



## **PRESS RELEASE**

No: 673/2018

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018

### **GHA Re-structure Services for Approved Mental Health Professionals**

The Gibraltar Health Authority and the Ministry for Health, Care and Justice wish to announce the addition of an Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) as a result of the enactment of the new Mental Health Act 2016 and Lasting Powers of Attorney and Capacity Act 2018. This key piece of legislation has enabled the GHA to fulfil plans for enhancing current Mental Health Services by recruiting an additional Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP).

The role of the AMHP, formerly known as a Mental Welfare Officer, has been developed to address a rise in demand for Mental Health Act assessments to protect and safeguard vulnerable persons. These include sensitive and challenging assessments such as Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) assessments, which protect vulnerable persons who are accommodated in hospitals or care homes, in circumstances that amount to a deprivation of their liberty and who lack capacity to consent to the care or treatment they require.

The team, previously three Mental Welfare Officers, will now consist of four AMHPs. They will deliver comprehensive and holistic care to the community, and they will be able to identify health and social factors that precipitate acute mental health crises. Further, they will be tasked to ensure that the GHA is operating a full DoLS service with assessments completed in a timely manner to the highest standards.

The AMHP team will provide a walk-in service, with clinics held at the Primary Care Centre from 9:00 to 13:00 hours, and 14:00 to 17:00 hours, Monday to Friday.

Since July 2017, the enhanced team will also continue to provide a 24 hour 'on-call' service, along with a Consultant Psychiatrist and Registered Nurse, to address any crisis or need in the community out of normal working hours. The team may be reached on 2000 7831.

Ms Suzanne Romero, Clinical Nurse Manager for Primary Care and Operational Lead for AMHPs said: "I work alongside the AMHPs to achieve the very best possible clinical outcomes



for our patients at all times, and make certain that the relevant legislation is always adhered to, ensuring the safeguarding of our most vulnerable patients.”

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP added: “I am pleased to announce the expansion of this team to four Approved Mental Health Professionals. This welcome expansion follows the recent announcement of the new Child and Adolescent Psychology Service, set to commence in January 2019, and the appointment of an additional Consultant Psychologist, which commenced on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October. It is imperative that we, as a public health service, provide persons within our community with swift and easy-to-access avenues when it comes to receiving assistance and treatment for mental health issues. My mental health teams and I continue our work to endeavour to improve and to create a better and more responsive mental health service to meet the needs our community. I very much look forward to making additional statements in respect of planned measures to our Mental Health Services”