



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.43 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.

Gibraltar, Friday, 26th June 2026

Contents

RECESS	3
<i>The House recessed at 3.43 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 4.00 p.m.</i>	<i>3</i>
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.....	3
GOVERNMENT STATEMENT	4
Q209/2026 GHA employees – Number of needlestick injuries.....	14
Q210/2026 GHA employees – Vaccines offered	14
Q211/2026 Staff survey undertaken within the GHA – Results of that survey.....	15
Q212/2026 Bank staff employed at the GHA – Working without a registered ETB contract	16
Q213/2026 Investigation conducted within the GHA – Formal whistleblowing process.....	17
Q214-216/2026 Findings of the independent review – St Bernard’s Hospital CCU whistleblowing concerns	18
Q217/2026 GHA employees – Long-term sick leave for a period of over 12 months.....	19
Q218/2026 Associated Specialists employed by the GHA – Standard allowances	20
Q219/2026 GHA’s Medical Director’s salary – Monthly breakdown	21
Q220/2026 GHA’s Director General’s salary – Monthly breakdown.....	24
Q221/2026 Power cut that took place – Causes behind the primary and secondary outages	25
Q222-224/2026 GEA’s NMPS Control Room – Company; Tender details; Operational costs	27
Q225/2026 Government’s policy – Minimum qualifications required for the new CEO of the GEA role	28

Q226-227/2026 BESS batteries – Maintenance fees, consultancy fees, insurance and operating costs; Installation and incidental costs	29
Q228/2026 Current Ministers – Outstanding utility bills	30
Q229/2026 Baby brain injury – Settlement been paid/funded	31
Q230/2026 Small Boats Marina – Empty berths	32
Q231/2026 Small Boats Marina – Plans to reclaim	34
Q232/2026 Proposed new residency criteria – Government intends to publish	34
Adjournment	37
<i>The House adjourned at 6.00 p.m.</i>	<i>37</i>

The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 3.43 p.m.

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

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: P A Borge McCarthy in attendance]

RECESS

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, with apologies, but the GEA has been focussing on getting power back to Gibraltar, and there are a couple of questions that I want answered before I rise in this House to give a fuller statement, as indeed I committed to doing. I would ask that we recess for 20 minutes to 4 p.m. in order for me to give a fuller statement.

Madam Speaker: Alright, we will recess until 4 p.m. and come back at 4 p.m. when we will hear a statement.

The House recessed at 3.43 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 4.00 p.m.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Madam Speaker: The Hon. Minister Arias-Vasquez.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I rise to make a statement to this House on the power outage that was affecting Gibraltar. First and foremost, I want to reassure the House that...

Madam Speaker: Just a minute, I beg your pardon, my fault. We have to suspend Standing Orders for the making of a Government Statement.

Clerk: Suspension of Standing Orders, the Hon. Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I beg to move under Standing Order 7(3) to suspend Standing Order 7(1) in order to proceed with a Government Statement.

Madam Speaker: Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried

GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Third time lucky. Madam Speaker, I rise to make a Government Statement to this House on the power outage currently affecting Gibraltar.

First and foremost, I want to reassure the House and the public that thankfully no injuries have been reported as a result of the incident. As I said recently, Madam Speaker, I am not here to give excuses. In this statement, firstly, I will outline what I have been informed that the issue is.

I will then go on to how we have been dealing with this in the last incident. Finally, I will state what we are going to do going forward. Madam Speaker, the information presently available to the Government is that the Gibraltar Electricity Authority suffered a major earth fault in the Ocean Village area.

The fault was reflected on engine 4 and consequently impacted the operation of the power station. At the time of the outage, Madam Speaker, the GEA was generating approximately 36.6 megawatts. I am advised that based on the information currently available, the incident appears to be wholly unrelated to the previous outages.

The GEA teams have been actively working to restore power across Gibraltar. I want to thank the GEA teams, the engineers and all those involved for their response to the work under considerable pressure. Their priority was to restore electricity safely, methodically and in a controlled manner so as to avoid causing any further instability to the system.

Madam Speaker, once again, I am not here to give excuses. The Gibraltarian public has invested hundreds of millions of pounds in Gibraltar's energy infrastructure, including the new power station, the LNG plant, the BESS system and upgrades to the grid. Madam Speaker, I fully appreciate the disruption and frustration that an outage of this nature causes to families, to businesses, to essential services and to the wider community.

I want to assure the House that the Government is being kept updated in real time and that further information will be provided to the public as soon as it is available. Madam Speaker, since the recent power outages, the Government has held a series of meetings, involving the Chief Minister and myself with all the relevant stakeholders at direct level, in order to seek detailed explanations for what has occurred. These include meetings with the directors of the company that we engage to provide us with the BESS, with the directors of PX and with the acting CEO of the GEA.

To date, these meetings have been held independently of each other and separately with all the different parties involved. Indeed, even before today's unacceptable incident, arrangements have already been made for a wider meeting with all relevant stakeholders to take place on Tuesday at 11 a.m. in light of that meeting earlier this week. These meetings were arranged to: (1) get to the bottom of what caused the last power outage; and (2) to ascertain how to make sure that it did not happen again.

The Government considers it entirely unacceptable that power failures of this nature should continue to happen. As a result, the Government has already been in discussions with a third party with the relevant technical and managerial experience to come and support the GEA in the discharge of its functions and to assist in ensuring the resilience and the reliability that the public rightly expects. This individual will be in situ by the end of the month of July.

Madam Speaker, I have asked the GEA to provide me, as a Minister with responsibility for Public Utilities, with a full and comprehensive report by Monday morning at 10am of this latest incident. The Cabinet will then meet to consider the report, its findings and the options that are available to the Government. In addition, the CEO of the GEA will be appearing on the GBC News tonight to give a further update of the situation and to apologise on behalf of the GEA.

Once the immediate restoration works are complete, which are currently ongoing, and once the Government has had the opportunity to consider the technical report, I will update the House further as appropriate. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition can ask any questions for clarification.

85 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, yes. I am grateful for the statement to explain the causes as we find them today, but of course this is against the backdrop that this is happening far too often and indeed a lot of people in Gibraltar will consider that this is happening far too often. The hon. Lady talks about disruption.

90 It is not just disruption to citizens, it is disruption to tourists, it is disruption for people taking flights to Gibraltar, it is about disruption of people taking flights out of Gibraltar, and it is hotels, restaurants, loss of business and indeed it is embarrassing for this jurisdiction that is promoting itself as being ready for business. Questions will be asked as to whether we are indeed ready for business, because, as I say, this is not the first occurrence. The hon. Lady was on television only 10 or 12 days ago talking about a power cut and reacting to it and saying that questions would be asked then.

95 A lot of people will think that why are questions being asked now when they have been 15 years in Government and why have not questions like this been asked before? Why, if questions were asked on previous occasions, why do these things keep happening? So, the hon. Lady says she is going to ask questions on this occasion.

100 She said the same thing 12 days ago on television and she says it is unacceptable, but these are, to many citizens, empty words when these things continue happening. So, Madam Speaker, there was a lot of fanfare when the BESS system was rolled out, which was supposed to provide better resilience. People will want to know beyond the incident today, because of course things are going to happen.

105 With contractors or accidents, things are going to happen. But what people do not understand is why, if power cuts happen repeatedly, why our system is not more resilient? Why, if something happens in a particular district and there is a trip, why the whole system nationwide goes down and it cannot be insulated into a particular district?

110 Why, given the rollout of the BESS, would people not have expected our system to be more resilient? So generally we would want to hear more from the Minister on those issues, on resilience, and to clarify on the particular aspect. Does she also have information as to how this came about beyond there being an earth fault?

115 Was this due to works or an accident or some other matter? She says that there is going to be a third party involved to provide backup or assistance to the GEA. Does she mean of a technical expertise nature, or does she mean someone providing access to infrastructure?

What exactly does she mean when she says that someone is going to be in place, this third party, by the end of July? If someone could have been put in place by the end of July in three- or four-weeks' time, why has it not happened before? How is that going to help us in addressing these issues? If it was as easy a fix as that, why has it not happened before?

120 Madam Speaker, people will be very disappointed about this occurrence only a few days after the last occurrence, the last big occurrence. Between the last big occurrence, when the hon. Lady was on television, sandwiched between them, there were also smaller power cuts.

125 So, what will she say to the people of Gibraltar generally to assure them that this is not just further words from a Government that has been in power for 15 years and has had long enough to resolve these issues of resilience?

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has risen to ask a question of the Government in respect of the Statement that has been made by the Minister. Given that she has not been asked a question by her shadow...

130

Madam Speaker: Just a minute. On a Point of Order, the Leader of the Opposition is raising a Point of Order.

135 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, on a Point of Order, the point being that the Minister has made a statement, I am asking the Minister for clarification. Why is the Minister not rising to clarify for the Government, someone who is going to be Chief Minister in a few months?

Madam Speaker: That is not...

140 **Hon. Chief Minister:** That is a cheap shot.

Madam Speaker: That is not a Point of Order. It is not a Point of Order, and it is for the Government to decide who answers any questions that may be put. The Hon. the Chief Minister.

145 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I am very grateful indeed. That was not a Point of Order by the Leader of the Opposition. It was a cheap political shot, like all the ones that we have been getting used to by them Madam Speaker.

A cheap political shot, Madam Speaker, of the sort that they have been deploying on something as serious as power cuts in this community in the past three weeks. Let me go into the detail of that, Madam Speaker, in answering the questions that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has asked. Ironically, not the Shadow Minister for the Utilities.

That does not seem to matter. The Leader of the Opposition. So therefore, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the House on behalf of the Government will deal with the issues.

In particular, because the issues that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has raised deal with issues from before the period when the Hon. Minister was in Government.

155 Madam Speaker, having power cuts is unacceptable. Let us be clear, if you operate an electricity island, and Gibraltar is, and in my view should forever be, an electricity island, you are susceptible to power cuts. It is my view that we should forever be an electricity island, because we should never rely on anybody else to provide our electricity. If we are all nodding at that, as hon. Members of the Opposition rightly are, then we have to understand that there is no electricity island that operates without failure.

In the Northern United States, New York and Canada lost power, I think two years ago, and they are not an electricity island. In the United Kingdom, large numbers of people have lost power during the course of this year, sometimes related to weather outages. Those weather outages result from high-voltage earthing instances, as a result, for example, of a cable being taken down by a tree.

170 Now, in this instance, Madam Speaker, turning first to the question the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has raised about what has caused the earth fault, we know it is an earth fault. We do not even know whether it is a contractor working or another problem. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition has also asked why this is happening, when we have got a new power station.

Well, we have got a new power station, Madam Speaker, but the grid is not yet fully upgraded. The grid is being upgraded. It cannot be upgraded at once, because as I have said in this House before, I think during the tenure of the Leader of the Opposition, but perhaps even before, if we were to upgrade all of the grid at the same time, we would have to have upheaval on our roads, because we would be taking up all of our roads all of the time.

We are making an investment in the grid. It is a constant investment. Madam Speaker, I am sorry I have to say this, but there was no meaningful investment in the grid for 16 years.

180 We have been making meaningful investments in the grid since 2015, after the installation of the new power station, but that has to take its course. Madam Speaker, after today's power cut, we have had 7 power cuts in 2026. 7 power cuts, too many in 2026. 7 power cuts in 6 months.

In 2009, there were 27 power cuts, general. In 2010, there were 27 power cuts, general. That means, Madam Speaker, that by now, in 6 months, in those years, there would have been 14, 13 and a half power cuts already.

185 Their record was not good enough. Our record is not good enough for me. I want it to be better. I want us to get back to where we were in 2016, when we had only 1 power cut in 12 months.

That is why the Hon. Minister and I are asking questions on behalf of the public to ensure that this does not happen again if it can be avoided.

190 That is why the Hon. Minister and I are putting all the resources available, financial, from the office of the Minister for Public Finance, and in terms of the resources which they need in respect of the power station through her department, to ensure that this does not happen again. That is why, Madam Speaker, I do not think it is serious to come here to pretend to represent outrage when you lead the Party that in 2011 was responsible, or was in power if not responsible for, 33 general power cuts. 7 in 6 months is not good enough.

195 We will continue fighting so that the record that we achieved in 2016, when there was only 1 power cut, is the worst of our years in Government in the future. Because Madam Speaker, we need to get that down as close as possible to zero. If you operate an electricity island, you are never going to get to zero. You are never going to get to zero. It is impossible. Because a fault can undo you.

200 Now, the battery, Madam Speaker and this betrays the complete and utter misunderstanding Members opposite have of what generating and providing electricity in Gibraltar is about the battery does not mean that you can keep one district going or another. Unless we had a battery in every district. What the battery does is enable you to keep an engine running and not lose all the power to a power station.

205 I am surprised, Madam Speaker, that on something as important and as serious as what I am talking about, I can hear the hon. Members opposite laughing and giggling. Do they not realise, Madam Speaker, that power cuts affect people's daily lives? This is not something to laugh about or crow about. This is not about political issues. This is about people's ability to do business and live their lives, Madam Speaker. Power is essential for everything. Members of the GSD Opposition are laughing away. But that is how serious these people are. Shame on you. (*Interjections*).

210

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Hon. D J Bossino: Shame. It is not going to work. Carry on with your Statement.

215

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Chief Minister: Shame, Madam Speaker, on the disgraceful way in which hon. Members opposite behave on something as serious as this. The generation and provision of power in our community. (**Hon. R M Clinton:** Go!) If anyone should go, Madam Speaker, it should be Mr Clinton for the disgraceful things he has said about Sir Joe Bossano. Nobody else should go. He should go and hang his head in shame. (*Interjections*)

220

Madam Speaker: Order! Can we get back to the point in question?

225 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, Madam Speaker, the issue is one of ensuring that the engines can keep running. This is the issue where the battery is there to help.

In this instance, it has not been able to provide that assistance because the fault was not at Waterport Power Station. It was the earth fault which resulted, Madam Speaker. Those are the issues that we are dealing with.

230

Look, Madam Speaker, I have spent a long time in this House dealing with the issue of power cuts. hon. Members might think actually the best point they can make is to ask me in which year there were the worst power cuts. I will tell them - in 2013 when I was in Government.

235

I will remind them that the power station blew up on Easter Sunday. It blew up in 2013 because they had been promising for years to replace it and they had not. What we inherited was a loan and a contract to build a diesel power station halfway up the rock.

Well, we acted, Madam Speaker. The 56 power cuts that we got from them, the golden legacy of the GSD, was resolved and we turned that into 1 power cut in 2016. We will not stop until we get it down again.

I hope, Madam Speaker, never to have to come to this House with the concerns I came to this House with in one budget about why power cuts were happening in Gibraltar.

Madam Speaker: Any other questions? (*Interjections*) I do not want this to become a debate.

Hon. K Azopardi: I was going to remind the hon. Gentleman that he did not answer an important question that I had asked. I was going to ask him to answer it, which is the question about the third party that they mentioned would be in place by the end of July. Who it is, what nature of work they are going to do, expertise or infrastructure.

I asked that question and he was on his feet, and he did not answer that question. I think it is a question of public importance.

Madam Speaker: I will allow that.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, this is an issue which I have been dealing with, therefore it is probably best placed that I answer this question. We have engaged or we are engaging an individual to come and assist the CEO or the acting CEO of the power station in order to assist with: (1) technical issues; and (2) governance issues at the GEA. This is not something which has come up overnight. We have expedited it as a result of this latest power cut. It is something which has been on the cards for several months. We have been looking to bring over expertise which we felt was needed strengthening here in Gibraltar.

Madam Speaker: Any other hon. Member has any comments or questions? Yes, the Hon. Mr Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I certainly question some of the statistics that have been banging around in this place this afternoon. In particular with...

Hon. Chief Minister: Point of Order Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Just a minute there is a point of order.

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, when I give statistics to this House, they are statistics that are provided to me by the Gibraltar Electricity Authority. They are the statistics which the Government relies on to give to this House, the accuracy of which should not be questioned unless the hon. Gentleman is saying that I am somehow misleading the House. If he is saying that, he can only say that by putting a substantive motion.

Madam Speaker: Yes, if that is what the hon. Gentleman is saying, that is the case.

Hon. C Sacarello: I was merely going on to say, to relate a story that was told to me by a former worker of the GEA. Now, it may be that the period that this person related to may be different to those, but it is possible that they may overlap. All I was referring to is my perhaps surprise at those figures, if I may. Is that acceptable to state?

Madam Speaker: Surprise is fine.

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you very much. I was speaking to a gentleman, a prior worker at the old power station. This was the old power station.

Who mentioned that in his lifetime, or his work lifetime, he had only experienced 1 major blackout. Now, take that as you may. I have not followed it up, but this was a conversation which I took from an honest working individual at face value.

What is incredible, though, is that the Government have spent over £100 million worth of taxpayers' money. The BESS batteries were brought in with great fanfare and further expense. With today's modern technology, we still have people being stuck in lifts, businesses losing money, events ending up in a disaster.

Events, in fact, if I may refer to the KPMG's iGaming event on the Sunborn, which is looking at bringing business into Gibraltar. That was nothing short of a disaster. For it to go on and happen again and again, I am receiving messages, Madam Speaker, asking if the Government are going to set up a compensation fund. As ridiculous as that sounds, it is happening with such frequency. People's appliances are breaking. As I said, businesses are losing money.

It is an absolutely serious question, among which I would like a reply in this House. If I may refer to the actual faults today, I understand that there was an earth fault on engine 4. I am not sure if...

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, an earth fault cannot happen in the engine. An earth fault happens in the street. An earth fault is in the cable, in the grid. It trips the engine, and the engine that it tripped was engine 4. It cannot be an earth fault on the engine. The earth fault is in the grid.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I was only asking for clarification. Having absolutely zero sight of this, there is no need for such theatrics. A simple yes or no or explanation would have been fine.

Hon. Chief Minister: It is not a yes or no answer.

Hon. C Sacarello: Well, a simple explanation would have been fine. With the theatrics, there is a further statement. (*Interjections*)

So, 1 engine was isolated. The GEA has 6 engines. 6 are fired up by a dual fuel, that is, a combination of diesel or gas, and 3 are just gas. They require, at peak, 3 engines to operate to meet the at peak, it is normally 42 megawatts. We are told it is 36 and a bit megawatts of demand that was being pulled by the system at the time. The question is, why did the... sorry, a question would be, why does the BESS battery not kick in? Also, why were the other engines not being used? Why was there not a quick conversion, if it was a dual fuel, to the diesel? If it was a gas, why are there no more dual fuel engines being used? Finally, does the Government realise that they have an engineer who is being sidelined at the moment, who could cover this type of technical expertise, and why are they not using their full resources?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Chief Minister: So, he is holding brief for someone, we just do not know who it is. Someone could fix everything, but we are just going to move on. Tell us who it is, we will call him. Tell us who it is that could fix everything.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I hate to be referring once again to Viewpoint programmes, but on a Viewpoint programme, only last week I did accuse the hon. Gentleman of conducting politics by having coffee with his friends. Unfortunately, we are dealing with a very serious issue and having an anecdote of a person that says that there has only been 1 power cut in Gibraltar on any given year other than 2016 unfortunately, we have all lived it, and we all know that there have been far more than 1 power cut in 2016.

If the hon. Gentleman wants to let us know who the individual that he is alluding to is, that we are sidelining, I am very happy to have that conversation with the hon. Gentleman.

In respect of the hon. Gentleman's questions, let me clarify, and let me refer back to my statement on the information which I have been given. What the GEA has told us is there was a major earth fault in the Ocean Village area which tripped up engine number 4.

There are 6 engines, 3 dual-fuelled, 3 normal, but it is not the case of them all being running at the same time. At any given time, there are 2, sometimes 3 running. He is absolutely right in that.

But it is not just a case of it switching from one engine to another. When there is an earth fault, the system trips up and stops all the engines. All the engines fail.

The BESS was not designed to pick up an earth fault outside the power station. This was made very clear in several of the broadcasts I did and several of the statements I did. So, if an engine trips, another one cannot simply turn on. If an engine trips the entire engine trip, it cannot turn from gas to diesel. That is not how the system functions.

Now, I am not an engineer, and the hon. Gentleman is not an engineer. There are people that are far, far better placed to have this discussion and to provide us with answers. Indeed, these are the individuals that we are asking for answers with our consultants. Indeed, we are bringing around further people so that they can conduct detailed investigations into these questions.

So, Madam Speaker, in conclusion to the hon. Gentleman's questions, I am very happy to look at the expertise if there is any such individual that we are sidelining, we are not aware. I very much doubt that, but if there is, I am very happy to have that discussion with the hon. Gentleman. I am not going to conduct the business of the GEA by anecdote of one individual who he happened to have a coffee with and told him that there was one power cut in the period before 2011.

That is simply not credible. I am very happy to have a discussion with individuals who actually know what they are talking about on the engines, who are much better placed to answer these questions than the hon. Gentleman or, indeed, myself, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, the Hon. Mrs Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, I am grateful. This afternoon, information has reached us that approximately an hour, hour and a half into the power cut, there were announcements being made that Ocean Views, Bella Vista, Hillside the generators had failed.

Perhaps the hon. Lady could enlighten us as to and yes, it is an intentional pun as to what it is that went on there and whether power was restored quickly, how long it took and the impact of that, because these are vulnerable individuals who are either residing there or who are admitted, and the panic and the chaos that we are told has ensued is significant. So that is one question, but I have another question as well, and it is in respect of the emergency 999 line.

The police, the RGP, were tweeting and putting information out on social media, again, approximately an hour, hour and a half into the power cut, that the 999 line had gone down. Can the Hon. Minister perhaps give some clarification as to how long that line was down? Because, again, the impact would have been significant. Not everybody is on social media. And of course, it seems that the police will have done what they can to put the message out, but another line seems to have been used, a mobile phone, so perhaps we can have some clarification on that as well.

Madam Speaker: I would allow that, certainly, but it is not something that arises, that was mentioned in the statement of the Minister. It is relating to the subject matter, of course it is, but it has not arisen the Minister has not commented on that. So it may be that that may or may not be answered, but I would allow that and see if there is an answer.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, if that is a Facebook post, we have no information. We are seeking clarification on what exactly happened from the Director General and indeed the police. I have not heard that from the police, and I believe that the Hon. Chief Minister has not heard that either from the police.

We are seeking information. The latest I have heard is that there was a delay in the battery powering up, but we will be seeking clarification on that.

Madam Speaker: All right, I do not want to go on for too long on this. I know that we have a very still comprehensive Order Paper, and I do not want this to become a debate. It is a matter of high public interest, I will allow, but I do not want to spend too long on this, because these can be the matters of questions for the next session.

The Hon. Damon Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Madam Speaker, I think it is fair to say that we all accept across the floor of the House that the frequency with which we are experiencing these power cuts is having a huge effect in terms of our reputation. We need to be careful with that. Not only that, it also has the potential of having an effect not just on the lives of our people, but indeed directly on our economy.

I think specifically in relation to the financial services sector, for example, one of the important sectors of our economy, and indeed our tourist sector. We have had another power cut today, almost at the end of June, when Gibraltar is busy with tourists. We have had to suffer the embarrassment of visitors to our shores seeing what many have described as a banana republic-esque kind of approach to energy, it seems.

But the important thing is that the people of Gibraltar are suffering the frequency of these power cuts. Now, the Chief Minister refers to, in a rather, may I say partisan way, and I would say immature way, to statistics to say that the GSD was worse than the GSLP Liberals in Office. He fails to mention, for example, that in answer to questions that were posed by my Learned and hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition in the past, that there were 30 power cuts in 2021.

But I do not want to go there. We need to deal with this issue. He is absolutely right when he says that, insofar as this issue is concerned, we are an island nation.

The obvious reason being that we do not want to be dependent on our neighbours to the north, as he has described in the past, in respect of our resilience and our energy supply. This is the greater burden that Gibraltar faces on a daily basis and into the future. But if I may ask in respect of that particular issue, either the Minister with responsibility for Utilities or indeed the Chief Minister himself, whether it is the position that we are in effect expected to live, therefore, with frequency of power cuts.

Is that the Government's position in respect of that particular point? If I may, by way of seeking further clarification, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has attempted on at least 2 occasions to obtain information as to who this individual is. Indeed, I think the impression that was given initially was, I am not suggesting that the Hon. Minister was misleading the House. It is the way that it was understood on this side of the House that we were going to have a company, a third party entity to provide the Government with the relevant assistance and advice and all the rest of it, in order to improve resistance. It so happens that what this third party is, is an individual. We have asked the Government and the Minister specifically who this individual is, and we have not yet had an answer to that particular question, and therefore I give the Government the further opportunity to provide us with that information.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman has accused me of being partisan, because he is the person who likes to remind us that we are here in this place to do politics, something with which I do not disagree with him, and we do politics in our system on a partisan basis. He represents one party, I represent another. So, I do not think there is anything wrong with that, and there is nothing wrong with my presenting the defence of the Government as the defence of the Government that I lead, because I think, frankly, that is what is expected.

But I do not appreciate that the hon. Gentleman should refer to my maturity or otherwise as if he was the person who determines whether I am mature or not. He is not. He can have a view about my maturity, which will be perhaps not too different from my view about his.

But that does not advance things at all. It does not take the debate anywhere, and it does not help people who are trying to do all the things that I referred to and that he repeated when the

power goes down. In fact, I think it is a bit of an indulgence that he should take the debate there, when the debate is on issues relating to how we generate power and the failures that we have.

Madam Speaker, there were not, in 2021, 30 general power cuts. Not general, Madam Speaker. What we are talking about, when I am giving the statistics for 2011 and the statistics for 2009 and 2010 and 2018, are general power cuts.

So, hon. Gentlemen and Ladies will want to be comparing apples with apples and pears with pears. I know that that makes it harder for them, but that is what they need to do. Because, as Mr Bossino often defends in this Chamber, we are in a political place, hon. Members will understand that of course I am making political points.

Now, the hon. Gentleman says, because we are in an electricity island, are we expected to live with frequency of power cuts? No, we are not, is the answer. We, on this side of the House, in the GSLP and the Liberals, are the ones who have demonstrated that it is possible to live in an electricity island without frequency of power cuts.

That is the point. Because in 2016, Gibraltar, despite being an electricity island, had only 1 power cut. That is not frequency of power cuts.

In 2017, Gibraltar lived with two general power cuts. In 2018, with three. In 2024, with two general power cuts.

So, there does not have to be frequency of power cuts. That is why the hon. Member and I are pursuing this issue, so that we push this back, so that we have an electricity island without frequency of power cuts. As we, only we, have demonstrated it is possible.

Now, hon. Members have not demonstrated it is possible. hon. Members have had power cuts in double figures every year that they were in Government. We had the worst year.

So, the hon. Gentleman says I am being partisan. I was the one who said, not the 2021 figure which he ascribed to us of 30, which were not general power cuts. I was the one who mentioned the figure of 56.

Which is a worse figure, but in our time. A worse figure because of the explosion of the power station. The power station that we inherited. The golden legacy of the GSD, as Mr. Bossino often refers to it, Madam Speaker. So, the short answer to the hon. Gentleman is that Gibraltar does not have to have frequency of power cuts because it is an electricity island. We have demonstrated that and we will demonstrate it again. That is the work that we are doing. You cannot expect a 100% guarantee in respect of power. But you can get us close to that. Which is what we demonstrated in 2016. I am still waiting to hear the hon. Member's congratulations for that.

Finally, Madam Speaker, on the question of the individual and the name that they have not given. It is very simple. We cannot give them the name of an individual because we do not know the name of the individual. We are negotiating with a company for a company to find in their infrastructure an individual that fits the bill necessary to do this work. When we have that, we will be able to agree with that company. We will then be able to share the name of the company and the individual. Because as we are in negotiations at the moment, if we cannot do it with this company, we will have another. We will have to find the right spec for the right work to pursue. Once we have got that, Madam Speaker, in fact, I am sure the Minister will want to make an announcement about having reached that arrangement and the relevant individual being deployed. Although I have to tell hon. Members, engineers are a little different to lawyers and politicians. They do not really like to have their names in newspapers. So we may simply make the announcement as to the company that is providing the expertise by way of subcontract.

That, Madam Speaker, is the way that the Minister and I believe we can once again take Gibraltar back to where we took it in 2016 and thereafter and in 2024, when we only had two general power cuts in the whole year. So, Madam Speaker, I do hope that the community will understand that the Government provides all the resources necessary to the individuals who are doing this work. I also want to say something, Madam Speaker, because they may not be popular right now, but they are amongst the hardest working people we know.

495 The people down at the GEA. When the power goes down in Gibraltar and everybody starts cussing and complaining, the people at the GEA gel like a unit and they run to their workplace. I have seen this happen, Madam Speaker, not just when the power goes out, but when the whole place goes up into frigging flames.

When others run away from it, they run towards it. They do their best. They get the odd tongue lashing from politicians who do not know anything about how to generate electricity, because we are lay people too.

They are at it, getting the power back. They deserve huge recognition for that, Madam Speaker, because the work they do at moments like this becomes very, very stressful indeed. Moments which I know they, like us, wish never happened and it was all plain sailing with engines performing as they should. Earth faults, which happen on the grid, not on the engine, not happening as they have today.

Madam Speaker: Alright, we are going to move on.

510 **Hon. C Sacarallo:** Madam Speaker, may I give the Chief Minister the opportunity to correct the wrong statement and not mislead the House?

Madam Speaker: Sorry?

515 **Hon. C Sacarello:** May I ask for your indulgence, Madam Speaker, in allowing me to correct a statement that the Chief Minister gave, perhaps in error, so that he does not mislead the House?

Madam Speaker: Alright.

520 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be brief. The Chief Minister spoke about the fault, the earth fault, only being the demise of the grid.

It actually can occur in the generator itself as well. In this case, it did not. But it can indeed occur in the generator.

With the right network protection, the generator could have been isolated and we could have had a brownout and not a blackout. Will the Chief Minister acknowledge that and amend his statement accordingly?

Hon. Chief Minister: Madam Speaker, I am acting on the information that I have been provided. The earth fault today happened at Ocean Village. Whether it is possible for an earth fault to happen in an engine or not is beyond my pay grade.

530 What I was trying to convey to the House was that today it did not happen in the engine, which is the error that the hon. Gentleman made and has not yet corrected the record for, although I think I corrected it for him. Madam Speaker, I do not know the difference between a blackout and a brownout, but I suppose some people do. I suppose the person who is sending him the texts knows what the difference is.

Can I suggest that instead of sending him texts, he identifies himself to the Minister? Instead of having coffee with him, because all he can do is talk about it, he talks to the Minister, who could perhaps, if he is the brains who knows how to stop these power cuts, he might then help us all to stop these power cuts if they are stoppable. We have had such instances in this House before.

540 I have said I hope not to have to come back to this place and say the things I had to say in the past when we reached the huge number of power cuts that we reached, which were so embarrassing, which led to me having to adjourn the Budget debate to make a statement. Madam Speaker, no doubt the Hon. Mr Sacarello, whom the Hon. Mr Bossino yesterday described as everything short of wonderful, will not want to be the sole repository of information about such technical detail as blackouts and brownouts, and he will want to share the information and the source of it with the Hon. Minister for the Utilities.

545

Madam Speaker: Alright, we will go back to the questions now.

550

[Q209/2026](#)
[GHA employees –](#)
[Number of needlestick injuries](#)

[Q210/2026](#)
[GHA employees –](#)
[Vaccines offered](#)

Clerk: Answers to Oral questions continued. Question 209, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

555 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** In the past 24 months, please provide the number of needlestick injuries suffered by GHA employees, broken down by grade/title and the vaccination/immunity status of each individual.

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

560 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 210.

Clerk: Question 210, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

565 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** What vaccines does the GHA offer its employees? Please state whether the vaccines offered:

- (i) Are compulsory for GHA employees (please outline which one(s) and the frequency with which they must be renewed);
- (ii) Are offered to all GHA staff, inclusive of cleaners, domestics staff and labourers?

570

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

575 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 209, over the last 24 months, the Infection Prevention and Control Team has recorded 57 reported needle stick injuries. Comprehensive staff demographic information has only been routinely captured since 2025 and staff grades were not included within the historical IPC data set. The reported injuries involve a range of staff groups including nurses, doctors, midwives and theatre sterile services unit, TSSU, staff.

580 Where required, affected staff members are followed up by the IPC team at both three and six months following the incident in line with the established occupational health monitoring practices. At present, there is no single centralised database for the recording of staff vaccination and immunisation status. The GHA has recently prioritised this and human resources and occupational health and safety teams are currently developing a screening and immunisation policy.

585 This policy will establish a formal process for the collection, recording and management of staff vaccinations and immunisation data. To strengthen incident reporting and governance arrangements, the IPC team now notifies the relevant clinical nurse manager whenever a staff member sustains a needle stick injury. This is intended to ensure that a DATIX report is completed and that appropriate follow-up actions are undertaken in a timely manner as per the SHARPS injury and splash exposure policy. All staff have face-to-face IPC training on SHARPS injuries and
590 how to manage them. There are also helpful guides on safe handling of SHARPS.

In answer to Question 210, the GHA offers its employees the following vaccines: Hepatitis A is offered to all laboratory and estate staff; Hepatitis B is offered to all staff found not to be immune at screening; Tetanus, diphtheria and polio are offered to all staff who have not previously been immunised for these; MMR vaccines are offered to all staff with no evidence of immunisation; TB and BCG are given to all susceptible staff; Varicella Zoster for chickenpox is offered to all staff not immune; and influenza is offered to all staff annually.

It is the GHA's mandatory requirement that staff cooperate with the staff screening and immunisation policy. Whilst no vaccination can be compulsory, the GHA will give careful consideration to any potentially justifiable reason for refusal, whether on medical, religious or other potential reasonable grounds, balancing the nature of the concerns of the individual against the health and safety objective of the policy. The policy allows for redeployment within the GHA for staff who refuse vaccinations for unjustified reasons.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, just for clarification purposes, can the Hon. Minister comment as to whether the GHA follows the NHS Professionals and Optima and the Green Book Standards at the NHS, or whether Gibraltar or the GHA have developed their own guidelines?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I do not have any information as to that. As usual, if the hon. Lady poses a specific question, I am very happy to answer it in the next session of Parliament.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

[Q211/2026](#)
[Staff survey undertaken within the GHA –](#)
[Results of that survey](#)

Clerk: Question 211, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: When was the most recent staff survey undertaken within the GHA what was the response rate, have the results of that survey been shared with staff and will the results of the survey be published??

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the most recent GHA staff survey was undertaken between 18th March 2025 and 19th June 2025. 368 staff responded to the survey, giving a response rate of 25% across both GHA and ERS. Although initial analysis of the results was undertaken and reviewed by the new Director General, he advised that the response rate fell well below the acceptable minimum industry standard of 50% to yield credible, actionable results.

Response rates below this level are susceptible to severe non-response rate bias and loss of anonymity and granularity. Therefore, the results have not been shared with staff or published on the basis that they face severe credibility issues and the Director General will revise the methodology used to ensure a more appropriate, accessible and specific health organisation tool is used to repeat the survey. The Director General is, however, concerned by the low engagement with the survey and, apart from repeating it, is developing new staff communication strategies, including open staff town hall meetings across all sites, a new staff newsletter and middle management development programmes.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, has it been established why people are not engaging with these surveys? Is there a general reason that has been established or is that something that has been looked into as well?

645 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as stated in my question, the Director General is currently looking at those concerns and is looking at different ways of communicating with staff.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Would the Minister accept that it indicates a certain level of demotivation?

650 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker, it indicates that people have not answered the questionnaire. As I have said, the Director General is looking into reasons as to why people are not engaging, but I do not want to draw any conclusions from that.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, once the reasons as to why have been arrived at, will the
655 Hon. Minister commit to sharing that across this House and perhaps publish the reasons why?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I do not think that we are going to come to a concrete view of why there is little engagement. What we can do, and what the Director General is trying to do, is ensure that in future there is further engagement by all the means that I have pointed
660 out. So I am not sure that I will be able to communicate why there was little engagement, but what I can say is that we can commit to trying different methods in order for there to be further engagement in the future.

Hon. J Ladislaus: If there is further engagement in future and more, shall we say, accurate data
665 is arrived at as a result of these surveys, will the Hon. Minister commit to sharing that with the public?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, if the Director General advises me that the staff survey is an accurate reflection and the figures can be relied on, then absolutely we will publish those
670 responses.

Q212/2026

**Bank staff employed at the GHA –
Working without a registered ETB contract**

675 **Clerk:** Question 212, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Broken down by month, how many bank staff employed at the GHA between
1st June 2024 to date were/are working without a registered ETB contract and how many of those
680 have had their contracts registered retrospectively?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the
685 information requested is particularly voluminous and is not held in a format that allows it to be readily broken down by month. Producing the requested breakdown would require the GHA to undertake a detailed manual review of the weekly duty rotas and individual employment records covering a period of more than two years. It has therefore not been possible to complete that exercise within the timeframe available for answering this question.

690 From a Ministry perspective, however, I would expect every person working for the GHA, including bank staff, to have the appropriate employment documentation registered with the ETB as required. I have therefore asked the GHA to review its records and processes to ensure that, if indeed there are any cases, any outstanding registrations are addressed without delay.

695 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps indicate whether she is aware whether there are any unregistered working for the GHA? Because I understand the issue with collating all the data in the timeframe, but is the Hon. Minister aware of any instances where this is arising?

700 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker I am not aware of any particular instances where this is arising. We are talking about bank staff which are called in on an as-and-when basis, so no, I am not aware.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q213/2026

Investigation conducted within the GHA –
Formal whistleblowing process

705 **Clerk:** Question 213, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

710 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** When a formal investigation is conducted within the GHA arising from a formal whistleblowing process are the findings of that investigation, any action taken and/or measures implemented shared and discussed with the whistleblowers and stakeholders?

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

715 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, should a whistleblowing concern arise that necessitates a formal investigation, the GHA would manage the process in accordance with the relevant Government whistleblowing policy and the GHA speak-up policy. This would include due consideration of confidentiality, appropriate communication with whistleblowers and relevant stakeholders, and the implementation of any actions or measures identified through the investigation process. Copies of the relevant policies were provided to the hon. Member in response to parliamentary Question 209 of 2025.

725 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Minister perhaps clarify whether information has been shared and whether recommendations have been implemented in every case where a formal whistleblowing process has been undertaken since 2023?

730 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, in my previous answer to this House, I said that the GHA has implemented a speak-up policy which is designed to foster a culture where employees feel empowered to voice concerns within the organisation. The policy ensures that all matters are raised appropriately, captured and reviewed and addressed in a structured and transparent way. Additionally, the whistleblowing policy published by the Department of Personnel and Development in November 2024 applies across the entire Public Sector, including the GHA.

This policy reinforces a commitment to accountability and integrity within the organisation. That answer is still correct today, Madam Speaker.

735 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q214-216/2026

Findings of the independent review –
St Bernard's Hospital CCU whistleblowing concerns

Clerk: Question 214, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

740 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** What were the findings of the independent review that was undertaken in respect of the issues which arose within St Bernard's Hospital CCU over 18 months ago, which were the subject of a formal whistleblowing complaint and was any action taken in respect of any of the individuals who were the subject of those complaints?

745 **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 215 and 216.

750 **Clerk:** Question 215, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Since the whistle-blowers within St Bernard's Hospital CCU raised genuine whistleblowing concerns over 18 months ago, have whistleblowing concerns been raised by staff from any other department within the GHA? If so, please set out:

- 755 (i) How many concerns have been raised;
(ii) What department(s) those concerns related to;
(iii) Whether any investigations which arose from whistleblowing within the GHA are currently ongoing;
(iv) How many investigations relating to whistleblowing concerns within the GHA have now
760 concluded and what measures were taken to address those concerns;
(v) How many of the concerns raised related to potential risk to patient safety?

Clerk: Question 216, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

765 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Since the complaints made by whistleblowers, over 18 months ago, relating to St Bernard's CCU, have any of the complainants:

- (i) requested transfers to other departments;
(ii) been forcibly removed from the CCU;
(iii) resigned from the GHA?

770

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 214, I wish to clarify at the outset that the independent review referenced was not
775 commissioned as a result of a whistleblowing complaint. The review was part of an investigation into a grievance and was commissioned by the Director General in full consultation with Unite the Union. Given the sensitive and personal nature of the information shared by staff during that review process, both the GHA and Unite the Union agreed that the full report would not be published, as was communicated in a joint statement on 15th September 2025.

780 I am therefore not in a position to set out the findings in detail on the floor of this House, as to do so would risk breaching the confidentiality obligations agreed to by both parties and could cause harm to the individuals involved. What I can tell the hon. Member is that the review made 17 recommendations to which both parties committed to implement in full. I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made on most of those recommendations.

785 In answer to Question 215, as per the answer to Question 214, the matters relating to St Bernard's CCU previously referenced did not arise from whistleblowing complaints. Furthermore, there have been no recourse to whistleblowing incidents within the GHA during the time period in question.

In answer to Question 216, I refer the hon. Member to my answer to Question 214, where I explain that the matters previously raised in relation to St Bernard's CCU did not arise from whistleblowing complaints but formed part of a grievance-related process commissioned by the Director General in full consultation with Unite the Union.

On that basis, the premise of the question is not accepted. I am advised that no individuals have officially requested transfers to other departments, been forcibly removed from the CCU, or resigned from the GHA as a result of any whistleblowing complaint relating to St Bernard's CCU.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, I will rephrase the question. Is the Hon. Minister aware of any individuals who have requested transfers to other departments, been forcibly removed from the CCU or resigned altogether from the GHA as a result of the grievance process? Because there were grievances made by staff and that is why I am referring to it as a whistleblowing process.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, yes, I am aware of several staff members that were transferred. They have applied for jobs in other areas. They have applied to become Charge Nurses. They have applied for redeployment to different departments. They have been redeployed to different posts. I do not believe that anybody has been forcibly removed from the CCU, Madam Speaker.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, just for clarification, is it the case that somebody has resigned, in fact, from the GHA altogether as a result of these grievances?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the information that I have given is that someone resigned from the GHA. Whether it was as a direct result of the grievance or otherwise is unclear from the information that I have been provided.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q217/2026
GHA employees –
Long-term sick leave for a period of over 12 months

Clerk: Question 217, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many GHA employees have been on long-term sick leave for a period of over 12 months? Please provide a breakdown as to how long each of those employees has been on long-term sick leave for.

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I can confirm that there are currently 5 GHA employees who are on long-term sick leave of over 12 calendar months. I now hand over a schedule with the information requested.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 217

Employee	Date of Commencement of Sick Leave
1	9 th May 2025
2	11 th July 2024
3	14 th March 2025
4	16 th April 2025
5	29 th May 2025

Madam Speaker: It is a very short schedule, so I will take any supplementaries now.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful. I have no questions as to the schedule specifically. Could the Hon. Minister perhaps clarify what the GHA's policy in respect of long-term sick leave is, in respect of how much proportion of a salary an individual is to receive whilst on sick leave?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, long-term sickness is managed in accordance with General Orders and GHA policy on the basis of ongoing medical certification and the formal review process. Where the absence reaches defined thresholds, the case is escalated by the relevant line manager to the Director of Workforce. It is all in line with both General Orders and GHA policy.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q218/2026

**Associated Specialists employed by the GHA –
Standard allowances**

Clerk: Question 218, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many Associated Specialists employed by the GHA are receiving allowances which are over and above the standard allowances normally granted to those within their role, for what reason have those additional allowances been granted and since when have they been paid at the increased rates?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the GHA currently employs 5 associate specialists, each of whom gets an allowance depending on their level of responsibility or additional duties undertaken. These allowances reflect responsibilities undertaken beyond the standard associate specialist remit, namely: forensic medical examiner duties; consultant level clinical duties and on-call commitments; and the senior management responsibilities of a clinical director. The additional allowances relating to these responsibilities have been in place since April 2020, January 2023 and May 2024 respectively and are intended to recognise the significant clinical experience, additional responsibility and the service commitments undertaken by the postholder.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Is there a specific guideline or protocol under which those allowances are given?

870 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the allowances are given depending on the activities that the individual associate specialist covers.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I will rephrase that. So, what is the criteria to be granted those allowances? Because of course you can have individuals working within the GHA who may not know how it is that they can go about achieving that level so that they are able also to benefit perhaps from those allowances as their colleagues are.

880 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, for example, if an associate specialist is acting as a forensic medical examiner, there are, I believe, 6 or 7 forensic medical examiners who work with the police frequently. These are advertised, they go out and anyone that wants to apply for those positions applies for the positions. If there is a requirement for a consultant in a specific area, then the doctor who is a specialist in that field would sometimes step up if we cannot bring over a consultant in that area. It is determined on a case-by-case basis, Madam Speaker.

885 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister perhaps inform this House whether all 5 of those associate specialists are indeed qualified consultants?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I assume that if they are associate specialists, they are associate specialists, not consultants.

890 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q219/2026
GHA's Medical Director's salary –
Monthly breakdown

895 **Clerk:** Question 219, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Please provide a monthly breakdown as to the GHA's Medical Director's salary from 1st January 2020 to date, to include:

- 900 (i) Basic Salary;
(ii) Allowances;
(iii) Enhancements; and
(iv) Overtime.

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the GHA's Medical Director's salary from 1st January 2020 to date is as follows:

January 2020 to February 2020: basic salary of £10,323.08, an allowance of £8,962.88 and an enhancement of £3,096.92;

910 March 2020 to August 2020: basic salary of £10,323.08, an allowance of £3,591 and an enhancement of £4,428.60;

September 2020: basic salary of £10,875.51, an allowance of £3,667.65 and an enhancement of £4,665.59;

915 October 2020 to March 2022: basic salary of £10,960.50, an allowance of £3,693.15 and an enhancement of £4,702.05;

April 2022 to January 2023: basic salary of £10,960.50, an allowance of £4,789.20 and an enhancement of £7,990.20;

February 2023: basic salary of £9,630.33, an allowance of £3,528.98, an enhancement of £6,821.57 and a rent allowance of £150;

March 2023: basic salary of £9,742.03, an allowance of £3,058.80 and an enhancement of £9,858;

April 2023 to November 2023: basic salary of £9,745.75, an allowance of £3,298.73 and an enhancement of £9,858;

December 2023: basic salary of £9,745.75, an allowance of £3,298.73 and an enhancement of £9,858;

January 2024: basic salary of £9,745.75, an allowance of £3,298.73 and an enhancement of £9,858;

February 2024: basic salary of £9,745.75, an allowance of £3,298.73 and an enhancement of £9,858;

March 2024: basic salary of £9,745.75, an allowance of £3,298.73 and an enhancement of £9,858;

April 2024: basic salary of £9,861.25, an allowance of £3,333.38 and an enhancement of £9,858;

May 2024: basic salary of £9,861.25, an allowance of £3,333.38 and an enhancement of £9,858;

January 2024: basic salary of £9,861.25, an allowance of £3,333.38 and an enhancement of £9,858;

July 2024: basic salary of £9,861.25, an allowance of £3,333.38 and an enhancement of £9,858;

August 2024: basic salary of £9,861.25, an allowance of £3,333.38 and an enhancement of £9,858;

September 2024 to December 2024: basic salary of £9,861.25, an allowance of £3,333.38 and an enhancement of £9,858;

January 2025: basic salary of £9,861.25, an allowance of £3,333.38 and an enhancement of £9,858;

February 2025: basic salary of £9,861.25, an allowance of £3,333.38 and an enhancement of £9,858;

March 2025 to July 2025: basic salary of £9,861.25, an allowance of £3,333.38 and an enhancement of £9,858;

August 2025: basic salary of £9,959.83, an allowance of £3,362.95 and an enhancement of £9,898.59;

September 2025: basic salary of £9,959.83, an allowance of £3,362.95 and an enhancement of £9,898.59;

October 2025 to January 2026: basic salary of £9,959.83, an allowance of £3,362.95 and an enhancement of £9,898.59;

January 2026: basic salary of £9,959.00, an allowance of £3,362.95 and an enhancement of £9,898.59;

March 2026 to April 2026: basic salary of £9,959.83, an allowance of £3,362.95 and an enhancement of £9,898.59;

May 2026: basic salary of £9,959.83, an allowance of £3,133.11 and an enhancement of £7,494;

and June 2026: basic salary of £9,959.83, an allowance of £2,987.95 and an enhancement of £5,975.90.

Hon. J Ladislaus: I am grateful for that information, which is quite difficult to follow across the floor, but in any event, I noticed that the salary, whereas it started off in January 2020 at approximately £10,323, it then dips to £7,000 odd and then it goes up again to £9,000 odd. Can the Hon. Minister account for those fluctuations, because that is a basic salary that we are talking about?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: That would depend on the individual that was performing at that point in time and how the basic salary was calculated, depending on what his level of expertise or what his position was within the hospital.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Can the Hon. Minister perhaps clarify what the enhancements relate to? I think the public and ourselves are more familiar with the basic pay and the allowances, but what are the enhancements in relation to that?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: The enhancement is a form of responsibility allowance, I believe. The enhancement is a payment, bear in mind that consultants are paid by way of additional sessions, and the additional sessions are paid for the additional responsibility that the Medical Director undertakes.

Hon. J Ladislaus: So, am I correct in assuming that over the course of the past few months, where we have seen the enhancement dip, that the responsibilities that the Medical Director has been undertaking have lowered or have changed in any way?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the Medical Director's contract was up in February, it was extended by three months, and when the new Director General came in, they were asked to review the PAs that were paid to the Medical Director. As a direct result of this, there was a recalibration, and therefore the new salary was calculated.

Hon. J Ladislaus: So again, am I correct in saying that the salary has in fact been decreased, that the total being received now by the Medical Director is in fact lower than it was prior to his contract being up in February? Is that correct?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, his contract was up in February, it was extended by three months, and then it was renegotiated, and yes, it is lower now than the previous salary.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Is there a reason for that salary being lower now that the Hon. Minister can perhaps share with this House?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I renegotiated the contract, and renegotiated it well. The Director General renegotiated the contract, and the Director General renegotiated it well. The Hon. Mr Clinton would be delighted with the new Director General and his powers of renegotiation.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Am I correct in assuming that the Medical Director has not changed? I am interested to see how it is that this individual has accepted a lower pay after a number of years in the role.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, again, the Medical Director's salary was renegotiated by the Director General and the Medical Director accepted the renegotiation.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q220/2026
GHA's Director General's salary –
Monthly breakdown

Clerk: Question 220, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1020 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Please provide a monthly breakdown as to the GHA's Director General's salary from 1st January 2020 to date, to include:

- (i) Basic Salary;
(ii) Allowances;
(iii) Enhancements;
1025 (iv) Overtime;
(v) Bonuses; and
(vi) Rent allowance.

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

1030 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, the GHA's Director-General's salary from 1st January 2020 to date is as follows. There was no Director-General position until February 2022, after which the information is as follows:

- February 2022: basic salary of £12,187 and a rent allowance of £1,200;
1035 March 2022 to September 2023: basic salary of £16,250 and a rent allowance of £1,200;
October 2023: basic salary of £16,250 and a rent allowance of £1,200;
October 2023: basic salary of £18,750 and a rent allowance of £3,000;
November 2023 to July 2025: basic salary of £18,750 and a rent allowance of £3,000;
August 2025 to October 2025: basic salary of £18,937.50 and a rent allowance of £3,000;
1040 March 2026 to April 2026: basic salary of £12,916.67 and a rent allowance of £3,000;
From May 2026 to date: basic salary of £14,166.67 and a rent allowance of £3,900.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Minister perhaps confirm whether it was a contractual agreement that the Director General's salary would rise after a few months of having been in the role?
1045

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: No, Madam Speaker.

Hon. J Ladislaus: For what reason has the salary increased by, I think it is £2,000, the basic salary, within just a small number of months from the time at which the Director General commenced in his role?
1050

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, this was an agreed increase with the Director General.

1055 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Can the Hon. Minister clarify the reason behind that agreed increase?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the agreed increase is still £4,000 per month less than the previous Director General's increase. Therefore, when it was requested, it was agreed by the Ministry with the new Director General.
1060

Hon. J Ladislaus: Is it a case, therefore, that the previous Director General's salary perhaps was not as well negotiated. As we have just heard the Hon. Minister refer to the negotiations that the Director General has done with the Medical Director and how good those were. Is it the case therefore the previous Director General's contract perhaps was not as well agreed?

1065 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, the previous Director General's salary was not negotiated by myself. I am therefore unable to comment.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1070

[Q221/2026](#)
[Power cut that took place –](#)
[Causes behind the primary and secondary outages](#)

Clerk: Question 221, the Hon. C Sacarello.

1075 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Could the Minister please explain the causes behind the primary and secondary outages of the power cut that took place on the 23rd March 2026 which caused a widespread blackout for approximately 3 hours?

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

1080

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the power outage of 23rd March 2026 at 12:28 was caused by an earth fault which initially resulted in the loss of supply to 8 feeders. Engine set 1 tripped on load at 9 megawatts and as a result of the loss of supply which affected the ventilation extractor packs for said engine. The ventilation extractor fan tripped, consequently shutting off the gas supply to the engine and the engine subsequently shut down as a safety precaution.

1085

Initial investigations identified a high-voltage cable fault in the vicinity of Campion Park. Following the isolation of the cable, work commenced on the reinstatement of the affected feeders, upon which a secondary outage occurred within the Waterport Terrace feeders, also tripping on the earth fault. This secondary outage caused the engine fault set to trip, resulting in the loss of supply to an additional 14 feeders.

1090

Following further investigations, a high-voltage cable fault was identified in the vicinity of Waterport Terraces. This cable was isolated, which subsequently allowed the GEA to commence the restoration of power to all affected customers. The process was completed by 14:36.

1095

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, we seem to have a similar tale here of earth faults in the circuit and inadequate network protection. Does the Minister truly believe that following over £100 million investment of taxpayers' money, including this new BESS which was supposed to back up generators that went down, and despite the advancement of modern technology, that this is acceptable, that there have been over 10 power cuts this year, 7 of which, according to the Chief Minister, have been general blackouts?

1100

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I think we have been quite clear that we do not think it is acceptable.

1105

Hon. C Sacarello: It is encouraging to hear. Madam Speaker, it is unbelievable that in this day and age for people to be stuck in lifts, for conferences to turn into disasters, for businesses to lose money. There was recently an open letter sent by the Catering Association. They are absolutely fuming with the irregularity of this occurrence. Is it the fact, or could the Minister acknowledge that perhaps their Government is a little bit out of their depth and they are making us look a little like a third world country?

1110

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the one person that is out of their depth in this discussion, unfortunately, is the hon. Gentleman. Madam Speaker, what is remarkable is that in this Parliament, a month before the Treaty implementation, I do not have a single question on any business-related matter. So actually, the mere fact that the hon. Gentleman feels it appropriate to stand up and say, do we find it acceptable? We have said that we do not find it acceptable. We have said that actually we are as equally outraged by the power cuts as the hon. Gentleman is. We do not find it acceptable, and we are asking questions about the power cuts. So, for the hon. Gentleman to come up and get up and ask us whether we are out of our depth, I am not an engineer, he is certainly not an engineer, and his internet searches are not sufficiently valid to provide answers to the GEA at a time like this. We need the experts, and as the Hon. Chief Minister has previously said, if he has an expert up his sleeve that we are not seeing, or if he has an expert up his sleeve who he believes could provide us with better answers, please do let us know who that expert is, and we will happily consult with that expert. I am happy to say that no one on the Government benches is an engineer, nor is anyone in the Opposition an engineer. Therefore, we will consult with the experts to get answers as to why this unacceptable level of power cuts are occurring.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, at the time of the power cut, like I explained before, there were three dual fuel and three gas only. Would the Minister please explain what the set-up was at the time in terms of the ratio between dual fuel and gas engines, and was this a contributing factor?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, we are talking about the power cut that occurred on 23rd March. The power cut that occurred on 23rd March was a fault on the grid. When it is a fault on the grid, it causes the engine to trip. It does not matter whether it is gas or dual fuel, the engine trips. I am sorry to say, Madam Speaker, but I am not the person that should be answering these questions. The hon. Gentleman does not have a clue, as neither do I. It is not an aspersion on his abilities. We do not know. We are not engineers. We are asking the questions of the engineers, as he seems to be doing over his cups of coffee. I am very happy to carry on asking the questions until I get an answer. I am very happy to employ another individual to try and answer these questions, but us sitting here, standing here, pretending to understand about dual fuelled engines and LNG engines, frankly, we are wasting each other's time. This is not a matter in which you conduct a quick internet search, as he has previously done on the BESS, and come up with an answer. Here is a case for serious people to come up with serious answers.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, there are a couple of points I would like to address there, because there are a few allegations, if I may indulge. The first is that this whole internet search with BESS, what I did was I researched that. I would like to correct this, because they keep repeating it, to sully my name and my reputation. This was done based on requiring a quotation from a UK-based company, so can we put that one to bed once and for all? It was not an internet search, which the person to the right is not sitting there at the moment, levelled at me.

Secondly, the hon. Lady seems to have developed somewhat of an uncomfortable obsession with my coffees. I do not know why. I only have two a day. What I do, Madam Speaker, is speak to people. I think it really underlies a great nervousness at the amount of information that I am receiving that they wish to shove under the carpet. I wish that they would realise that.

My question, Madam Speaker, coming back to the next question, is that there are three dual-fuel generators which can be run on diesel, sufficient to meet the 42-megawatt peak that Gibraltar demands, and they do not take that long to start up. Why did it take, from 23rd March 2026, over three to four hours to restore power to some parts of Gibraltar?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, again, I am no expert in the field, and I do not pretend to be, unlike the hon. Gentleman. When the high-voltage cable trips, it takes a while to start up

1165 the engine. The whole of the North Mole Power Station trips. The engines fail. As I was there last time, I was actually witnessing the entire incident. The engines fail. They need to get the engines started up, and you normally have to go to the south to get the caterpillars started to power up the engines in the North Mole Power Station.

1170 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

[Q222-224/2026](#)
[GEA's NMPS Control Room –](#)
[Company; Tender details; Operational costs](#)

1175 **Clerk:** Question 222, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Could the Hon. Minister please provide details as to which company now operates the GEA's NMPS Control Room?

1180 **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 223 and 224.

1185 **Clerk:** Question 223, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Could the Hon. Minister please confirm if the management and operation of the GEA's NMPS Control Room was put out to tender and, if so, how much the tender was awarded for (cost per the length of the contract)?

1190 **Clerk:** Question 224, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Could the Hon. Minister please confirm the amount per annum that was being paid to WinPower SA to run the NMPS Control Room per annum for the last 3 years of their contract and roll over years?

1195

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the control room at the North Mole Power Station is operated by the Gibraltar Electricity Authority in answer to Question 222.

1200

In answer to Question 223, the management and operation of the control room at the North Mole Power Station has not been put out to tender as it is controlled by the Gibraltar Electricity Authority.

1205 In answer to Question 224, the control room at North Mole Power Station has never been run by WinPower SA. WinPower SA were engaged by Weeks Energies and Services SAS to provide an operation and maintenance function at the North Mole Power Station with the Gibraltar Electricity Authority retaining full control of the management and operation of the control room. The services provided by WinPower SA were reduced as from April 2024 and subsequently terminated on 31st December 2025. Disclosing the amount paid to WinPower SA would not be in the best interest of the taxpayer given that there is now a different contractor providing the same reduced services which were previously provided by WinPower SA at a lower price. When I say this, and the answer says this, the price was never disclosed to the entities during negotiations.

1210

1215 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Lady for her answer there. So, there is a difference obviously in running the whole control room and running the operation and maintenance, but really, we are talking about semantics. So, as I understand, it is effectively the same people doing the same job with a different company name.

1220 Could the Hon. Minister please explain what she means by reduced responsibilities and how have these been covered, the missing parts being covered, I assume by the GEA, but I would be grateful if she could elaborate on that.

1225 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, we are not talking about semantics. Someone controlling the control room is very different to someone that is managing the operations at the control room. The GEA have always controlled the control room at the North Mole Power Station, and the GEA will continue to control the Power Station.

1230 The next question was why were there reduced services? There were reduced services simply because as the contract went on, the staff at the GEA were taking over those responsibilities. So, some of those responsibilities passed to the staff at the GEA and therefore over time they were run down. There were, however, some employees of WinPower there until the last minute, which is what has now been overtaken by a new company.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, did this transition to this new company go out to tender? Was there an official tender process for this?

1235 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, we consulted on this with the Procurement Office and there is a process called a VEAT, a Voluntary Exempted Transparency Notice, when no one is contesting the application. The Procurement Office were aware of the negotiations throughout and the VEAT procedure was used with Procurement's blessing throughout the process.

1240 **Hon. C Sacarello:** So, can the hon. Lady confirm that she mentions that it was not contested, that it was actually fully advertised?

1245 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, it was not fully advertised. Individual companies raised the issue with us and there were people that were interested in running it for them, so the contract was passed to a new entity.

Hon. C Sacarello: And can the Hon. Minister confirm that effectively it is the same people, employees in situ, just with a different management structure, if you like?

1250 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Yes, and a much, much reduced price.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1255

[Q225/2026](#)
[Government's policy –](#)
[Minimum qualifications required for the new CEO of the GEA role](#)

Clerk: Question 225, the Hon. C Sacarello.

1260 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Could the Hon. Minister provide detail of the Government's policy on the minimum qualifications required for the new CEO of the GEA role?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, this is as set out in the internal bulletin, which I am happy to provide the hon. Gentleman behind the Speaker's Chair.

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I would gratefully accept that. And could I ask, among the objective criteria for the role, how high did the restoration of supply from a black start feature?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I know that the hon. Gentleman is being facetious. I understand there is no such qualification.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I was not asking as a qualification, I was asking as a criteria how high did it feature, as in the job requirements?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, again, I will hand over the qualifications that are required. I do not think that those are qualifications or experience that are, qualifications that are required at the CEO's level. I do not think it was specifically required.

Hon. C Sacarello: And were proven engineering qualifications and experience in this field a basic prerequisite?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, experience in the field was a prerequisite.

Hon. C Sacarello: I notice the omission of proven engineering qualifications. Could we assume that that might be overlooked?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, it is not overlooked. There is a bulletin which I am happy to share with the hon. Gentleman.

[Q226-227/2026](#)
[BESS batteries –](#)
[Maintenance fees, consultancy fees, insurance and operating costs; Installation and incidental costs](#)

Clerk: Question 226, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Could the Hon. Minister please detail the ongoing cost of running the BESS batteries per annum including all maintenance fees (third party and GEA), consultancy fees, insurance and operating costs?

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 Question 227.

Clerk: Question 227, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Could the Hon. Minister please confirm the total cost for the installation of the BESS batteries, including all incidental costs, related third party goods and services, consultancy fees and any associated GEA costs?

1310 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, as per my answer to Question 254 of 2025, the ongoing cost of running the BESS amounts to £6.63 million, spread over a three-year period, amounting to £2.21 million per annum. In answer to Question 227, as per my answer to Question 225 of 2025, the total cost for the installation of the BESS amounts to £9.79 million and covers all costs associated with this project, except for the operation and maintenance costs over three years.

1320 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you to the Hon. Minister. With regards to 226, could the Hon. Minister confirm the expected operational lifespan of the BESS batteries and whether the annual costs are expected to increase over time?

1325 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I do not expect the costs are expected to increase over time, but I do not have the lifespan of the battery. Again, if the hon. Gentleman asks me a specific question, I am very, very happy to provide him with an answer.

Hon. C Sacarello: Thank you, I shall, Madam Speaker. Can the Hon. Minister confirm whether the annual running cost is fixed under a maintenance agreement or variable, depending on the usage and performance?

1330 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as detailed in my answer, it is a fixed amount.

Hon. C Sacarello: Moving on to 227, Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Minister confirm whether all costs connected to the BESS projects have been fully disclosed in the answer, and by that I mean, does it include costs perhaps borne by the GEA indirectly?

1340 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, I was almost surprised by that. The obvious inference to be drawn from the hon. Gentleman's question is that I am withholding information, he has asked me for all incidental costs related to third-party costs. There is no need to repeat the question. I understand what the obligation is, and I confirm my previous answer.

Hon. C Sacarello: And would the Hon. Minister be able to confirm if there were any cost overruns against the original approved budget?

1345 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** No, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1350

Q228/2026
Current Ministers –
Outstanding utility bills

Clerk: Question 228, the Hon. C Sacarello.

1355 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Could the Government please confirm if any standing Ministers have outstanding utility bills in excess of £1,000 due and if any special exemptions for any of the Ministers exist, if so?

Madam Speaker: I am going to stop the hon. Member there. This question slipped through my net when I first looked at questions. It is a question which is out of order. It relates to a Minister's private affairs and not to their Ministerial responsibilities. I see that the Minister has provided an answer. If the Minister wishes to give the answer, given that we have got this far, I have no objection, but I am not going to allow any supplementaries because it is an inappropriate question, and I ought to have stopped it before it got onto the Order Paper.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, one Minister has a dispute with AquaGib over the cost of the provision of water. The dispute is currently being resolved by AquaGib undertaking an analysis relating to the costs involved. There is no special exemption for anyone in Gibraltar. This dispute has been resolved in the ordinary way. Additionally, the relevant Minister's solicitors are in funds for the totality of the amounts currently due for immediate payment once AquaGib issues a final invoice.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

[Q229/2026](#)
[Baby brain injury –](#)
[Settlement been paid/funded](#)

Clerk: Question 229, the Hon. R M Clinton.

Hon. R M Clinton: Can the Government advise if the £10.5 million baby brain injury settlement announced by the GHA in October 2025 has been paid and if so on what date and how was it funded?

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

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, I can confirm that the Government paid, in respect of damages, the £10.57 million settlement. The insurers paid an indemnity settlement amount of £9,255,039.29, and the GHA is paying the remaining balance of £1,314,960 from its recurrent expenditure.

Hon. R M Clinton: Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the Minister for her answer. So, if I understand it, then the GHA has a, forgive me for searching for the right terms, has a professional indemnity insurance, is this what the insurance cover claim was under, or was there some other insurance cover type, which I may have the wrong description of, and then secondly, the £1.3 million which the GHA covered, that came out of its budget in the current, or the financial year had just gone by.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, yes, the GHA, and indeed any other medical institution, is required to have medical insurance, which has an annual policy, which is a line in the estimates book which covers that insurance policy. So yes, it is a PI for negligence, etc. So, the GHA, as indeed any other medical institution, is required to have the PI in order for it to operate. Yes, the GHA is paying the remaining balance out of its recurrent expenditure this year and next year.

Madam Speaker: Yes, the Hon. Mrs Ladislaus.

1405 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, just a question. As to the indemnity insurance, does the Hon. the Minister have any information as to the impacts that this settlement has had on the premium for the indemnity insurance for the GHA?

1410 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, no. I would expect it to have the same impact that an ordinary claim would have, and you have to look at it the next financial year. If the hon. Lady wishes to have more detail on that, I am very happy to answer that, but with notice the question in advance. Sorry, Madam Speaker. If possible, I will provide the information.

1415 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

[Q230/2026](#)
[Small Boats Marina –](#)
[Empty berths](#)

1420 **Clerk:** Question 230, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: How many empty berths are there at the Small Boats Marina?

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

1425 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, we must distinguish and define what can be considered empty berths. We currently have 67 berths not assigned to any berth holders, as well as 2 additional berths that were ring-fenced as emergency berths and are purposefully not assigned. Additionally, we have a further 38 berths which do not currently have any vessel berthed, but they have been assigned to berth holders. Reasons for
1430 vessels not currently occupying these berths can vary, including vessels undergoing maintenance, vessels being winterised, vessels having been sold and replacements for vessels not arrived yet.

Hon. D J Bossino: May I ask the Minister what, because as I understand the position, these berths have remained empty for a considerable period of time and from my discussions with the
1435 Committee, I am told that that is causing them quite a lot of frustration. Can I ask the Minister what the Government's intentions, or shall I put it in a different way, policy is in respect of at least the 67 in number empty berths that she cites? I understand from her previous statements in relation to this issue, and I offer this and I give her the opportunity to correct me if she thinks that I am wrong, that it is the Government's intention to sell as opposed to rent out these berths. Can
1440 I ask her what the Government's position or intention is in respect of at least the 67 that she cites?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I have met the members of the Small Boats Marina on numerous occasions, as the hon. Gentleman seems to be aware of as he is nodding opposite me. We have discussed this. In previous Budgets, I have said that we are looking to sell those berths. I
1445 understand that my Budgets are long and boring, but there is information contained in there which may be useful. We have said in the Budget that we do intend to sell those berths. We have currently instructed lawyers to determine how to sell these berths, and I have communicated that to the Committee of the Small Boats Marina. We are currently in the process of obtaining legal advice on how to sell them, but in the interim, we have passed regulations, I think they are
1450 regulations, on how to clear out boats that are currently under the surface to also assist them in their endeavours. So, we are currently obtaining legal advice on how to sell the berths, and it is our intention to sell the berths.

Hon. D J Bossino: I see, and given that there is, to an extent, the sale of the berths as opposed to renting will address to the extent of 67, the waiting list, which I understand is quite lengthy. But she may wish to comment on what I have just said. I also understand that the Committee which runs this marina depends in large measure on the rental income that they receive from those berth holders who rent, which is, as I understand it, the current status as respects all the filled-in berths, or occupied berths. So how is it that that entity will be receiving income from the sold berths, if I can ask of that? Is it through some form of service charge which the new owners will be subjected to? Is that the position? And will they be receiving the sale proceeds? Because as I understand it, they then need the cash and the income and the finance to upkeep the marina.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the proceeds of the sale of berths will come to HMGOG. The service charges, in the same way as when you sell a property, the service charges are collected by the entity or the management committee of the property. The service charges will be collected by the management committee in the ordinary way.

Hon. D J Bossino: And the hon. Member made a reference to the budget speech, which she said was boring. I mean, I do not necessarily wish to make a valid judgement in respect of that. I am sure it was lengthy, given her various responsibilities. Can I, given that this was last year, and I think she said that this issue was the subject of legal advice that the Government was seeking, because I suppose the issue is how do you sell a bit of the sea, in effect, is she able to at least give an indication as to when she thinks that she will be in receipt of affirmative or confirmed legal advice such that this will be able to take place and the transactions are able to take place?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, the lawyers that we are instructing were traced on 10 June, and they assured me that they would have a response in the next two weeks.

Hon. D J Bossino: May I ask the hon. Lady who she is seeking advice from in relation to this? Is it internal or has she sought advice from a legal firm?

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I do not wish to put the individual on the spot, as I clearly am at the moment, but I have sought advice from Nick Howard from Hassans.

Hon. D J Bossino: If I may, Madam Speaker, when the hon. Lady says that 38 in number have been assigned to berth holders, is it the case that it is a question of the transaction needs to take place for them to enjoy and occupy the berths, but there is a legal assignment, so to speak, of those berths? May I ask her whether those are going to be rented or, when she says assigned, have they been sold to these 38? I have assumed that they are going to be rented, but that assumption may be incorrect.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Sorry, Madam Speaker, the answer to the question was that 67 berths have not been assigned and there are a further 38 berths which do not have a vessel in it, but they do have a berth holder. So, there are different reasons why they do not have a berth holder, but they have been assigned to individuals.

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, I think I have understood what she has now said and forgive me for having misunderstood the answer that she originally gave. In effect, they are empty, but they have owners, and I understand that they rent. Does the Government, the Department, the Port Authority, how will it deal with those? Because I have been on site, and I know that there are some berths which are in a very bad state because they are simply not occupied. So what action, what measures is her Department, the Port Authority, she, thinking of taking in order to address this issue? Because I understand that some of them have laid there empty for a considerable period of time, and I know it is another cause of frustration to the Committee.

1505 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I have detailed in my answer, there are numerous reasons why the berths may be empty. It may be that the vessel is undergoing maintenance, it may be that the vessel has been winterised, and it may be that the vessel is not in a particularly good state and that the owner does not intend to take possession of the vessel. In those statements, much in the same way as you have with vehicles, the Government has recently published regulations which permit the Captain of the Port to remove those vessels which are in a particularly dire state from the berth in order to create a further empty berth. The owners of the vessels will be notified in the same way as vehicle holders are notified when their vehicles are going to be removed, but the Captain of the Port will currently have the powers to remove the vessels from the berths. Again, these regulations have been discussed with the owners of the Small Boats Marina, they have been agreed with the Management Committee of the Small Boats Marina, and their feedback was requested.

1520 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Final question, Madam Speaker. Is she able to say when those regulations are going to be in force? I captured that from her response.

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I think they already are in force. I would have to confirm, but I believe they already are in force.

1525 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

[Q231/2026](#)
[Small Boats Marina –](#)
[Plans to reclaim](#)

1530 **Clerk:** Question 231, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Are there any plans to reclaim over any parts of the Small Boats Marina?

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

1535 **Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez):** Madam Speaker, there are currently no plans to reclaim any part of the Small Boats Marina. I have confirmed this to the Committee of the Small Boats Marina on numerous occasions.

1540 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

[Q232/2026](#)
[Proposed new residency criteria –](#)
[Government intends to publish](#)

1545 **Clerk:** Question 232, the Hon. D J Bossino, on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. D J Bossino: Will the Government confirm the extent of consultation on the proposed new residency criteria which the Government has been working on and that it intends to publish? I mean, I think the residency criteria has now already been published.

1550 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Health, Care and Business.

Minister for Health, Care and Business (Hon. G Arias-Vasquez): Madam Speaker, the consultation on the proposed new residency criteria has involved the Leader of the Opposition, the GFSB, the Chamber of Commerce and relevant stakeholders, for example estate agents, intermediaries, etc.

1555

Hon. D J Bossino: So, may I ask her for a bit further information? Who are the relevant stakeholders that she refers to specifically? I think she referred to those in very general terms. May I ask her who those relevant stakeholders are?

1560

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, we consulted with company managers, with estate agents, as well as with internal people from the Government that are relevant. These include the Director of Employment, the CEO of the Department of Business, the Director of Internal Home Affairs, and the Chief Secretary. In fact, I would say that the consultation was so wide that on a Viewpoint programme several weeks ago, it was quite well known what the criteria was going to constitute. Therefore, the consultation was wide, the criteria was well known, and we had feedback from numerous different operators.

1565

1570

Hon. D J Bossino: Whilst the Hon. Minister's reply has been that, in effect, there has been extensive consultation and feedback received before they drafted this criteria and before they published it, is it the Government's position that they are willing to take another look on the basis of any further representations which may be made to it in respect of some of the finer detail which they have published in respect of this particular criteria? Is it capable of being changed as a result of any further representations that may be made to the Government?

1575

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, since the criteria was published, I have conducted further meetings with stakeholders. These are stakeholders that have wanted. I reached out to the GFSB, I reached out to the Chamber, and I have reached out to numerous other individuals who have provided feedback. We will be making certain minor amendments in respect of the comments that we have received. The amendments that we will be making are minor in respect of the comments received, but what we have done is that we have delayed the regulations by one week in order for us to be able to take the comments on board. So, yes, we are listening to representations made. Where we agree with some of the representations made, we have agreed to it, and they are included in the paper. It has to be said, Madam Speaker, that the Chief Minister did reach out to the Leader of the Opposition. There was a discussion on the residency rules, and there were no comments or feedback provided by the Leader of the Opposition. There was a press release that was issued several days later. However, no comments were provided by the Leader of the Opposition on the residency rules. If such a strong sentiment was expressed, it should have been expressed in the appropriate forum at the appropriate time.

1580

1585

1590

Hon. D J Bossino: Look, I am not sure that the sentiments, as she put it, that were expressed by the Leader of the Opposition in this press release were necessarily strong. I think it was a rather tame press release in the scheme of things. Look, if they have overreacted with their statements published today, that is a matter for them. She refers to the paper. I imagine she is referring to the regulations, which is going to be the statutory instrument through which the residency criteria, as published, will take shape. She also refers to minor amendments. May I ask the Minister what those amendments are? She describes them as minor, but I think we would be interested to understand and learn what those are.

1595

1600

Hon. G Arias-Vasquez: Madam Speaker, I do not have an exhaustive list with me in front of me on the changes made, but they are, as I said, quite minor. For example, the eight-week turnaround. If someone is unemployed for 8 weeks, we have received representations that that

can be quite a short period. We have accepted that and that will be lengthened. There are other similarly minor tweaks that are being made. However, the substantive criteria remains.

1605 **Hon. D J Bossino:** One can take it as far as one can take it in terms of supplementaries, in terms of the answers that the Minister is willing and able to provide across the floor of the House on this occasion. We will see the regulations once they come out. May I press her further, if I may, Madam Speaker? Do those amendments in any way impact on the threshold of about the £37,000 salary threshold, which has been the subject of comment, not just from us but from others, and that perhaps it either should be lowered or, alternatively, how shall I put it, greater criteria, more detailed criteria should be set out, which will dictate the exercise, as I understand it from my recollection of reading this, the exercise of discretion to allow those individuals, perhaps young trainees, for example, in law firms, who may not earn that amount of money or in any other field, and they will not necessarily be beholden or obliged to pay the relevant tax and social insurance at that high level. May I press her further in respect of that particular issue?

1620 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** Madam Speaker, as I said in my previous reply, there are no changes to the main criteria, so the threshold of £37,500 remains. However, as the hon. Gentleman may be aware, there are exemptions which relate to that criteria of £37,500. There is a discretion, which the Chief Minister has, in which he is able to exclude sectors from the ability to earn £37,500. There is the discretion or there is the ability for anyone 30 or under to earn less than £37,500 and the employer can top up the amount. There have been other representations made as to individual sectors that would need a different focus, but the threshold of £37,500 remains in place, with the same exemptions as were detailed in the paper that was published.

1625 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I appreciate that it is a late Friday afternoon. I am assuming we are going to go home. We could go to questions from the Minister for the Environment. I am not sure that she did make the point in the course of her replies. Is she able to say when these regulations are going to be published? As I understand it, we will not actually have the full spiel, so to speak, until the regulations will be published. There will not be any further communication by the Government to the public in respect of the points that she has just made. It will all be made clear once the regulations are published.

1635 **Hon. G Arias-Vasquez:** The regulations are drafted. The bulk of the regulations are drafted. We have received comments, as I have said, so the regulations are currently being amended to take into account the comments that we have received from numerous groups. On this side of the House, we believe in consultation being real and meaningful, and therefore when people give us comments, we like to accede to them when we think that we are able to. There are certain comments that we have taken into account. We were looking to publish the regulations on Thursday last week, yesterday, but because of the comments that we are receiving and because of certain tweaks that we are making, we are looking to publish them as early as next Thursday if we stop receiving representations. There is one other group that would like to meet me. I am happy to meet them. I am happy to hear their representations. Once we have exhausted the number of people that do want to meet, in that case we will publish the regulations on the subject.

1645 **Madam Speaker:** I think that is the end of the questions to the Hon. Minister for Health, Care and Business.

1650

Adjournment

1655 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Yes, and so, Madam Speaker, can I rise to propose that the House should now adjourn to Wednesday 1st July at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Madam Speaker, it might be helpful to the House if I share that it is the Government's present intention, although a lot is changing, to deal with Questions to the Hon. Minister for the Environment and the Minister for the Savings Bank on that day, to deal with my Questions the following day, and, if possible, to take the Budget the week after that. However, I will give the House an update when we return on 1st July.

1660 **Madam Speaker:** I now propose the question which is that this House should now adjourn to Wednesday 1st July at 3.00 p.m. I now put the question which is that this House should now adjourn to Wednesday 1st July at 3.00 p.m. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Passed.

This House will now adjourn to Wednesday 1st July at 3.00 p.m.

The House adjourned at 6.00 p.m.