



PRESS RELEASE

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Government confirms second round of COVID-19 Fund allocations

The Minister for Health, Care and Business, the Hon Gemma Arias-Vasquez, has approved a second round of allocations from the COVID-19 Fund following the conclusion of the second application process announced in September 2025.

The Fund was established from donations made by members of the public and commercial entities during the COVID-19 pandemic to support Gibraltar's health and care services. As previously announced, following the first round of allocations in January 2025, approximately £585,000 was committed to projects including hospital accessibility improvements, new clinical equipment, community health initiatives and specialist workforce training.

In September 2025, applications opened for a second round of funding, with proposals invited from individuals, organisations, charities and community groups. A total of 37 applications were received. The COVID-19 Fund Referral Panel, comprised of three healthcare professionals and two lay members, met on a number of occasions to review the submissions in detail and ensure that each proposal was properly considered against the established criteria.

In keeping with that approach, approximately £260,000 will now be allocated to a number of additional initiatives.

The second round of allocations includes:

Mental Health Anti-Stigma Campaign – approx. £35,000

A continuation of the anti-stigma campaign funded in the first round, aimed at promoting understanding of mental health, encouraging openness and reducing stigma in the community. The campaign has already demonstrated positive engagement and will continue to support wider mental health priorities, particularly as Gibraltar progresses plans for its new Community Mental Health Hub.

Robotic Surgery – approx. £150,000

Funding to support the capital purchase of robotic surgical technology for the Gibraltar Health Authority, complementing substantial charitable contributions already secured for the wider project. This investment supports the continued modernisation of surgical services and Gibraltar's growing capability in advanced minimally invasive procedures.

Introduction of safeguarding Helpline for Gibraltar – approx. £44,000

One-off set-up costs to strengthen safeguarding support for children and young people in Gibraltar, including specialist training delivered through NSPCC for 16 safeguarding specialists. The project supports prevention, early intervention and long-term community resilience.



Infection Prevention and Control Training – approx. £20,000

Dedicated funding to support further specialist training within infection prevention and control services.

Postgraduate Diploma in Infection Prevention and Control – approx. £10,000

Support for advanced postgraduate study to strengthen local expertise and future workforce capability in infection prevention.

Updating Maternity Ward – approx. £38,000

Funding has also been approved for refurbishment works within the Maternity Ward, including improvements to the Serenity Room and Labour Wards. This includes room refurbishment costs together with additional cabinetry and furniture, aimed at enhancing the environment for mothers and families during labour and postnatal care.

Public Health Advertising Campaign – approx. £31,000

Funding will support a 12-month public health advertising programme designed to improve awareness of prevention services and strengthen engagement with key public health messages across Gibraltar. The campaign will use a mix of local media platforms, including broadcast advertising, outdoor digital screens and public transport advertising to maximise visibility and reach across the community. It will support priority campaigns throughout the year on issues such as healthy lifestyles, screening, vaccination, smoking and vaping, seasonal health awareness and mental wellbeing, helping ensure prevention messages are delivered consistently and effectively

Accessibility to the Hospital Garden

In addition, the Panel has agreed in principle to support improved accessibility to the hospital garden for patients, subject to final costings being received.

This second round brings total allocations from the COVID-19 Fund to approximately £913,000 over two rounds, with the remaining balance continuing to be reserved for future health and care initiatives in line with the original principles adopted by the Panel. A further round of applications will be announced after the summer to allow additional proposals to be considered.

The Minister for Health, Care and Business, the Hon Gemma Arias-Vasquez, said:

“From the outset, my priority has been to ensure that this fund is used carefully, transparently and in a way that delivers real and lasting benefit to our community. This second round of allocations continues that approach by supporting projects that strengthen our services, invest in our workforce and improve outcomes for patients and families.

“I am particularly pleased that this round supports mental health, safeguarding, infection prevention and further innovation in healthcare delivery through robotic surgery. These are all areas where thoughtful investment today can make a meaningful difference for many years to come.

“I would once again like to thank the COVID-19 Fund Referral Panel for the considerable time they have given to reviewing applications carefully and ensuring these public donations continue to be directed where they can have the greatest impact.”



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