



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Training for prospective Foster Carers and Adoptive Parents – 22nd – 26th January 2018**

Following the Care Agency's annual campaign to promote Fostering in Gibraltar, in November 2017, the Care Agency's 'Children's Team' are offering those who have expressed an interest, as well as previous applicants, the opportunity to attend the "Preparation for Fostering and Adoption" training programme.

The Care Agency held their yearly awareness campaign to promote Fostering in Gibraltar in November 2017. The campaign titled "This is me", focussed primarily at raising both understanding and awareness that children who need alternative care, above all, remain "children", and do not just represent the experiences that they have had. The campaign generated interest from people in the community through the launch of an advert, workshops and stalls that were held over the course of a week.

Attendance and undertaking the course is the first stage of an assessment process, which is required for any prospective foster carer or adoptive parent. The course is being delivered at the John Mackintosh Hall and will run for 5 full consecutive days, from Monday 22nd January, between 9.30am – 4pm, to Friday 26th January 2018.

The 5 day programme has been developed by professionals working within the Care Agency, namely Jennifer Wilson, Senior Social Worker and Team Manager for the Children's 'Looked after Services' and Giselle Carreras, Head of Service for Psychology and Therapy at the Care Agency.

Jennifer Wilson explains the aim of the training, as created and developed by the team, is to provide prospective foster carers and adoptive parents with information about the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to foster or adopt a child. She adds it further helps applicants to consider the additional needs, which children in need of alternative care will require. The training also helps applicants to reflect on their values and attitudes in relation to the task of caring for children and young people and to think about how fostering and adoption will have an impact on their own families and their lives. Ultimately, it helps people to decide whether fostering or adoption is right for them, as well as helping professionals' in making decisions about whether applicants would be suitable to move onto the next stage of an assessment.

Ministry of Health, Care and Justice

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The range of topic covered in the training programme will include:

- Understanding why and how children come into the care system.
- The impact of abuse and neglect upon children's development.
- Common themes in the thought, feelings and behaviour of children in care.
- What is attachment and what happens when attachments between children and parents is affected?
- How does separation, grief and loss affect a child?
- How can a foster or adoptive parent manage the issues that children may present?
- Positive and therapeutic parenting strategies for children who may have experienced trauma.
- Why contact with birth parents can be important and helping a child understand their life story.

Ms Nicole Viagas, Head of Children Services said: "I am confident that the training will lead on to the assessment and successful approval of more foster carers and potential adopters, which will have major benefits in ensuring that children are able to live within a family setting for as little or as long as they need it. It is a well-researched and established fact, that Children who are placed in foster and adoptive families, are more likely to achieve positive outcomes in the future."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice is extremely pleased with the community's response, adding: "It is extremely rewarding to witness the interest shown by members of our community, following the fostering campaign last November. I am equally happy that the number of children in residential care has reduced significantly in the last year, with more local adoptions taking place. I have no doubt, that this is due to the professionalism, dedication and hard work demonstrated by the the Children's Service."

If you are interested in attending the Preparation training for Fostering and Adoption, please contact the fostering and adoption service before noon on Friday 19th January 2018, on Telephone 200 78528 or email: [fosteringandadoption@careagency.gov.gi](mailto:fosteringandadoption@careagency.gov.gi).