youth service provides a lot of different services not just on youth clubs, but during the day, during the schools collaborating with the Care Agency with whatever involves young people the youth service is involved so we find that we can use our resources and our time more productively, there seems to be me parroting the same phrase throughout the week. Could it be a trip to Grazalema maybe that is where we decide to go. Is it a drug awareness

2495 campaign that we are doing throughout the whole week on a five-day week, maybe it is there but we want to give variety to the young people so that they learn different skills and it is a way for us to give more contact time of more value to young people.

**Hon. G Origo:** Looking at the statistics which have been provided across the floor of the House, it appears that there's no real consistency with respect to the number of trips in every given month and they appear to vary, so can I ask the Minister whether what's affecting the numeracy of the number of trips and outings is taking place a resource issue or an engagement issue?

**Hon. C P Santos:** I really do not understand at what point the youth service became literally saga trips. We need to realise that the trips that we do have to be of value to the kids that are involved regarding what we are offering throughout the week. I seem like I am getting annoyed, I am not getting annoyed at all I just do not understand this obsession with the youth service apparently having to take kids to day trips on Saturdays. They do when it is of use, they do not when it is not of use because we use that time and resources differently. It is the same funds that are used in different ways and if he looked at the Budget, he would see that it is the same year on year the Budget remains the same for extra activities. Is it used to take the kids to Grazalema, maybe, is it used to take the kids for a day trip to Alameda, maybe, is it to spend that time and resources of a workforce somewhere else on a Friday it is there, we need to find the best use of resources we are not MH Bland, we don't need to provide trips to people we do because it is of value, but it is not what the youth service is there for.

**Hon. G Origo:** I don't think he answered the question which I posed whether it was the issue which determines the number of trips that are taking place, a resource issue or an engagement issue, that is to say if there was more money, would we have more trips or would we not have more trips because there's not enough engagement from young people, is there a balance that's struck in between which of the two is it, can you just clarify on that point.

**Hon. C P Santos:** The hon. Member really needs to listen to what I say, get his face out of his pre-prepared nose and listen to what I am saying. The budget is the same, the numbers of kids that I mentioned two questions ago is rising, so it is clearly not about engagement and it is clearly not about budget we have more people engaging with youth service and we have the same budget plus there's always fundraising because that's part of what we teach kids to do. We have found that there are things that are more important at times than maybe taking the kids to McDonalds I just don't know how to explain it for the hon. Member to understand, I think I have answered the question three times in a row, maybe the issues with not understanding it and not about me not explaining it.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q542/2025**  
**Youth strategy –**  
**Career's advice programme**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 542, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** In line with its youth strategy, can the Government confirm what sort of career's advice programme it has developed for young people?

**Acting 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 youth strategy has not been completed or published yet, however I am happy to give a synopsis of the work we are undertaking to develop careers advice programmes for young people. At present, we are in the process of centralising all career pathways for young people across Government. We have recently met with the Ministry for Education and the Department of Personnel and Development whereby we will be bringing together all pathways currently being offered in a one-stop shop under the careers.gi current website and Instagram sites, which will include future pathways and the careers fair.

Just this Monday we have seen the launch of the young leadership programme designed to cover leadership communication, safeguarding, conflict resolution and more. Recognising that not all young people follow the same route as you might already be aware, we also offer the zone a targeted project for 16 to 25 year olds who are not in education, employment or training which offers tailored one to one support on CV writing job search, signposting to relevant services and liaising with other Government departments to support individual progression.

**Hon. G Origo:** I think I heard correctly that the Hon. Minister said that the programme is not yet completed but referring if I may just briefly to a section in the manifesto which deals with youth strategy and careers advice it said in parts of the commitment that we aim to expand the existing voice of young people programme into the youth symposiums. Can the Hon. Minister clarify with respect to that commitment because I wasn't quite sure having looked at the voice of young people it seems that they haven't posted a video since November of 2020 and I wasn't able to determine whether this group is still active or whether it has been swallowed up by what is now the youth symposium. Does he have any comments on that?

**Hon. C P Santos:** This apparently has absolutely nothing to do with careers which is the original question but I am fine to answer it. As he mentioned, as the hon. Member mentioned the I think I stated that the voice of young people will be expanded into the youth symposium which it has. Therefore, the voice of young people as opposed to being a small group for just people youth service users it has been expanded to everyone.

So all young people from different NGOs are invited to attend and individuals also attend and the voice of young people was always different representatives from the clubs which were the reps that we discussed earlier on as well in the questions and they attend as representatives of the youth service.

**Hon. G Origo:** If I may Madam Speaker, in the original answer I believe the Hon. Minister stated that the youth careers advice programme was going to be multifaceted and it had a number of different components to it. Looking at one of the components I saw that last year in February 2024 there was a future pathways programme which was a three-day event for year 12 students which took place in February but I realise it hasn't taken place this year. Can I ask if the intention of the Government is for this future pathways event to be done again or have they decided not to do so anymore?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, it just happened I think maybe four, five, six weeks ago maybe. It happens every year for the year 12 and that is led by the Department of Education with collaboration from our youth service.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q543/2025**

**Zone: Step Up and Thrive services –  
Use by young people**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 543, the Hon. G Origo.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Minister confirm how many young people that are not in employment, education or training; have made use of the Zone: Step Up and Thrive services from October 2024 to date?

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**Acting 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 hon. Member has not specified the age range of young people but in this context, we will use age range 16 to 25. 11 young people from ages 16 to 25 have attended the Zone Step Up and Thrive project from October 24 to present May 2025.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q544/2025**

**PATHS program –  
Enrolment by young people**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 544, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** How many young people have enrolled on the PATHS program, broken down by months from June 2024 to date?

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**Acting 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 hon. Member has once again not specified a date range of the young people to whom he is referring but in our view the term young people refers to those between 16 and 25 and also up to age 30 for people with supported needs. Therefore, I will therefore give the breakdown as follows per month.

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Month	Young people		
	Young people Total	16-25	26-30
Jun-24	1	0	1
Jul-24	4	2	2
Aug-24	5	3	2
Sep-24	3	2	1
Oct-24	3	2	1
Nov-24	7	4	3
Dec-24	0	0	0
Jan-25	0	0	0
Feb-25	9	5	4
Mar-25	5	2	3
Apr-25	5	2	3
May-25	22	17	5

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, may I ask whether the Hon. Minister had some type of enrolment target in mind and whether the figures of enrolment, which he has just given, how do they measure up with those targets? I do not have an overall total so perhaps it would be helpful to give me the total number.

**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, there was no target set. It was a programme that is there for anyone that may need it. Not just young people.

There are many more people that have enrolled in the PATHS programme but I have just given the details of those between 16 and 30 and as I mentioned, there is no target. This is open to however many people require this service.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, and if I may, if the Government had no sort of target or sector that it was trying to target in mind then how did it go about allocating the adequate resources of young people that were to take up this course? Is this done on an ad hoc basis? So if in the month where there's one person who's signed up, we may have enough resources but in the month where we have five people who want to take part in the upskilling there may not be enough because we haven't really taken a view on how many people we'd be able to service.

So can I ask the Hon. Minister in those terms, how was he able to prepare and plan ahead of the resource allocation if we had no idea of the target group, which we were going for?

**Hon. C P Santos:** I was asked about a target number, not a target group. Therefore, the target group are those people who need to upskill, who do not have the necessary qualifications. Therefore, this falls under an employment programme.

We are targeting those people that do not have qualifications or do not have a lot of qualifications due to whatever circumstances in life and are able to upskill. We have a classroom that fits up to eight people at one time and we have staff within the different departments. So we have someone that mans it for the supported employment programme, we have people that man it for the EDEC programme, we have people that man this in the prison under Coracle, we have people that man it in Bruce's Farm.

Therefore, we have all different members of staff from different areas that are able to man this. It is according to where they are. The people in prison have their own programme. We have five computers so five people can do it at one time. We have eight in the classroom and we are able to just turn over as many people as required. We have not found any issues at the moment.

2660 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, may I ask the Hon. Minister how, if I can put in these terms, meaningful these courses are. Therefore, what type of benchmarks do we have in place to ascertain or then assess in future, whether these PATHS programme initiatives is actually working? So for instance, I understand that in December, there were 17 people who ordered certificates of completion of this PATHS programme but how do we ascertain whether this course is actually  
2665 functioning beyond enrolment and beyond these certificates?

Is the measure that the Government is going to take whether they end up getting employed? Is that how we are going to assess whether this programme per se is actually really working? I just want to put the question in those terms and just note for the record that I am fully supportive of this programme.

2670 I just want to ensure that we have benchmarks so we can then say that these are actually doing what they are supposed to do and if there are any changes that we have to do to get these people to upskill them better and get them into employment that we do so as a result.

**Hon. C P Santos:** The PATHS programme is like any other qualification. Can you ascertain that  
2675 anyone who gets a Masters in Psychology is going to become a psychologist? Is the benchmark for success becoming a psychologist or becoming employed in any different sector?

Qualifications are exactly that. We give the people the tools to be able to upskill whatever the qualification may be according to people's different levels of education and what they are capable of doing. We offer in Gibraltar a very broad spectrum of qualifications. We offer GCSEs, A levels,  
2680 BTECs, different certifications, we offer a lot of different apprenticeships within the training centre, nursing, insurance, and we have the PATHS programme. Our aim is to give people as many different pathways as possible in order for them to become the best that they can be. Now hopefully all these qualifications from the huge fan that we offer will hopefully aid and support people getting into employment.

2685 The good thing about the PATHS programme is that we are getting a lot of people who maybe had to leave employment for a while and are trying to get back. People who maybe need extra support in computer skills or it is as successful as being able to offer people the chance to upskill. We also have the other part, which is about confidence building because a lot of people need to get back to work or those who have not had the opportunity to maybe have a full education as  
2690 maybe others have.

We have found that there have been people with issues of self-esteem so we do a lot of different workshops and different types of programmes with alternative art therapies as well. Therefore, for us success is when someone comes and wants to upskill and get better. Therefore, for me that is success and hopefully together with the employment programmes that we have  
2695 going, our aim is to give people pathways into employment.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q545/2025**  
**Alternative Tours –**  
**How many**

**Hon. C P Santos:** Question 545, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Is the Government able to confirm how many “Alternative Tours” have been  
2705 given by tour operators to date, since its introduction in May 2024, broken down by months?

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

2710 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, these tours would be operated by private local operators so it is obviously not Government information.

2715 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may, I understand that they are being carried out by private local operators. I think they are advertised on the Nature Reserve website and on the private operators' pages themselves but can the Minister confirm whether they have been in his respective Ministry for Tourism given any sort of feedback with respect to these alternative tours? Has he had feedback from the operators themselves in terms of uptake? Is it popular or is that information not given to him?

2720 **Hon. C P Santos:** My discussions with the tour operators tend to be about Gibraltar's product in general so I have not really received any feedback, positive or negative, either way on how the booking of the alternative tours is. I do not get it for the Marmalade run either and I do not get it for how many day trips they take up to wherever they go. I do not get that type of detail.

2725 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may, I believe that one of the rationales behind this alternative tour in the first place was to achieve what I think was described as a decongestion in the Upper Rock Nature Reserve and to offer repeat visitors an alternative tour, as it is so titled, something different in Gibraltar because they have already come in the past. Has this alternative tour programme achieved that decongestion which they were trying to achieve?

2730 **Hon. C P Santos:** From what I hear from my hon. Colleague, it has not yet achieved decongestion.

2735 **Hon. G Origo:** Separately, may I ask, because the plan behind this tour was really to decongest and offer different alternative tours to what was going on in the nature reserve, can I ask, having visited the Visit Gibraltar website, why I couldn't find any trace of this alternative tour on the website, not least given its very important aim behind it to decongest such a site such as the Nature Reserve? So why is it not being advertised on the website, which we advertise every other tour, every other bar, most shops and amenities of the like?

2740 **Hon. C P Santos:** I would need to check if we advertise tours, because I think we advertise products that is what we do. We advertise what Gibraltar has to offer, but I do not think we sell tours. I would have to double-check.

2745 It is a very big website. We worked on it last year, but I do not remember us selling tours, in particular because we cannot necessarily promote private businesses in that way but I stand to be corrected. I will go tomorrow and check fully whether that is the case.

2750 **Hon. G Origo:** I can confirm for the record, having looked at it just only yesterday, that there are different tours that are being advertised as tours specific to the Gorham's Cave, the St. Michael's Cave, the Upper Rock, maybe not tours as packages per se, but there wasn't any reference whatsoever to the alternative tour and that package in that sense being referred to on the site but there were different other tours by different other operators which were earmarks within the site, and I just query why this was one which was not there.

2755 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I need to check this. I think what we do is we do not advertise particular tour packages, but every different site within the alternative tours is within the website as well, because we need to promote the site and the destination. As I said, I am going to double-check if it is that you can click in and go to a tour operator with a prearranged tour. I do not think we do that on the website, but as I said, I will double-check.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

**Q546/2025**  
**Arts Advisory Council –**  
**Number of meetings**

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 546, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm how many times the Arts Advisory Council have met since the last Election?

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**Acting 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 Gibraltar Arts Advisory Council has met on three occasions since the last Election.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I ask, is this the same council which was appointed only recently on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2025, or is he including meetings of a differently constituted council? Just for clarity, is this the same council, which was only constituted a couple of months ago and has met three times?

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**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, the Arts Advisory Council was constituted as soon as I came in. It just became statutory in January but this Arts Advisory Council was already meeting as soon as I came into office.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Can I ask, Madam Speaker, whether this Arts Advisory Council is a paid role for those persons who are members of the council, or is this voluntary work, which is carried out?

**Hon. C P Santos:** This is voluntary work, Madam Speaker.

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**Hon. G Origo:** May I ask you, Hon. Minister, for the purpose of and sake of transparency, whether there are any summaries of the minutes of the meetings and the matters discussed within these council meetings? If not, does the Government have any intention of publicising them?

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**Hon. C P Santos:** Every meeting I walk into is minuted. We do not usually publish the minutes of meetings of councils of this nature.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Finally, can I ask for the purpose of clarity, what is the remit of this council? How are we then going to assess whether or not the council itself has carried any success with respect to informing cultural policy, per se?

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**Hon. C P Santos:** The remit, as its name implies, is an advisory council. I have different representatives from the different art forms, and we discuss where Gibraltar is at culturally at the moment, any new ideas, any new projects and any new collaborations. I am unsure how we can mark success on something that is so subjective.

I find it very successful already that I can meet with different people from the arts community, and we have an open debate to see how we can work to improve what our already very successful offering in Gibraltar is.

2810 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q547/2025**  
**“Elite Funding” programme –**  
**Number of young people benefited**

2815 **Acting Clerk:** Question 547, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** How many young people have benefited from the “Elite Funding” programme designed to support the pursuit of professional careers in the respective arts’ vocational schools?

2820 **Acting 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 refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer to Questions 728 of 2024.

2825 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may, I believe I was just navigating through the Hansard of May and March of 2024, and I could not identify how many people had benefitted from this elite funding programme. Therefore, could the Hon. Minister, for the purposes of passing on information and being helpful, just confirm how many people have benefitted from this course, because I can see that the funding programme has been around for at least a better part of the  
2830 last year, and I just wanted to ascertain how many members have used it.

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** The question was asked by the Leader of the Opposition in October, and I will actually repeat what I answered the  
2835 Leader of the Opposition back then. We have spent £10,000, as budgeted, and have had 12 applicants that have applied for the elite funding programme, of which 9 have been successful and 3 unsuccessful.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister what sort of criteria is used to determine which applicants are successful and unsuccessful, and how that process is carried out?  
2840 Is there such a committee, group, and individual that takes these decisions?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Goodness, it is like being back to the future. I had this whole conversation with the Leader of the Opposition already, and sometimes I would encourage the Hon. Member to do his research, because it is like the second question that I have already answered previously.  
2845 The criteria is based around vocational schools under the DADA, the UK DADA organisation, and it is for vocational schools of art and music and dance and drama, and then there's a committee that chooses who needs the support.

A lot of it, as I explained the last time, tuition fees for some of these vocational courses are more expensive than the ones for the traditional degrees, so normally you top that up if there is  
2850 a difference. If they have got funding already from the Gibraltar Government, it may not fall under the criteria. If it is a university course, not a vocational school, it does not fall under the criteria.

Therefore, the criteria is set and it is published and it can be found on the website, and there is a committee of people that look. It is very much mathematics. It is about who needs the help and who falls under the approved organisations.

2855 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I just pick up on one of the points that the Hon. Minister has just stated in the tail end of his question, was that the criteria is on the one hand set and it is available online, but a few days ago I was on – so I'll ask where this criteria is available – I was on

the Gibraltar Cultural Services website and one of the directions it takes me is to look up forms to make applications for this type of elite funding, but when you go to the section on forms for elite funding, it just isn't there.

So how are prospective applicants that want to make benefits of this elite funding programme going to be able to ascertain what criteria they are going to be judged upon if the data is actually not online? I ask that in the same vein and taking into consideration that the fact when this programme was announced last year that the applications came out and were announced on the 17th of July and closed on the 31st of July, which was a two-week period. So why is it that if the criteria is not online and the period is so narrow that the Government is taking this position where it seems that they do not want that many people to apply, not least because the criteria is not there and readily available and the window is very short to then submit the application?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I am going to have to double check on that because when in October I myself searched online because I could predict that this could have been one of the questions that was asked. I do not know if there is an issue now or whether the hon. Member cannot find it. I am just going to ask about it because normally all the forms are online, especially under scholarships.

The reason why it is in July and only a short period is because it was the first time that we were adding it and I couldn't really commit until after the Budget session. Therefore, as soon as the Budget was approved, I sent out the advert and I had to make sure that the young people applying had time to confirm and know that they had this funding. Therefore, if I did not do it in that short period of time within the month of July, maybe those leaving in September may not have found out about the scholarship that they were given. So it is the complete opposite of what the hon. Member is trying to imply and there is no secret where I come from, where I trained and what my background is. So there is nothing more that I can do or would bring me joy than to support people going into vocational schools, into the arts. So there is nothing sinister about us trying to hide this information. It is the complete opposite.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may ask, I take it from the Hon. Minister's reply that then, because there's nothing sinister with the two-week application window, that the intention is to open it for a much longer period, perhaps this time around once the Budget session is approved.

Moving away from that, can I ask, given that this programme seems to be one which will be a recurring one and one that he fully supports, whether the Government or his ministry is going to offer any opportunities to young people who are beneficiaries of this course to be able to come back to Gibraltar, work and benefit the arts community. Is there some sort of project or plan to be able to attract these people back to Gibraltar? Alternatively, are they going to qualify for elite funding, then go, and work elsewhere?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Every scholarship in Gibraltar is given with that hope that you can come and give back to your community but we are not that draconian that we are going to force people to have to come back. This is the way that Gibraltar can support these young performers that we are very proud of are currently working within the West End.

There is a growth in people actually taking the arts as a career, many of whom are currently performers professionally. Therefore, we support them and we want the Gibraltarian to be able to succeed. If he succeeds in Gibraltar, great. If he succeeds abroad, fantastic.

I am one of those examples of someone that got a discretionary grant to be able to study in the arts. I went away, I worked abroad for 12 years and then I came back and I put my knowledge and everything I had learned into practise here and now we have an academy of performing arts and we have a Minister here that is vying for culture as well as many other things.

So ideally at some point they would come back but for us it is about supporting the Gibraltarian to be able to be successful whether it is in Gibraltar or whether it is abroad.



**Hon. G Origo:** Thank you Madam Speaker for indulging me. Yes, just like the Hon. Minister has just noted, I could get a law degree and decide to work in the UK but that is not the premise of my question. The point of my question was whether any opportunities were being offered back in Gibraltar to attract these people to come and work here or were we going to just have to wait another 10 or 12 years for them to get experience to come back and then get their expertise within the arts and culture community.

That was the premise of my question. What kind of opportunities are available to these people who are given the benefits of this elite funding programme?

**Hon. C P Santos:** This is the same opportunity that is awarded to any Gibraltarian that gets a scholarship. We give people the opportunity to train and upskill, get degrees, and get qualifications. That does not come with an assurance of a job. We cannot ensure everyone is going to be employed, everyone who we support with a scholarship to train abroad. Right now, we will support people as much as we can but us supporting someone to go and study abroad is not an assurance of a job here when you come back but normally there are a lot of opportunities for people.

Are we going to offer them opportunities to become a professional actor here in Gibraltar? Well I don't think we have that type of extent in the field but could they form part of one of the many educational facilities, both private or Government subsidised, in order to be able to continue? Yes, but I am not planning to put a stop to anyone that wants to be a professional dancer because they might not be able to do so in Gibraltar.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q548/2025**

**CEO/ex-CEO of the Tourist Board –  
Ministry for the Environment**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 548, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, does the CEO/ex-CEO of the Tourist Board now work for the Minister for the Environment?

**Acting 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 549.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 549, The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Who will be directing Gibraltar's Tourism strategy from now on?

**Acting 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 product development side of Gibraltar's tourism strategy will be led by the CEO of Tourism Product Development, Mr Kevin Bossino, under the Ministry of the Environment, which also oversees and manages the Upper Rock Nature Reserve and tourist sites. The marketing side of Gibraltar's tourism strategy will continue to be led by the Gibraltar Tourist Board.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** But who is in charge of the Gibraltar Tourist Board?

2960 **Hon. C P Santos:** The Gibraltar Tourist Board has SEOs. We have a marketing representative in the UK that deals with the marketing side in the UK and then we have an SEO in the Tourist Board.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** So the CEO of the Gibraltar Tourist Board is no longer in charge of the marketing of the Tourist Board. Why would that be?

2965 **Hon. C P Santos:** Historically, the Gibraltar Tourist Board used to manage the sites, the Upper Rock Nature Reserve and marketing and then the sites got taken over by the Ministry of the Environment due to the sites mainly being within the Upper Rock Nature Reserve and then the Gibraltar Tourist Board took on the marketing.

2970 The CEO, Mr Bossino, came in at a time when we needed a lot of support with marketing. It was at a time post-COVID when the figures needed to get better and improve and now we find that with the new investment, private and public investment, and the new product development that is going into the Upper Rock Nature Reserve there needed to be someone leading on that.

2975 This has been a sideways move and it is about semantics. The only change is that he is under the Ministry of Environment and not the Ministry of Tourism but we are in close collaboration in the same way we were before. We just need a closer collaboration with the Ministry of Environment due to the product development as opposed to site management but there is a lot of work that we are still going to collaborate on and the tourism strategy has already been completed by Mr Bossino and that's what we are following and we are going to be very much in touch in the same way that we have been in touch in the past.

2980 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** To whom do the people who are in charge of the marketing strategy the tourist board, to whom do they work to Ministerially? Do they work to the Minister for Tourism or to the Minister for the Environment?

2985 **Hon. C P Santos:** The marketing team works under the Ministry of Tourism.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see. I mean, does the Minister not see that all of that sounds really, really strange because Mr Bossino is brought in with great fanfare by the Government as a local person that I have finally identified and the previous Minister, Minister Daryanani said, you know, we found someone with a great track experience in tourism to come and lead the tourism strategy and product development for Gibraltar.

2990 This person comes in as CEO of the Tourist Board but the Tourist Board continues to exist. It continues to have personnel dealing with the marketing strategy who are accountable to the Minister for Tourism and the only one who is accountable to the Minister for the Environment is the CEO himself, who is moved sideways. I mean, all of this sounds very strange, doesn't it? It sounds as if there is some kind of problem here, isn't it?

3000 **Hon. C P Santos:** This is very simple. The press randomly made a story out of something that is not really a story. If the tourist sites were still under the Gibraltar tourist board, there would not have been a shift.

3005 At the time we were working, the CEO of tourism was working on marketing but we found that we needed someone now that there is a lot of product being developed and there was a lot of different issues that were falling under marketing that had nothing to do with marketing. A lot of new products that we were dealing with, that both Mr Bossino and myself were being approached with and we were like, this is not a marketing this has nothing to do with marketing, it is got to do with product. Therefore, we were ending up having meetings for people who wanted to offer new products into Gibraltar.

3010 Therefore, we have worked very closely together throughout this process and we found that really we needed now a person to head the development of new products as to where Gibraltar is now. I am not sure this has been discussed here but I know everyone is aware here of an

expression of interest for all the areas in the Upper Rock and there is a lot of management and directions that has needed to develop the product. I understand that all this needs to be made sound like oh look; there is a problem as said by the Leader of the Opposition.

3015 It sounds like it is a problem. It could sound however, you want it to sound. For us it really is not a problem. It has been something that was not even news and the press just made it into a story but it is about being in a different office under someone who manages the areas where we need more support from a CEO that was brought with a lot of experience and we want to use his experience in the best way we can.

3020 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, but it is strange because the product is not just a sideways move. You are putting the CEO of the Tourist Board that continues to exist and is accountable to the Minister for Tourism under a different Minister in relation to and with a slightly different title to concentrate on product development but product development of what?

3025 Product development of tourism. Tourism being a pillar of the economy. Therefore, the product development of tourism as a pillar of the economy is given to the Ministry for the Environment. That is like giving the product development of financial services, another pillar of the economy, to the Income Tax Department. It makes no sense whatsoever. So perhaps the Minister can give us the real reason why this has happened.

3030 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker, if I may assist. Mr Bossino continues to work for the Government. I think we have to remember that he works for the Government and increasingly there is trans-Ministerial cooperation and we work extremely closely together. This is one Mr Bossino that I really can work with. I really think very highly of him and get on extremely well with this particular Mr Bossino and his knowledge of tourism will help us because as it is well known, the tourist sites are managed by the Ministry for the Environment, by the Department of the Environment and the Heritage Section and, as is well known here, because this has been a bone of contention with the other Mr Bossino. We are developing these sites extraordinarily well using tourist money to improve them to a level never seen before in Gibraltar.

3035 I don't want to sound like Mr Trump by saying better than ever before but it actually is the case that we need someone with that kind of experience who can work with me and with my team linking across with the team of my hon. Friend the Minister for Tourism and he will be working and attending events with him. We are actually merging in a way. We are trying to not have such strict lines between Ministers when Ministers can work together and when officials can actually work across ministry.

3045 This is going to be extremely successful and the Hon. other Mr Bossino will find it very hard to flaw the things that we are doing in tourist sites in Gibraltar.

3050 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** We equally, I think we welcomed at the time the appointment of Mr Bossino as CEO of the Tourist Board because the Government had alighted on a local individual with experience who could lead in the area. We badly thought that there should be localisation of the post and that the person should be working in Gibraltar. Remember those debates here in this House where we made a big thing about it.

3055 What we cannot fathom is that suddenly years later this broken up approach and isn't this the problem that you have got a Minister for Tourism, Ministerially responsible to drive that area forward, who has ceded in some way product development of that pillar of the economy to the Ministry for the Environment who really has other responsibilities and other views and the product development of tourism is not just the upper rock or the management of certain sites  
3060 traditionally under the Ministry for the Environment. It is much wider than that and is not this the issue of what is at the heart of the directionless tourism policy of the Government?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Nothing could be further from the truth. I understand that their job is to ask questions and make it all sound like the Government is this wicked monster. This is very simple.

3065 I have not ceded product development because I do not manage product. We market the product. Therefore, the staffing of product development is over here with my colleague.

3070 So imagine if someone from another ministry, let me put it to the hon. Member who works in a law firm and there is another law firm that also works in family law and they just move over and start giving instructions to that law firm. Listen, we cannot have someone in one ministry instructing people in another ministry. That is why it is a silly sideways move.

3075 We have kept CEO tourism product development because it is essentially the same. We could have within the next 18 months a lot of new products, a lot of things working and then maybe we'll need to bring it back and it is one of those things that it is about having someone under a Minister on an official on paper this is who you report to and this is who your team is because that's where it is. It is not. It does not go further than that.

3080 As much as this is laboured and tried to make it seem like there is not. Last year I went with someone from the Ministry of Environment on a conference on sustainability. I am already going with Mr Bossino when it comes to things that are product based like the World Travel Market but he will go under his guise of CEO of product development but we will still work together because the marketing of the product still needs to work together. It is not like, oh, there you are.

I have ceded the CEO of tourism to you and therefore here I am. It does not work like that.

3085 **Madam Speaker:** All right. I am not going to call the next question. I am going to suggest that maybe we have a short recess.

3090 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** We have been here since three o'clock and certainly, yourself and the Clerk have been here literally without being able to leave. Therefore, I suggest that we have a recess of about 15 minutes and we reconvene at quarter past seven so we do not stay too late and then we will be dealing with my questions.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, we will recess for 15 minutes.

*The House recessed at 6.55 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 7.10 p.m.*

## EDUCATION, THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

3095

**Q550/2025**

**St. Martins School –**

**Number of pupils expected to leave; Services used**

**Acting Clerk:** We continue with questions. Question 550, the Hon. E J Reyes on behalf of the Hon. A Sanchez.

3100 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Sorry Madam Speaker on behalf of my colleague who had a previous appointment.

I ask the Government, Could the Government provide the number of pupils expected to leave St. Martin's School at the end of the current academic year, indicating:

3105 (a) How many are expected to begin using the services provided at St. Bernadette's Centre; and

(b) How many have alternative arrangements in place with the Government to access other services, including a breakdown of what those services are.

**Acting 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):** Yes, Madam Speaker, there are five pupils expected to leave St. Martin's School at the end of this academic year. It is the Department of Education's understanding that all five pupils leaving St. Martin's this year will start attending St. Bernadette's in September 2025. The Department of Education is not aware of any plans for any of these children to have alternative provision elsewhere.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you for those figures, Madam Speaker. I detract from what the Minister is saying, that all five have taken up the facilities that will be offered by St. Bernadette's. However, can the Minister confirm that should a particular family wish to avail themselves of other facilities, other programmes that they feel might better suit the children, is the Department of Education open to this?

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If so, would there be sort of any Government financial contribution and non-financial assistance in helping find those places? Because one size does not fit, all and perhaps some of those pupils might be better or might be more beneficial to that individual not to have to necessarily go to St. Bernadette's.

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, ultimately it is up to the parents to decide what they want their children, what they think is best for their children. These children would probably be over 16 in most cases, so they would be beyond compulsory school age. If there are other opportunities available, then obviously the parents can follow that and if they wish to contact the Department of Education, if they should need some assistance, then they should do so.

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I think that alternative opportunities are limited, but certainly, they would be considered.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, the Minister is correct in his assumption that we are talking of those who are past the compulsory school age. I am thinking more in the lines towards some sort of, within their capabilities, some sort of sheltered employment, shall we call it that, where the Government departments could help to absorb these people into the bigger, wider adult world, because their condition could be such that although not entirely 100% self-sufficient, shall we call it that, they could benefit there. Hence why I ask, would there be support from the Minister's area, and would there be perhaps a financial contribution, because we could enter into a partnership with the private sector. I know some individuals who, in days gone past, certainly when I was sat on that side of the House, they were employed by a private company, but there was a contribution and understanding with Government funding.

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, some of the young people who go to St. Bernadette's also attend the Gibraltar College, and there they are assisted in linking up with employers, and I also know that the Ministry for Equality works very hard in trying to assist these young people to find employment with the support of employers. The exact arrangement will depend on the employer and on the child, but certainly, this is something that can be taken up and would be supported as much as possible.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, I am very grateful for that answer. Above all, I make a special note when I debrief my colleague that the Minister has not answered in a negative or defensive tone, and perhaps if she requires anything further in consultation with the Speaker, you might allow her to press any question that may arise out of the answers that have been given. I will leave that for the future, Madam Speaker.

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**Madam Speaker:** The opportunity to ask supplementaries is now, and can be asked by any member of the Opposition, but I am not going to allow supplementaries on this at a future date.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** You are correct, Madam Speaker. What I meant is, should a new topic arise out of...

**Madam Speaker:** That is hypothetical... Yes, the Hon. D J Bossino.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, I wanted to probe the Minister further in connection with the second limb of the question under B, which poses the question about the... Seeks from the Minister a breakdown of the alternative services beyond St. Bernadette's which are on offer, and in response to one of the supplementary, the Minister refers to the parents taking part in the decision-making process, but of course it is not just limited to the parents. Particularly if they are of limited means, they rely a lot, on what the Government, on the Government side, can provide. And that is, I think, what the question from Mrs Sanchez is seeking to elicit from the Government by way of replies and he said that the choices are limited, but can he specify what those choices are beyond St. Bernadette's?

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I have answered the question. It says, how many have alternative arrangements in place for the Government to access other services, including a breakdown of what those services are? I have said there are none, as far as we know, with alternative arrangements. Therefore, I cannot include a breakdown because there are not any who are requiring any alternative services.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** I appreciate the clarification, which the Minister, I think, quite rightly has provided, but I would ask that he answers the question, which is inherent to what I asked him in my previous supplementary, which is what alternatives are in fact currently available to parents in respect of these children?

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member is asking me to be kind to him and I hope that he will continue in that light and be very kind to me for what is left of today's meeting.

Madam Speaker, as I have said, one of the options that is open and many young people do take it up with and they make a good deal of progress is to attend the Gibraltar College for a number of sessions and I believe that the charity PossAbilities also provides facilities and opportunities for young people of that age.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is it also possible for students or pupils to remain in St Martin's? Is that currently available and if it is not, is it an option that the Government may be considering?

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, it is an option. It would, I think, be important that the teachers who know the child assess this. We have to be careful if young people over 16 remain. It would be exceptional if they remain in St Martin's. Obviously, it would be possibly not in their best interests but every such case is different and I think that this would have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

3205

**Q551/2025**

**Gibraltar Taxi Association –  
Number of disability-friendly taxis**

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 551, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm how many disability-friendly taxis are available to the Gibraltar Taxi Association and whether they have been fully operable these last few months?

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**Acting 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, this matter is one for the Gibraltar Taxi Association. However, we have discussed this with them and they are happy for me to answer and provide the information. There was one fully functional disability taxi but another one was imported last week making a total of two. The GTA is currently making arrangements to purchase a further seven in the very near future.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon. Minister for his answer. My understanding and the information I had was also that recently up until now there was only one disability-friendly taxi available. Part of my question concerned whether they had been fully operable during the last few months because the information I had was that the only then available disability-friendly taxi had not been on service and therefore there were many concerns by people who needed to use these taxis that were unable to move around Gibraltar because the only one disability-friendly taxi available was not working. Is that the case?

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, no. As I say, this is a matter for the Taxi Association. They have provided us with this information.

One functional, another one is brand new, so therefore I am assuming that that one is functional but certainly I do not believe that that is enough and that is why we have encouraged the GTA and they have agreed to purchase a further seven.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may just quickly concur with the comments of the Hon. Minister. I don't believe that one is enough and I am very pleased to hear that he has agreed and negotiated with the Association to get a further seven taxis, not least in light of recent statistics that we have seen from the Disability Society that there are at least around 1,400 persons in Gibraltar with disabilities and I accept...

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**Madam Speaker:** I must ask the hon. Member for a question.

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**Hon. G Origo:** ...With respect to the fact that we have only had one taxi, we now have two and seven are yet to come.

Can I ask the Hon. Minister whether there are any contingency plans in place when these taxis break down? Is there any sort of arrangement where persons who need access to these taxis are given some kind of alternative measures subsidised by the Association so they can actually move around Gibraltar through other private means? Is there any such contingency measures in place or what are they expected to do if the taxis are not operable?

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I would not be able to answer in detail as this is run by the Taxi Association. I would have thought that if one is brand new it is unlikely that it will break down any time soon and I have no information as to whether the other one is not in good condition. However, I am hopeful that these further seven will arrive very soon and therefore I think we would be able to cater much more adequately than they are doing now.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q552/2025**  
**Taxi service –**  
**Improvement of service**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 552, the Hon. G Origo.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Given the recent Chamber of Commerce comments that the taxi service is “sub-standard” particularly in the case of private hire; does the Government have any plans to further improve the service?

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**Acting 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 don't agree with the comments, certainly not without qualifying them by adding praise to the Taxi Association for the way that it is working with my team in order to improve the service. This was clearly visible during the Christmas period, for example, and it was clear then that the GTA can provide an excellent taxi service. I would like to add that the newly established airport taxi service is running extremely well and residents and visitors alike are now experiencing the level of availability expected at any international airport.

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Transport inspectors and the GTA themselves report to the Ministry daily on the quality of the service and it has been excellent since inception.

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In April, the implementation of a year-round city service commenced. This is the first time we have had this and it will improve the availability of taxis tremendously.

The GTA also provides daily school runs for children with supported needs, shuttle services for crewmembers who work within our bunkering sector and for cruise liner passengers, just to mention some of the unseen but very important services they provide. We recognise that there is much more to do, such as the provision of card machines in every taxi as well as better availability and improvements to the app. In saying this, I must praise the GTA committee who have been working with my Ministry proactively to bring about the many improvements already seen and are fully committed to continuing the work and deliver the taxi service that Gibraltar expects and deserves.

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I am pleased to say too that following some input from my office, a meeting is being arranged between the GTA and the Chamber of Commerce, which will, I am certain, prove fruitful. In the words of St Francis of Assisi, Madam Speaker, where there is discord, may we try to bring harmony.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may just qualify that the statement made on the GTA came about in respect of the recent changes, which took place in the airport mandating a number of taxis to stay within the airport premises whilst planes were coming to Gibraltar. My understanding is, Madam Speaker that the taxi drivers themselves want to be part of the solution and not the problem. So may I ask the Hon. Minister, given that we both agree that improvements can be made and there should be changes to improve the service in the future, how are we engaging with the drivers themselves so that they are also involved in this process?

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I do not know what the Hon. Member is referring to. Obviously, we cannot engage with every individual driver, but I can say that we engage with the representatives in the Taxi Association and I also meet with those taxi drivers or a representation of the taxi drivers who are not members of the Taxi Association and they know that I am accessible

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and I have had discussions with all of them and I often have conversations with taxi drivers. Therefore, I am aware of where they are coming from and what their needs are and their aspirations are. I actually find that they are all reacting very positively and we are seeing improvements.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q553/2025**

**Museum –**

**Drop in visitors; plans to improve the product**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 553, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** The number of museum visitors by month, appear to be dwindling, having had a total number of 2,855 visits between January to March of this year, whereas 3,311 visitors were recorded last year for the same period, representing a 14% drop. In light of this, does the Government have any plans to improve the overall museum product?

**Acting 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 know that the GSD are sworn enemies of Knightsfield Holdings and the Hon. Mr Bossino in particular is such but this question really does take the custard cream. Madam Speaker, the differential between last year and this year falls within the realms of stochastic statistical processes and it cannot be concluded with such limited data to be necessarily significant.

Many factors can affect visitor numbers and a purported drop such as this one could be influenced by a wide range of factors and need have nothing to do with the quality of the product on offer. For example, in terms of the weather, the month of March this year was exceptional as we are all aware because of unusually high rainfall, which will have impacted on visitors. In any case, trends cannot be determined on the basis of two points on a graph, which is what the Hon. Member has provided.

In actual fact, the 2025 figure is the second highest achieved for this period since 2005. Therefore, we hardly need to panic. When we look at the fluctuations between years, positive or negative, as they have been both for the January to March period between 2000 and 2025, the mean fluctuation is 63.5%. I do not want to be accused of manipulating the data by adding the significant fluctuations in this period during the COVID years. Therefore, if we remove the data sets from the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, the mean fluctuation is 17.5%, still higher than the 14% at 2024 to 2025 fluctuation, which the Hon. Member purports to be a drop. It is simply not significant, Madam Speaker. Having said this, I can assure the Hon. Member that the great professional team at the Gibraltar National Museum continues in its incessant efforts to improve this product which he will recall is not limited purely to visitor numbers, but includes also a vibrant research facility, educational facility and other areas related to museum activity.

Finally, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Member that in terms of revenue, the figure for the January to March period actually increased by 36.78% compared to the previous year, in spite of the slight drop in visitor numbers. This, the Hon. Member will agree, indicates that the current Government strategy of pricing entry to its sites at a level which reflects the site's quality is having a clear and immediate effect.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may, by way of assistance, just give the Hon. Minister a much wider than different points for him to assess, because he said that the three months for the

two years are not very representative, accurate representation of the drop that we have at hand but I have a statistics website for museum visitors from the year 2000 to 2025 and they are broken down by month and by year and with the exception of 2023, which had a few hundred visitors over the threshold since 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 to date, we have had the worst records on date with respect to museum visitors for each respective year.

Does the Hon. Minister not agree, given these points which I've given them, which is a span of 25 years, that the last four or five years do actually show a drop in visitor numbers in the museum?

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, what I am saying is that it is not statistically significant. I do not accept that it is statistically significant and we also have to bear in mind, I have mentioned other possible explanations for that, and also the fact that nowadays a lot of visits are actually virtual visits. I know that that is not what the Hon. Member is referring to, but I do not recognise this as being a statistical problem.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, the Minister says that I am a sworn enemy of this particular company. I am not a sworn enemy of this company. I am a sworn friend of the Gibraltar taxpayer. That is where my concern and our concerns come from and our concern is that more than a million pounds, I think the last figure is 1.25 million pounds, is given to this particular company to run various sites and in fact, that contract has been extended.

Therefore, I just wanted to correct the record but ask him this question. Whilst he boasts, in effect, that there has been a near, as he puts it, or tries to put it, as a 14% drop in the figures that and the time period that my learned and hon. Friend, Mr. Origo, points out in his question, aren't the absolute numbers, forgetting the fluctuation for a moment, aren't the absolute numbers, whether it is 2,800 or 3,300, quite frankly, for a site which is so important and in the centre of town, which ought to be attracting many more visits, quite frankly, derisory?

He shakes his head and I just put it to him and ask him to comment on that. Do I take it from the shaking of his head that he is satisfied with these numbers?

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** I think the hon. Member is betraying, surprisingly, a lack of understanding of how visitors visit Gibraltar because the vast majority of visitors actually do not go to the centre of town. They go around the different tourist sites, particularly in the Upper Rock and that is where the figures are, I believe, at an all-time high this year.

Therefore, I do not agree that the fact that it is in the centre of town actually makes it more accessible to the majority of tourists. I think probably the opposite is correct. I think that for the size of the museum in particular, I am absolutely satisfied.

As to certainly the product, clearly it would be good to have more visitors. However, as I also said in my answer, the income generated has also increased and as the hon. Member is so concerned about the taxpayer, clearly he will be very satisfied to hear that the taxpayer is getting more income from the museum than probably ever before.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is the Hon. Minister's position really that he is satisfied with the numbers? Furthermore, he also betrays, he says I am betraying something, he also betrays a concern on his part that actually the numbers are low but the reason why the numbers are low is because of the location of this particular attraction.

Does he not accept that this product in many respects is failing? It is failing because it has not been looked at, it has not been refurbished. I went there last summer and it is the same as when I went to school on a school trip. It is hardly changed and many of the signs and all the rest of it look jaded and this is a company which is receiving a lot of money from the taxpayer but do I take it that he says it is all fine, the product is fine, and it is simply a question of location. Is that his position?

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** The person who said it was a question of location was the hon. Member who said he would expect high numbers because it was the centre of town. Therefore, the only thing I said is that most of our tourists actually do not go to the centre of town. That is one point that I would leave to one side.

It is not correct that it has not moved since the days he was at school. I am glad that he was one of the visitors last summer. Clearly, he is one of the statistics but Madam Speaker; I have myself opened at least three different exhibits in my time as Minister for Heritage over the last few years including the Neanderthal model, including the reconstruction of the Neolithic person, including the Neolithic woman, including the discovery of a Phoenician urn. So clearly it is developing. The hon. Member perhaps would notice the difference if he went more frequently because obviously his memory from when he used to go when he was a child may be failing him.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Yes, the honourable jury member. Madam Speaker, may I ask, because the Hon. Minister makes references to the fact that the number of revenue that we have generated from visits has been going up but it is my understanding that the fees from the entrance fees for the museum has also gone up. My information is that it used to be £5; it has gone up to £15. Is that correct? If so, since when was this change implemented?

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the fees went up recently. I cannot recall exactly what the new fee is but they did go up.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, just finally if I may, because based on the discussion that we have just had, it clearly appears that the numbers of visitors, at least in the numerical visitors, even though it is generating more money, has been going down. When things go bad, at least in the medical sense, we carry out what is called a post-mortem to see what has gone wrong and identify issues and how can we improve. So given that it is clearly evident that things are going wrong with the marketing and development of the museum, can I ask the Hon. Minister whether he's minded to carry out a similar exercise, a post-mortem on the museum, if we could call it, to see how we can better improve the product.

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I think it is a bit late to do a post-mortem on one particular exhibit, the mummy but Madam Speaker, I do not accept that I have said that I recognise that the figures are going down and there is a problem with the museum. I simply do not accept that.

Therefore, I have no comment to make on the post-mortem, other than the one on the mummy.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q554/2025**  
**Tower of Homage –**  
**Restoration works**

**Q567/2025**  
**Moorish Castle –**  
**Running of site post refurbishment**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 554, the Hon. G Origo.

3460 **Hon. G Origo:** Given the recently announced restoration works to take place at the Tower of Homage, can the Government confirm whether it still has plans to provide studio spaces for artists adjacent to this site – in line with its manifesto commitment?

3465 **Acting 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, I will answer this question together with Question 567.

3470 **Acting Clerk:** Question 567, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is it the intention that a company or other entity will run the Moorish Castle site post refurbishment; if so, has this company/entity been identified and if so which one is it?

3475 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change.

3480 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, Fortress Attractions Limited will be managing the Moorish Castle facility as a subcontractor to the Gibraltar National Museum. With regards to the restoration of the outer keep, which is the area the Hon. Member is referring to, its future use is under consideration at this point in time in the context of the refurbishment of the Moorish Castle as a whole.

3485 **Madam Speaker:** The Hon. G Origo.

3490 **Hon. G Origo:** Yes, Madam Speaker, and if I may just take supplementaries on my Question, which is Question 554. I note that I made the question on the premise that I found on the Government's manifesto that there was a commitment very specific to say that studio spaces would be provided within this area. He now says that the use of the outside area is under consideration.

Can he clarify on how these two positions reconcile? On the one hand, we have a promise, a manifesto commitment to put these and produce the studio spaces and on the other hand, he is telling us that these are still up for consideration. Could you please provide clarity on that?

3495 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Yes, Madam Speaker, when the manifesto was prepared and in fact this was prepared at the time when I was Minister for Culture, we had not yet embarked on the extensive refurbishment of the Moorish Castle and we were not quite clear where that was going to go. In the context of that refurbishment and the success that that is seeing, it may be that there may be an alternative use for that particular area. It is something that the Hon. Minister for Culture and I would have to discuss if they still have that requirement.

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There has been considerable interest from outside Gibraltar in that area by way of enhancing it in the Moorish style including potential funds from outside Gibraltar and this is why we are still looking at an option without discarding any.

3505 **Hon. G Origo:** If I may Madam Speaker, I am very pleased on the one hand, to hear from the Hon. Minister that parts of the considerations at stake is that they are reconsidering whether to maintain the integrity of this site as a stand-alone heritage landmark by not tainting it, if we can call it that, with studio spaces. Can the Hon. Minister then confirm, I think that is the effect of the statement that he has made, that he is going to take into account the historical and architectural  
3510 status of this site and therefore that will be the basis of the consideration of whether or not he goes ahead with the studio spaces because in the manifesto commitment it did say that they had already consulted and approved designs with heritage stakeholders but it appears that now different heritage considerations are at play and I would be grateful for his clarification on that.

3515 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** All that was correct and we did have the discussion with the heritage stakeholders. Now on seeing the way that the Moorish Castle is developing there has been an interest from potential philanthropic funders to develop that also as part of the Moorish theme but it is something that is still under discussion and as I said in my answer, the whole thing is under consideration as to which direction we go.

3520 **Hon. G Origo:** If I may just finally, given that we are steering towards the premise that the Moorish Castle will be preserved as a stand-alone heritage site, is the Government still committed to providing studio spaces to artists, which was the premise of the initial question, whether or not to take form next to the Moorish Castle site or otherwise.

3525 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** I think we need to tackle that question once we have determined the use of that space.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. D J Bossino on Question 567.

3530 **Hon. D J Bossino:** As I have understood it, the Hon. the Minister has replied to my friend Mr Origo in relation to the refurbishment works, whilst my question was more about what's going to happen thereafter and he referred to the specific area which is the outer keep element of the site. Now I think that is still in abeyance, still has not been decided but may I ask him this, is he able, is  
3535 that element going to go out for tender? On the face of it, it is not because of that, but I just make an observation that it will be, I would have thought, a lucrative venture for whoever gets it and that's the question, is it going to go out to tender and not necessarily assigned to the structure that is currently now carrying out the refurbishment works, which is the infamous Knightsfield Holdings and Fortress Attractions.

3540 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the potential use of the outer keep would not; certainly, the uses we are looking at would not be lucrative.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** The Hon. the Minister, with respect, has not answered my question. He has  
3545 made a comment on my observation, which he says is inaccurate but can he answer the question in relation to whether this particular activity is going to go out to tender?

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, it depends on what we determine the activity is. If the activity is to develop it for argument's sake as cultural facilities for the Government, it might be  
3550 the Government that does it. It may be that the philanthropic donation may be to develop for argument's sake an Arabic-type garden a la Granada. That would not necessarily be something that would have to go out to tender because it could perhaps be done internally by the

Government. Therefore, it really depends on what the outcome of this consideration is. I think it is too early to say.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Will it in any way be impacted that decision-making process, or is it separate to the announced expressions of interest which was issued, I think, during the course of last summer, in respect of which we still haven't alighted on a decision?

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** This particular area was not included within that expression of interest.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Insofar as the answers and the replies that the Hon. Minister has currently provided is predicated on the outer keep element of the site, are there any differences in respect to the other bits of the site, i.e. the inner keep? Are there separate considerations? I would ask him to expand on that.

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** The inner keep and the Tower of Homage are part of the current project that we have already discussed. The only part that is not included in this particular project is the outer keep, which is where the Hon. Member, Mr Origo, has been referring to.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** To clarify, when the Hon. Minister says it is part of the current project, it is part of the current refurbishment project. Is that correct? Therefore, whilst I did not distinguish the position, I simply said the Moorish Castle site, the Hon. Minister has and has taken me down that particular path under the guise of the outer keep, but I would ask him please to provide me an answer with the inner keep.

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So once the restoration and refurbishment work has been completed insofar as the inner keep is concerned, what is going to happen to the running of it thereafter?

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** That is the answer that I provided, it would be run by Fortress Attractions Limited.

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Fortunately, before too long he would be able to ask the other Mr Bossino all these questions, perhaps over Sunday lunch.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Oh sorry, I see. Therefore, Fortress Attractions Limited is the successful company, which has been assigned the future running of the inner keep.

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Did that go out to tender? If not, why not and if it did, when did it go out to tender?

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Mr. Speaker, the Moorish Castle, Tower of Homage inner keep are part of the contract of the museum, Knightsfield Holding and it has been subcontracted by them.

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**Madam Speaker:** You have asked six supplementaries on this. I know we are having fun back and forth, but I have to cut it. Next question.

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#### Q555/2025

#### Rosia Bay aquarium project – Support by Minister for the Environment

**Acting Clerk:** Question 555, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Does the Minister for the Environment support the Rosia Bay aquarium project, which proposes an oceanic display and research centre?

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**Acting 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 need to be satisfied as to the implications on heritage, on animal welfare, on the acquisition of specimens, on the quality and relevance of the intended research and the entity that will carry out this research as well as keeping within the law. I will present my views on the proposal at the meeting of the Development and Planning Commission. Once I have fully considered the plans and listened to the various representations, I will be able to form a view.

**Hon. G Origo:** I had a series of supplementaries which I wanted to take, but given that the Hon. Minister is saying that he has not taken a view and that is still pending, I don't think that the relevance of my supplementary is coming to play at this stage, so I will take the opportunity once he does take a view and once we do see these plans materialise to perhaps submit the question on the basis that the project is going ahead.

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

**Q556/2025**  
**Recycling rates –**  
**Below target**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 556, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Given that recycling rates are well below the Government's target, with just 12% of waste being recycled, how is the Government proposing to reach the targeted 55% by the end of this year?

**Acting 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):** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change. Madam Speaker, the 55% target will be extremely challenging to reach within the proposed timeframes. Nevertheless, there are a number of measures envisaged that will assist in this.

First is the commencement of the commercial recycling regulations. They have already been commenced, Madam Speaker. This requires all places of business to recycle the municipal waste and will have a significant impact, particularly in respect of glass and cans from the hospitality sector.

Secondly, the introduction of new recycling streams such as textiles and organic waste. The textile bins in particular have been extremely well utilised with over 31,000 kilogrammes having been collected since they were introduced.

Thirdly, the recent announcement of an agreement for a new waste management facility. The facility will include a sorting and processing plant comprising ballistic separators as well as manual sorting to maximise the recovery of the recyclable fraction of waste. Ultimately, however, achieving these targets will require a community-wide effort and to this end, the Department of the Environment will also be engaging in public awareness initiatives to increase awareness and understanding and is exploring the possibility of introducing recycling incentives as well as stricter enforcement of penalties for non-compliance.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may, can I just, on the tail end of his question, ask what sorts of incentives the Hon. Minister is considering and whether these are specific to businesses

3650 or will they apply to individuals in order to get them to encourage to recycle more because I am very interested and fully supportive of that so I just want to elaborate and expand a bit more on what kind of incentives or disincentives the Minister is considering.

3655 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, a disincentive, as I said, is a stricter enforcement of penalties and closer observation of how people recycling, it is now illegal to put the wrong sort of thing in the wrong type of bin and that can be monitored particularly with cameras and so on but by way of incentive, we are looking at both commercial and individual and we are looking at schemes such as a prize for recycling initiatives perhaps some financial incentives as well and we are discussing various options and some of these things are seen in other parts of the world and  
3660 we are looking to see whether we can introduce some of these here.

**Hon. G Origo:** If I may briefly ask a few questions with respect to the recycling plant which he introduced in the response to his question he did say that there is a recent announcement that was in the press as a new separation plant which is being built or going to be built before 2026 near the Europe point. Can I ask whether this plant is going to be able to deal with under-recycled items or is it just a separation plant on its own right?  
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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I think this is stretching the supplementary because I have not been asked to answer details on the plant. I think the question is will it only separate or will it treat? It will separate and without going into too much detail some of the recycling most of the recycling, the intention is to export it because it has a commercial value.  
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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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#### Q557/2025

#### Refuse collection – Reduction in number of employees

**Acting Clerk:** Question 557, the Hon. G Origo.

3680 **Hon. G Origo:** Given the reduction to the number of employees overall and the number of refuse collectors per truck, is the Government satisfied that these new changes, albeit potentially cost saving, will produce a better service for Gibraltar's refuse collection?

3685 **Acting 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 has engaged in extensive and constructive dialogue with GIC and Unite to ensure that these changes result in cost savings for the taxpayer at no detriment to the service provided. Government will be closely monitoring the situation to ensure that this is indeed the case and retains the right to intervene as necessary should the service ever drop before the required standards.  
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**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker and if I may I believe the Hon. Minister said that he will continuously be reviewing the changes and carry out any amendments to that should it be necessary to remedy the situation but as a current system stands in place now are there any contingency measures available to deal with any uptakes and volumes with respect to waste increases or decreases because I understand that we are proposing less routes with less trucks  
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and less employees so I wonder how we are going to be able to manage the current refuse collection if everything seems by resources point of view going down.

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker they would have to provide the service to the satisfaction of the Government if not there are provisions in the agreement where the Government would act.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question if there is one.

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**Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I have a couple but I will do one at a time. The first one is will the Government consider returning to the lunchtime or the two o'clock collection in the summer months when tourism levels are higher turnover is greater particularly for the collection in town when smells and obviously the visible nuisance that it causes would be more prevalent in the summer months. Would it consider increasing it at least for that particular period?

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** I believe that the department has already made arrangements for that to be tackled. I stand to be corrected but I believe that is the case.

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**Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker will the Hon. Minister be able to clarify whether the cost savings will cause a knock on impact now or in the future however small within the realms of possibility that at some point in the future the private sector whether companies or private residents within certain estates would be charged for refuse collection.

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker there is absolutely no intention of that.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may just briefly refer to I believe what was the Government statement and press releases relating to this new change part of the rationale behind the changes in times workload routes and number of employees was in much respect due to the wish to achieve a better work-life balance for these employees given that a work-life balance and the notion of trying to reduce costs was the premises of achieving this deal. Can I ask whether there were any kind of pilots or trial runs, which were taken place in order to establish whether these changes would actually work or is this some kind of experiments that we may have to then go back on in the future.

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker the personnel in my department particularly management have a lot of experience in this and it is their assessment that this will work. I do not believe there was a need for a pilot but the best pilot would be when the system changes and if we find this not working then as I have already said we will ensure that it does work because we need this service to work for the public.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q558/2025**  
**Lover's Lane –**  
**Details of emergency works**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 558, the Hon. G Origo.

3745 **Hon. G Origo:** Can the Minister provide details on the emergency works carried out at Lover's Lane, which required the hire of pumps, to the cost of more than £120,000, and whether the issue is now resolved?

**Acting 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 we are continuing the works of redressing almost two decades of neglect under the GSD and this cannot be concluded in a decade but we remain committed to continuing to fix what they broke. The £120,000 was spent specifically on the hiring of specialist pumps from a company in Spain, which were hired through Wastage Products Ltd who are the local agents for these pumps. 3755 The pumps were brought in as an emergency given the extent of sewage that was pouring out to the walls at Wellington Front as we have discussed here before. The pumps allowed the main sewer to be blocked and the sewage over pumped past the works area thus allowing operatives to work safely within the sewer.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker if I may, could we not in hindsight have done more to prevent these emergency works because the Hon. Minister has just noted that there was decades of neglect much of which includes 14 years of their own Government being in charge. In light of the fact that they have been supervising over these issues for 14 years, did we really have to wait until 3765 the breaking point until sewer was pouring out to the walls in Wellington Front before we had to address the situation? Was the Government not aware that such works would be required and therefore could we have not done regular normal works as opposed to emergency ones in order to remedy the situation given that emergency works normally come at a higher cost?

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker I think the hindsight would have to refer to those members of his party who used to sit here once upon a time happily long, long ago. As I have said here before Madam Speaker, the investment that this Government has made in the sewer system accounts to millions and much, much more. I don't have the figures here but they have been mentioned here before in previous answers to very similar questions many millions more than 3775 they ever spent and there was so much to do that unfortunately we haven't been able to catch up and unfortunately when a system is so old and had been abandoned for so long you can try and refurbish as much as you can but you never know where the problem is going to arise. So Madam Speaker I totally reject the implications of the Hon. Member.

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**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker can I ask whether given this experience are we going to learn from it or we are just going to remain idle until we have another emergency of this nature arise before we have to carry out emergency repairs to fix the situation. In that vein I refer to a recent campaign that I think the Government has introduced which was the Pipe Monster Campaign in which they are trying to educate and bring to people's attentions what they should or should not 3785 put down the toilets or down the drains. With respect to that campaign which I think goes to the heart of this issue how is the Government going to assess whether the people are indeed getting the message or are we going to just have to wait for another emergency to take place before we fix the situation and see whether we have to educate people more on what should or shouldn't go down the toilet.

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**Madam Speaker:** That is two questions.

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker I am feeling almost exactly the same as my hon. Friend felt when he was answering questions from the hon. Member. I do not know whether he does not 3795 listen or he forgets. How can he possibly say that the Government has remained idle on sewage with the millions it has literally pumped into improving the sewage network.

It is actually now planning very soon to lay a whole new north-south sewage line. The amount of work that the Government has done is incredible so there is no question of being idle. They were idle when they were in Government.

3800 I don't like reminding them and sometimes when I actually mention the lack of investment and the lack of work that the former GSD Government did I almost hold back a little bit but never again because they are seemingly trying to make us believe that when they were in Government they did wonderful things for the sewage network. Madam Speaker they did virtually nothing. We are the ones who have done it.

3805 We are not idle. The hon. Member has referred to the campaign that our hon. Friend the Minister for Housing has started because of the particular problem in housing estates but the problem is the same throughout Gibraltar. People have to not throw wipes and so on in the sewers and down the toilets but I totally reject the implication that the Government has been idle because it hasn't and all he has to do is go through estimates book for the past 15 years compare them to  
3810 the previous 15 years and it will all be there for everyone to see.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker the Hon. Minister seems to want to assume the mantra of the Chief Minister. He needed to get excited about these things but the reality is that in his prepared reply no doubt added on by him when it was originally drafted by his officials was very  
3815 partisan and very political and in fact inaccurate when he refers to two decades we weren't there for that long but the reality is that they have been there now for 14 years so the criticism levelled by Mr Origo is absolutely and utterly justified and in fact I thought the campaign that was started by a former Minister on the other side which was PPP so it is pee, paper and poo are the only things that ought to go down the toilets and it stayed with me and this was about 10 years ago so  
3820 I think it is quite effective but can I ask him this question, this was Mr Balban, in relation to the question which cites a cost of 120,000 pounds is it the case that the problem is now completely and utterly resolved it is not just a and I don't want to put it in derogatory terms but nothing else comes to my mind a patch up job because it was done on an emergency basis but then they're going to have to be further substantive works done what is the current position.

3825 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker first of all I am honoured to be compared to my friend the Chief Minister. It is really touching that he should actually say it secondly almost two decades, mathematically 16, which is more or less the time they were in rounded up to the nearest whole decade I think that that is mathematically acceptable Madam Speaker. I believe there is still work  
3830 to be done in that so I am told that there is a couple more months to do remembering that very often work has to be done at weekends or overnight and therefore it might take longer than expected.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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#### Q559/2025

#### Traffic (Licensing and Registration) Regulations – Medical review cases required to pay for renewal of driving licence

**Acting Clerk:** Question 559, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Why are individuals who are required to submit to a medical review and renewal of a driving licence within specified intervals under the Traffic (Licensing and Registration) Regulations required to pay for their driving licence renewals?

3845 **Acting 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, this payment is to cover the administrative fees relating to the production of the licence. However, this will fall under the review of the traffic licencing and registration regulations that as mentioned in past meetings of this House I have asked my team to carry out.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful for that indication. Is the Hon. Minister aware that the UK does not appear to charge such a fee?

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker I am sorry I did not hear the question.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** Is the Hon. Minister aware that the United Kingdom does not appear to charge such a fee.

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** No Madam Speaker I am not aware but I am aware that there is a charge and it is something that I have asked to be addressed and would consider perhaps taking a view that this should not continue to be the case.

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**Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful for the indication. Will the Hon. Minister go a step further and actually commit to abolishing it on the basis that it appears to be discriminatory on the basis that somebody has to pay to renew a driving licence to comply with legislation simply because they have a medical condition and it is in breach of the of the Disability Act and the description of what or the meaning of what discrimination is under that act so would the Hon. Minister commit to abolishing it?

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker the fee is not high for a medical condition for somebody under 70 is £15 every 3 years for certain categories it is £25 every 5 years or £9 every 3 years it varies but I agree with her assessment and therefore it is my intention to recommend to those reviewing the legislation that this should not continue. I do agree that it seems not acceptable in this day and age.

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**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

#### **Q560-3/2025**

#### **Masters degree –**

**Qualifying criteria to cover tuition fees; Criteria needed to receive a maintenance and travel allowance; Government support areas/unsupported areas; Maximum annual tuition fee**

3880

**Acting Clerk:** Question 560, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister confirm what qualifying criteria are required in order to achieve a Government scholarship to cover the tuition fees for a Masters degree?

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**Acting 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 561 to 563.

3890

**Acting Clerk:** Question 561, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** What criteria need to be met in order for a Masters student to receive a maintenance and travel allowance and what is the maximum amount awarded?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 562, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** The award of Government grants for Master's programmes are discretionary; which areas of this level of study does the Government support and, importantly, which are the areas which it will not consider granting financial aid for?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 563, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** What is the maximum annual tuition fee paid for a Masters degree?

**Acting 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):** Thank you Madam Speaker I am combining the answers to these questions as they overlap greatly but my answer I believe contains all the information requested.

Madam Speaker there are different routes that individuals take into Masters Qualifications. Some pursue a Masters course immediately after having completed their undergraduate degree. In cases where the individual's undergraduate degree was funded through a mandatory school award the individual is able to automatically access mandatory funding for their Masters Qualification if it is undertaken as a continuation to the undergraduate course with the application being made within two years of them having completed their undergraduate qualification and if it is within the same field of study. That is one way.

Individuals who are not in this position can access Government funding through the discretionary route if their application is found to be successful post-application. Applications received through the discretionary route are carefully considered by the scholarship committee which is a gazetted panel consisting of ten individuals both from within the Department of Education and Independence. Applications for Masters Qualifications received through a discretionary route are scored against all of the following criteria: Total cost of the course; individual needs of the candidate to follow a career path; calibre of the application the needs of Gibraltar; and if they are a second chance learner.

The needs of Gibraltar scoring criteria are determined each year by Government. Most recently, these have been set mainly for medical or related degrees. The scores for all the discretionary applications received are totalled and then ranked in descending order with individuals whose scores rank them above the threshold for funding available for the subsequent academic year as voted for by Parliament at the Appropriation Bill being funded.

All applicants for discretionary Masters funding must meet the eligibility criteria of ten years of continuous residency in Gibraltar and be otherwise eligible to receive funding by meeting any other current eligibility criteria. For example, not being a Government debtor.

Once it has been determined that a Masters Qualification will be funded, specific funding details are determined. The length, type of course and location of study will all have an impact on the amount of funding support received. The length of Masters Qualifications varies depending on whether they are taken as full-time or part-time programmes. Most full-time courses can be completed in one to two years, whereas a part-time Master's Degree can take anywhere between two and four years.

In some instances, for example Masters of Medicine, MMed, the Masters Qualification is a full-time course and can take three years. Different courses have different tuition fee rates, which are set by the respective university. However, tuition fees for all Masters' Qualifications regardless of the course duration or university are capped at a total of £12,000. The assistive grant we used to

call it the maintenance grant for Masters Qualifications is £7,200 irrespective of the course duration.

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The travel allowance for Master's qualifications is £1,300 in total irrespective of the course duration.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you Madam Speaker for the detailed information. The Minister made reference in his reply about the sums of money that have been approved at Budget time. Am I correct in assuming, because if I recall correctly, we vote X amount of money to be allocated to scholarships.

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When it comes to Masters, which end up being discretionary, shall we call it that, is that dependent year upon year on how much is left, how much money is left over after we have given the mandated scholarships to all the undergraduates or is there a fixed sum per year? I ask this question because it seems that in some years, there are more master's scholarships being granted than others and I was wondering if that was a contributing factor. It depends how much money has been left over after the payment of the undergraduates.

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, there is a specific allocation for discretionary so it is a specific sum but I did miss one thing out in my reply there is an appeals procedure which goes to a separate board and maybe on appeal some will get through if there are particular circumstances which the board considers should be met and then sometimes there is a little bit of a leeway so there is an appeal procedure for anyone who is rejected.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, thank you. It saves me from asking that I know the appeal procedure is undertaken by exactly the same people who are composed on the discretionary grants board or a totally different entity.

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, it would not be appropriate for the appeal to be heard by the people who determined the original scholarship. It is a different panel, which includes the director of education who is not part of the original one and a couple of other people, I cannot remember exactly the composition of the board. I will share if we meet tomorrow Madam Speaker, the hon. Member and I will be meeting tomorrow to discuss a number of things that have arisen in past meetings and I can clarify that for him.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** I think it is a final thing Madam Speaker the scholarship award committee and so on are technically an advisory body to the Minister because they are not the controlling officer of the funds that I think legitimately lies with the director. Am I correct and if that is the case does the Minister recall any occasions when their decisions or recommendations may have been overruled for some particular circumstances? I may be asking for something he may not have the notes but we can discuss further if need be.

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**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Not so far because there is the avenue for appeal and they would come perhaps for me for some special consideration if their appeal fails and then perhaps if there are particular circumstances which might be determined that it would be exceptional because it would be the third time round that they would come.

3985

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker the main issue here particularly this year is that the application release date is normally scheduled for the end of March early April over recent years and at the moment it has not been released and there are plenty of worried parents, not just worried parents but students writing to me on an almost daily basis explaining their situation and their concern that they have to book accommodation for the next year that they have to book themselves into courses that they have a life to move on with

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3995 and the only message they get from I assume a disgruntled member of staff at the Department of Education is that try next week, look at the website but the website simply shows nothing.

Why is the Government silent on this? Does it not realise the harm and stress it is causing to, sure it is only a small cohort of people but what they may feel is a disturbance or an interruption or perhaps just hang on for a bit, an inconvenience for a short while is actually for them hugely stressful so it is stressful for the parents, the students and I assume the Department of Education staff themselves who are having to countenance this. So will the Government explain why it has not yet released this officially, why the criteria are not on the website and why they will not if that is the case move the date for closing which is the 8th of June I believe or 6th of June back further.

4005 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker I am aware there have been some administrative delays, which is regretted, and we will have to reconsider the closing date. It is imminent but not the closing date the publication date. I think I would like to reassure those students on the first option, those who are directly following a Masters within two years in a similar course to their original that that is virtually automatic, that is not discretionary what has not gone out really is a discretionary one but it is due to appear within the next day or two.

4015 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker I am very glad to hear that given the fact that students and their parents who have spoken to the Department of Education have been told this for the last few weeks and in fact they have been looking since the end of March but my next question would be something that the Hon. Minister mentioned in his reply that the tuition fee was capped for I believe it is the second level the discretionary level at £12,000. The website for I think it is gibraltastudents.gi which is a very detailed explanation of and something like that for the postgraduate would be extremely useful but the only information on postgraduate details that I found there states that the cap is actually for tuition fees is at £18,000 I don't know if that is a discrepancy that is wrong or if the Government has reduced it from £18,000 to £12,000 and I am just wondering if the Hon. Minister could clarify that point. Thank you.

4025 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, I would have to seek advice because my prepared answer refers to £12,000. I am not sure whether that is an error or it may be some other thing that neither the hon. Member or I can quite latch on to now. I would have to seek some advice and I will share it with Mr. Reyes tomorrow and he can advise.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q564/2025**  
**Vehicle Learners Licences –**  
**Emailed as well as or in lieu of being posted**

**Q565/2025**  
**Licencing Authority –**  
**Issues with SMS text messaging system**

4035 **Acting Clerk:** Question 564, the Hon. C Sacarello.

**Hon. C Sacarello:** Can the Minister please explain why Vehicle Learners Licences are not emailed with a secure pdf as well as or in lieu of being posted?

4040 **Acting 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 565.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 565, the Hon. C Sacarello.

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**Hon. C Sacarello:** Can the Minister please explain why issues with the Licencing Authority SMS text messaging system, where garbled and contradictory messages are sent at unsociable hours such as 2am, remain being sent in a continuous, maniacal loop of messages for months on end?

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**Acting 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 must say that maniacal loop really reminds me, Madam Speaker, is it a Muppets movie where there is a maniacal laugh? It reminds me of that.

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Madam Speaker, DVLD are in the process of acquiring a new licencing and vehicle registration system, which will have the functionality to send provisional licences via email. That functionality sadly does not exist in the old system and there is an ongoing issue with the SMS maniacal system being used to send reminders to those whose MOT certificates had expired. This has been reported to the IT&LD who are rectifying.

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I was hoping they would tell me today that it had been rectified, but I have not heard back, but it is being addressed imminently.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

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**Q565/2025  
City Walls –  
Weed growth**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 566, the Hon. C Sacarello.

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**Hon. C Sacarello:** It has been brought to our attention that the proliferation of weed growth on our City Walls has reached levels where their removal must be addressed with urgency. Does the Government not share this concern and why has the weed growth been allowed to reach such levels on such an important element of our heritage?

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**Acting 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, in my vocabulary there is no such thing as a weed, except perhaps in the dark crevices of the Opposition benches, of course. Sorry, I could not resist that. Madam Speaker, I call them plants in places where rather they were not. While these can on some walls and in some conditions be unsightly, they are for the most part not a threat to their structure if they are herbaceous. They can be if woody. In the latter case as recently by Southport Gates, this is tackled immediately.

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The removal of plant growth on city walls is not a simple matter as it requires specialised access work and depending on the fabric of the wall will need curatorial supervision and it is expensive. On occasion in addition, there are species of plants that may be growing on a wall that are rare or protected and these must be treated in a different way, for example, being removed after they have shed seed. However, I am pleased to inform the House that we are preparing a programme to have plant growth removed from the walls along Queensway in the coming months.

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4090 Additionally, and despite the members' hyperbole, I can assure the public that the walls of our great city are not about to tumble and our defences are stronger than ever.

4095 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Well, I am very glad to hear that, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I am not sure if one's, as in one in general's mother, ever taught the importance of the value of washing behind one's ears and also cleaning or polishing one's shoes because at the end of the day that is the image that is portrayed and the discipline of keeping oneself clean and tidy.

**Madam Speaker:** I am sure the hon. Member is coming to the question.

4100 **Hon. C Sacarello:** You are absolutely correct in that, Madam Speaker... As for the city walls, well, to use the analogy, we wouldn't want plant growth coming out of our ears and from our shoes but the point I am trying to make is that they are extremely important bastions of our heritage and of our tourist products and they reflect the image of Gibraltar. Some view it slightly differently, as the Hon. Minister.

4105 So my question is, thank you for confirming that a certain section will be cleared but will this be done regularly and consistently throughout or is this just something that's done at this moment in time?

4110 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, the huge surface area of walls, so therefore it would be extremely expensive and time-consuming if I wish we had but if I was spending that much money I would probably be criticised by the Opposition benches for spending too much money on this. There are certain areas that are worse than others and certain areas that are easier to tackle than others and we will begin, certainly once the walls are cleared it does take a little bit of time maybe a few years for the growth to grow back and be visible and offensive and I have agreed in my answer that it can be unsightly and therefore we are going to start some work on it. It is expensive  
4115 so we have to phase it in and my intention is that we should do some stretches of wall every year and hopefully that will resolve particularly those areas which are particularly unsightly.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q568-9/2025**

**Westside School emergency civil contingency plan –  
When shared with all teachers; ongoing review of security measures**

4125 **Acting Clerk:** Question 568, the Hon. E J Reyes on behalf of the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker when was the Westside School emergency civil contingency plan put in place and uploaded onto the teaching platform in use by teachers and when was it shared with all Westside teachers?

4130 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education the Environment and Climate Change.

4135 **Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker I will answer this question together with Question 569.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 569, the Hon. E J Reyes on behalf of the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Is there an ongoing review of civil contingency and security measures at our schools following the trespassing incident of March 2025 at Westside School and are improvement measures being taken?

**Acting 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, first answer in relation to Question 568. Westside's emergency response protocol was developed from the original fire response plans through consultation and departmental input from early 2023 onwards with engagement with staff including teachers, SNLSAs, counsellors and auxiliary staff through operational updates meetings and inset sessions. While the precise date of upload on the staff handbook cannot be evidenced digitally, it was in place and actively referred to by the return to school whole staff meeting on the 2nd of September 2024 when all staff were asked to review it. Following a post incident evaluation in March this year, the ERP, the Emergency Response Protocol, was re-uploaded to the new platform and reviewed again by staff in April.

In relation to Question, 569 all school emergency response plans have been developed and reviewed as part of an ongoing civil contingencies work stream in consultation and collaboration with the Office of Civil Contingencies and the Royal Gibraltar Police Crime Prevention and Counter Terrorism Security Advisor. Individual school plans continue to be cascaded to staff in line with security risks identified while facilitating an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you for that information Madam Speaker. From what I can deduct in March, a couple of days after the incident that happened, it then came to light that in preparing a more user friendly format of revised platform there seems to have been some, let's call it clerical error and the updated information has not been included. That does not leave us in a position that new members of staff who were joined in the school in September 24 were therefore not aware of what the procedures were because the Minister refers to information having been available before, they have been working on things from 23 onwards and so on in one of the Government press releases the Minister kindly informed us that in February 24 there was even an inset training day but members of staff who start on that or this current academic year anything that happens prior to September 24 is something that they are not privy to information. Is the Minister able to recognise that through some admin or clerical error there seems to have been a lack of communication and information that perhaps had been taken for granted was available but in reality was not.

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** My information is that the procedure was in fact online in 2023. There is this discussion as to when it was and we cannot determine exactly when it was posted, there if that is the right expression for this and then it was re-uploaded to a new platform after March but certainly my information is that the procedure was there from early 2023 onwards.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, thank you. I am not disputing that in 2023 some procedure was noted down and so on. I hope the Minister understands my concern is that if I just start working in that school as from September 24, what had happened before is not something that was privy to and unfortunately it was only a couple of days later that we noticed that in moving things to a more user friendly format on the Revive platform there had been an error. I just want the Minister to at least be able to verify that having learned from that mistake we are trying to ensure that the two days' gap there will be avoided in future when we transfer things.

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** I don't think the Hon. Member is actually correct because he's saying that any staff who joined in September wouldn't have been privy to what had happened before but they would be privy to the procedures that were available then and as I said in my original answer

4190 there was a whole staff meeting on the 2nd of September 2024 where all staff were asked to review the procedure so that was I am told when they were told look even if you're new this is the procedure and here it is so I don't think that concern is a correct one Madam Speaker.

4195 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Well we don't seem to agree because my understanding at least of the feedback coming out from teachers is that in whatever briefs happened in September 2024 they were mainly concerned with school evacuation and at some stage another Government even were able to publish that in February 25 there was a year 7 fire drill taking place and so on. The incident that happened on the day did not require, in fact it was a wrong decision to try and evacuate children but rather it was a question of getting ourselves locked in. Can I at least get the Minister to agree  
4200 that he will try and look and perhaps like an auditor does you know there was a discrepancy at least from the teacher's point of view of a couple of days where it had been taken for granted and information was there but because the exercise had undergone some clerical errors which is the way I prefer to call it in updating information there was a couple of days when information was missing and that could have been a big contributing factor you know they brought along these  
4205 worries and I am not going to enter into now or trying to form a trial to shoot whoever is responsible I just want an assurance that this will be borne very much into mind so we have no reoccurrence even if it is just for a two day period where information is not available to staff.

4210 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker, it is your own member's assessment that there was a clerical error or that information was missing that is not the information I have before me. What I do know is that every incident I think we have to respond by learning lessons and clearly there have been further reviews of procedures throughout all the schools and I think they are now much more robust as one would expect after one has had an incident and they are lengthy documents which have been prepared in conjunction as I said before with civil contingencies of the RGP. I am  
4215 very happy to share them with the hon. Members there is about 70 odd pages of it but so I cannot say that I agree with the hon. Member with what the hon. Members say but I can say that lessons have been learnt and that we are now even more robust in our procedures.

4220 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I just ended by saying yes I am grateful I know the Minister likes to sit down we cover it together. What I do have as a note here was that the teacher's union was saying that the school handbook was not updated until the 28th of March which is two days later hence I reinforce my point you know that although the Minister has been told it is there in March it is a question of a discrepancy of two days which jointly we share concern and jointly we will work if the Minister agrees to make sure it does not reoccur in the future.

4225 **Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker now I understand what the hon. Members have said I have discussed this with the union the upload on the 28th of March is the second one that I mentioned I am told that it was in another site before I haven't checked so this is what I am told but I do get what the hon. Member says I have discussed this at length with the union and we are working  
4230 together in fact I have set up a sub-committee to look at emergency procedures which includes members of the Department of Education and the Health and Safety representative of NASUWT and they are having regular meetings to make sure that we are all on the same wavelength.

4235 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Thank you Madam Speaker very short question just by way of clarification if the Hon. Minister may the lessons which would have been learnt as a result of the YouTuber incident as I would call it the March 2025 incident when we had this group of individuals I think from across the way strolling into the school and resulted in the locking down in a rather alarming way of the classrooms. The 70 odd page document that the Hon. Minister is referring to is that the result of the lessons learnt or is it still a work in progress which is the way I thought he had  
4240 answered it initially and if it is the latter is he able to say when we are going to have a consolidated document that can be distributed to teachers and the like?

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Madam Speaker it is a dynamic document it is a document that exists and is constantly reviewed there will be new inputs, new considerations learning from events like this so it is a document that is subject to constant and continual revision and review but as I say I am very happy to share with hon. Members and very happy to listen to any comments that they may wish to say.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** With respect it was an alarming incident and a potentially serious incident what I am trying to understand is whether the lessons which have been learnt are now reduced to writing is the answer no not yet but it will at some point in the not too distant future is that the position? It may be dynamic and I understand that but there was an incident, lessons ought to be learnt as a result of that particular incident and do we have a document that reflects the learning from that incident?

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Yes Madam Speaker, lessons have been learnt and steps have been taken to ensure that what happened doesn't happen again and we have carried out actual works on the ground and changed procedures so yes that is now included in this dynamic document. So yes.

**Madam Speaker:** Right that I think unless I am mistaken brings us to the end of oral questions.

## Questions for Written Answer

**Acting Clerk:** Answers to written questions.

**Minister for Education, the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Prof. J E Cortes):** Madam Speaker I have the honour to table the answers to written questions number W61 to W88 of 2025 inclusive.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker if I may I am not sure whether this is the right moment or before this part of the procedure is formally happens but there are Ministers who are absent in respect to which questions are remaining and need to be answered so presumably we follow the same process that we indicate to the Clerk if we wish it to be in writing.

**Madam Speaker:** I remind hon. Members of pursuant to Rule 16(2) I think it is of the rules any questions which are unanswered in this session are effectively automatically converted into writing unless a member wishes to carry those questions to the next session by way of oral questions I think they have three days in which to write to Parliament exclusive of Sunday, Saturdays, public holidays, three days running next from the adjournment so anyone who wishes their questions that have been unanswered to be dealt with at the next session needs to write in within the time frame.

There is one more matter that I wanted to raise in relation to a Written Question the Hon. G Origo behind the Speaker's chair raised this with me and I thought it was the correct thing to raise it in the House. There was a written question filed on the 14th of May 2025 I understand by the Hon. G Origo which asked for Government to confirm the results of the checks on health and safety that were carried out by the Department of the Environment following the chemical reaction which took place in New Harbours.

As I understand it, an article appeared in the press on the 19th of May 2025. I don't know whether it was in the press or GBC covered it but when I say press I mean it loosely because I didn't see the article which I understand, well I've seen it since the hon. Member has pointed it out to me and the article gives information on the incident which came that information came

from the Government in answer to questions from GBC and it appeared to provide an answer to that question. Hon. Members on my right side will be aware of my ruling of the 25th of September I think it was 2024 which essentially said that should not happen unless it was a matter of urgency  
4295 oppressing public interest and so really I call on the Government or one or more Ministers to explain to the House what has happened and why.

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Yes of course Madam Speaker let me just reiterate what the Hon. Chief Minister said before that we totally support your ruling and respect it in fact only last week there  
4300 was a request from GBC to interview me on another matter which had been raised in a question and I was under quite a lot of pressure to go on today what is it? The lunchtime... Gibraltar Today and also on the news and I declined this incident that you are referring to Madam Speaker, if I may just give the explanation that you have requested, it was not a statement that was initiated  
4305 by the Government as you yourself have said Madam Speaker it was in response to press questions and there were also a lot of enquiries directly to the Government from the environmental safety group expressing great concern and almost fear for the possible implications to the public. Therefore it was in no way intended to break the Speaker's ruling but it was a matter  
4310 Madam Speaker of great public interest as there were concerns which can only be termed as legitimate concerns in hearing about chemical reactions near the public highway so there were concerns as to danger and safety issues and it was probably important that the public should be reassured that there was nothing to worry about. Madam Speaker I believe that there were exceptional circumstances and they should not in any way be viewed as a disrespect to yourself or to your rulings and I offer that explanation in these exceptional circumstances of something that the public could have been afraid could have had great repercussions on public health and  
4315 safety.

**Madam Speaker:** On the specific facts of this case I can see why it may have been necessary to allay fears in the face of a chemical reaction, so I accept the Minister's explanation on this particular matter. Obviously, everything is fact specific but on this particular matter, I find that  
4320 there has been no breach of Parliamentary procedure but in any event where there was doubt I thank the Hon. Member for bringing that to my attention.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker if I may on a different issue because I am aware, I think we are about to adjourn *sine die* and I am going to take advantage Madam Speaker indeed I wouldn't  
4325 overstep but in the absence of both the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition who were present earlier today but have had to move away and in the absence and we certainly missed him of the Father of the House it puts me today in a position I didn't think would ever happen. I happen to be the acting Father of the House the longest serving member in the Parliament. I am the second eldest because my evergreen colleague Professor Cortes is a few months older than I am  
4330 but with that Madam Speaker as a mundane thing I want to recognise the efficiency of the acting Clerk because he's normally helpful to members on both sides of the House and I have been on both sides of the House quietly well behind the scenes but today he's proved to me he's on the ball and he's certainly made sure that older folks like [*inaudible*] and myself are kept awake and on our toes he's always a couple of questions ahead warning me when I am coming for colleagues  
4335 and if I could I'll even buy him a cup of coffee so thank you Madam Speaker to your staff for their efficiency.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you to the Hon. Member. I'd like to endorse that Mr Balban has stepped in to cover staff absence and I am very grateful to him for the professional manner in  
4340 which he has carried out a task which maybe people don't realise is actually quite a difficult one particularly under the eyes of the camera so thank you to him.

**Hon. Prof J Cortes:** Thank you Madam Speaker and thank you for your consideration on the explanation as to your ruling it is appreciated.

4345        Madam Speaker let me echo the Father of the Houses... that's one definition there's another definition which says the oldest member in that case it would be me Madam Speaker but we'll argue that out tomorrow over a cup of tea as we discuss proper Government and Opposition business but I would like to echo his praise for Mr Balban who's always there at everyone's beck and call and here has been on the front line and with that Madam Speaker in the absence of the  
4350        Chief Minister I have the honour to move that this House do now adjourn *Sine Die*.

### Adjournment

4355        **Madam Speaker:** I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn *sine die*. I now put the question, which is that this House should now adjourn *sine die*. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Passed.

          This House will now adjourn, *sine die*.

*The House adjourned at 8.50 p.m.*

4360