



PRESS RELEASE

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Dementia Conference

A Dementia conference, hosted by the Elderly Residential Services, took place on Monday the 30th September at the King's Bastion Leisure Centre. The conference, themed 'See the person, not the dementia' included key speakers from the UK; Chris Roberts, from the BBC1 Panorama documentary named *'Living with Dementia: Chris's Story'* and Simon McDermott.

Simon is the son of a well-known club singer in the 60s and 70s, Ted McDermott, known as 'the Songaminute Man'. Ted now lives with Dementia, and together with Simon, they have inspiring millions around the world with carpool karaoke-style videos, raising more than £130,000 for charity.

One of the highlights of the conference was the announcement of the launch of Gibraltar's National Dementia Strategy. In 2015, the first Gibraltar Dementia Strategy Vision was launched, which resulted in significantly enhanced services for people living with Alzheimer's and dementia. The John Mackintosh Home, which was inaugurated in 2015, provided 54 residential beds. The impressive Hillsides Dementia Facility, opened in 2017 provided a further 52 beds, 8 of these to provide respite services. The Bella Vista Day Centre also opened early in 2017 and delivers a community-orientated model of care with the aim of enhancing the life of people living with dementia and their families. The Gibraltar National Dementia Strategy aims to achieve a more 'dementia friendly community' and provide a wider understanding of the condition and how Gibraltar's health services and the community can further support those living with dementia and their loved ones.

Ms Susan Vallejo, Elderly Residential Services Manager, commented: "This is Gibraltar's first Dementia Conference organised with the aim of bringing a greater understanding of what dementia is and to remove the stigma associated with it. We have worked very hard to organise this event, and I would like to thank our Practice Development Sister, Karen Truman and Activities Coordinator, Amanda Parsons-Yeo, and the rest of the team who have been leading the organisation of these events. I would also like to thank GADS and our sponsors for their endless support."

Ministry of Health, Care and Justice



The Gibraltar Alzheimer's & Dementia Society's Chairperson, Daphne Alcantara, added: "I would like to thank Elderly Residential Services Manager, Susan Vallejo, Practice Development Sister, Karen Truman, Activities Coordinator, Amanda Parson-Yeo and the rest of the team at Elderly Residential Services for their hard work and dedication to help improve the lives of people living with dementia and for organising the Dementia Awareness Conference. Today we have seen the launch of Gibraltar's National Dementia Strategy, and I wish to commend Minister for Health, Care and Justice, Neil F. Costa for his leadership and support in the development of the strategy. The successful implementation of the strategy will improve and generate services that will provide people living with dementia and their family carers with the help, guidance and support they need during the dementia journey. It's a huge step forward."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa, said: "The opening of the Bella Vista Day Centre, Hillside Residential Home, the John Macintosh Home and the investments towards adapting Mount Alvernia to provide a more dementia-friendly environment demonstrate this Government's unshakeable resolve in providing the best possible services to a much cherished sector of our community. I am delighted that we have today launched Gibraltar's National Dementia Strategy, which represents our continued commitment towards further enhancing all our services. I must sincerely thank the formidable Daphne Alcantara and our friends at GADS, as well as the incredibly talented and wonderfully compassionate Ms Susan Vallejo and her teams, whose support and dedication have been invaluable throughout."