

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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The present Government are incapable of replying to criticism without insulting their critics, imputing their motives and distorting the basis of the original complaint. It is a reflection of a Government that is on its last legs that the GSD continue to resort to these tactics instead of having a debate about the issues.

In the case to which the Opposition is currently referring, Shadow Minister for Health Neil Costa issued a statement to express the concern of parents who were upset with the decision of the GHA to cut back on the services provided by the Speech and Language Therapy Department to children with speech impediments. The Opposition viewed this reduction as unnecessary and as negatively impacting on young children who required speech therapy lessons.

In their statement the Government have confirmed that there have been increased referrals to the department. This was the point made by the Opposition. The Government have also confirmed that as a result of the increased referrals there have been cuts in the services offered (which they choose to describe as a “rearrangement”). This was also the point made by the Opposition. Given that the reduction in service is a reality, the GSD should have had the good grace to keep quiet instead of automatically switching to knee-jerk mode and publicly attacking the Opposition while at the same time confirming the very criticism that has been made against them.

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

“The Opposition is perfectly entitled to disapprove of the manner in which the Government has decided to spend, or in this case, not spend the monies voted in Parliament for health care as it relates to the Speech and Language Therapy Department.

Regardless of their insults, I will continue to monitor how taxpayer's money is spent and to hold the GSD to account. It is therefore simply a false premise to say that it is contradictory for the Opposition to criticise the Government for a reduction in service and also for how it spends taxpayer's money. This is simply because it is indeed possible for the GSD to reduce a valid and valuable service and at the same time squander our money in other areas.

The GSD Government really needs to prioritise how it spends our money and must put people first – that services for our children should be reduced is just unacceptable and is further unequivocal proof that this Government could not care less how their spending plans affect the most vulnerable and in need.”