

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 120/2006
16 October 2006

EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 16 OCTOBER

The statement issued by the Health Authority and the Social Services Agency claims that these two bodies conclude that Charles Bruzon, Shadow Minister for Social Services has descended to publishing inaccurate, medical in-confidence information about a patient in KGV Hospital in his eagerness to cause the Government political embarrassment.

This response shows how politicised the Health Authority and the Social Services Agency have become under the present Government and explains why users of their services are often inhibited from publicly expressing their concern.

Citizens in democratic countries are not afraid to seek the involvement of their elected members of Parliament when they have problems with the provision of public services. It seems that under the current regime Gibraltar is the exception to this rule.

The person affected by the failure to provide her with the support she needs is not a KGV patient, since in the very same press release the Health Authority says that there are no clinical reasons for her to remain in KGV and that she has been given a temporary home there only because the Social Services is unable to provide the special support she requires.

The information made public at the request of the affected parties had all previously been provided to the Government by Charles Bruzon in letters written in June, August and September of this year all of which remain unanswered to date. No attempt was made by the Government in this period to correct by replying what is now claimed to be completely inaccurate, untrue and misleading information provided by the affected parties to the Opposition.

If the Opposition had been anxious to publicise this information to embarrass the government politically, Charles Bruzon would not have spent the last four months trying to get the Government to be more supportive in private without making any public statement about their failure to respond.

The Government says that it is not true that Sue Ellen's medical condition follows her treatment in Cadiz as a patient three years ago. The parents and Sue Ellen herself provided the information to the Opposition claiming she had been sent to Cadiz as a sponsored patient and returned with a severe condition which required her subsequent hospitalization for a year.

The Government then sent her to UK as a sponsored patient to a specialist clinic in London. The Health Service therefore has had the responsibility throughout of ensuring that she receives the support that her medical condition requires and they cannot simply wash their hands of that responsibility. In view of the misleading and arrogant response of the Health Authority and the Social Services Agency, the Opposition is making public the content of the three letters sent by

Charles Bruzon to the Minister so that the public can see for themselves that every effort was made in private to get help for Sue Ellen and her parents before, and as a last resort and at their request, making their plight public.

The parents claim that she has only been offered two hours a week of support and that this happened at a meeting held with the Agency following the letters from Charles Bruzon. The Agency now says that this is untrue and that it was a few hours a day and not a week. As the Government press release clearly states, Sue Ellen is an adult, she has her own home which is a Government rented flat, and has lived independently of her parents for many years.

Since she does not live with them, what the Agency cannot do is require the parents to take over the responsibility of caring for her and remove that duty from the Health Authority or the Social Services Agency, whose patient she is and has been, since the condition was provoked by her treatment in Cadiz as a sponsored patient.

ENDS