

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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The Government have refused medical attention to the children of a Gibraltarian family on the technicality that they do not have identity cards. This latest incident is further proof that the GSD Government shows no compassion when it comes to dealing with cases of genuine hardship and are more interested in looking after the interests of the rich, who can afford it, rather than the interests of those who are most in need and who require support.

The Opposition has been dealing with the case of a couple with four children two of whom, as well as the mother, are Gibraltarian. The father and the other two children are also British. They have lived for a spell in the United Kingdom until about a year ago. The six of them live in one room, the monthly rent of which is £550. The father, who is the breadwinner, earns about £930 a month. This means that the family, with four children, have financial difficulty in making ends meet.

The GHA had originally refused to register the family for medical treatment on the basis that they did not have a local address and were therefore unable to obtain the necessary ID documentation in order to be able to register. After the family obtained a local address, they were told that they needed to pay £5 per ID card. This is an amount that a family in such circumstances simply cannot afford.

In addition, one of the children suffers from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and requires constant medication, which is expensive and which the family do not have the money to pay for. Another child has specific learning difficulties and requires an educational assessment.

In the light of the very real financial hardship suffered by this family, Shadow Health Minister Neil Costa contacted Health Minister Mrs Del Agua to see whether the Government could facilitate the registration of the children and their mother with the GHA so that they may immediately receive medical attention. The response from her office to the family directly was that the GHA is not the Government and there was nothing that they could do.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Health Minister Neil Costa said:

“It is appalling that the Government should wash its hands of any responsibility for this family by playing with words and saying that the GHA is not the Government. Everybody knows that the Minister for Health is also the Chairperson of the GHA and that it is the Government that funds and lays down the policies for the GHA. This is a genuine case of serious financial hardship

where the Government could simply waive any administrative obstacles to the registration of these children so that they can receive medical treatment. Given the money that the Government have wasted on projects of questionable value to the community, they have behaved in a penny-pinching and heartless manner in this case as if the issue had nothing to do with them.”

ENDS