

Media Release

Date: 29 April 2022

Further de-escalation of island's COVID-19 measures

Further changes are being made to the island's COVID-19 testing strategy and guidance for positive cases, as part of the continued and planned de-escalation of measures.

The changes will come into effect from Monday (1st May).

Guidance for positive cases

There are some changes to the guidance for people who test positive for COVID-19.

Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should continue to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days following the day of their positive result. The guidance is now that they can go out on Day 6 **if asymptomatic and they should wear a face covering in enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces until Day 10**. Positive cases can also have unlimited outdoor exercise during the first 5 days as long as they stay away from other people.

It is not necessary to take a test before release as long as you are asymptomatic, unless specifically required by a Health and Care setting.

There is some evidence that children have a shorter duration of illness compared to adults. As such children and young people aged 18 years and under are advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day of a positive test. They can go out on Day 4 **if they are asymptomatic without taking an LFT**. This is because after 3 days, if the child or young person feels well and does not have a high temperature, the risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

Education

The updated guidance is reflected in how education will continue to manage the implications of COVID-19 in schools, so students can return to education settings on Day 4 following a positive result **as long as they are asymptomatic**.

Students must continue to stay at home if they are unwell.

Lateral flow tests

We continue to have supplies of LFTs for islanders to collect free of charge as-and-when they are running low. We would again ask people to not stockpile them and use LFTs in line with the latest guidance.

We will continue to review our guidance on the use of LFTs, but islanders are asked to LFT in the following circumstances only:

- If you are symptomatic (if the test is negative, please repeat after 24 hours)
- If you are health and care worker **and** a household contact of a positive cases (LFT on Day 1 and thereafter only if symptomatic). Non-household contacts and people who are household contacts **but not** health and care workers do not need to test unless symptomatic
- If you are visiting someone in hospital or a Care Home (do not visit if you are unwell or symptomatic)

Positive cases are still asked to complete the online referral form at <https://www.gov.gg/covidnotification> or call 01481 220001/220002 to register their positive result. Residents in Sark should also notify the Sark Medical Centre.

Face coverings

Public Health advice regarding the use of face coverings continues to be that they are recommended as a good mitigation for reducing the risk of spread in enclosed and poorly ventilated spaces. It is for individual businesses and organisation to implement their own policies on the use of face coverings by staff and customers. These policies and requests should continue to be respected.

The States of Guernsey will from next week amend its policy on the use of face coverings in public buildings. Face coverings will be a requirement only in clinical settings or when staff are in close proximity with high risk or vulnerable colleagues and service users. Islanders attending Health & Care facilities for appointments will be advised by the relevant service whether a face covering is required.

PCR testing

PCR testing will continue to only be available in limited circumstances. These are when people are admitted to vulnerable settings such as the hospital (including those presenting with respiratory symptoms), prison or care homes.

Pre-travel PCR testing will continue to be available via GP practices. Islanders are also advised to research options in UK hub airports if these more suit their travel needs.

Deputy Al Brouard, President of the Committee for Health & Social Care, said:

'These further de-escalations in terms of testing and other guidance are welcome and appropriate as we continue our journey of living responsibly with COVID-19. Our Committee is supportive of these next steps and, as ever, the position and guidance will be kept under regular review and we will adapt as needed.'

Dr Nicola Brink, Medical Officer of Health, said:

'Reported case numbers have continued to come down since our last wave and hospital admissions remain very low, so it is right for us all to continue moving forwards with a reduction of measures. We will continue to keep our guidance under review and provide further updates, with the further scaling back of mitigations, as appropriate.'

'Vaccination remains the best way to protect us all from severe disease and hospitalisation. I would really encourage all eligible people who have not yet come forward for their primary or booster dose of vaccine to do so straight away – the Bailiwick's vaccine programme is there to help and the sooner you are vaccinated the sooner you will be protected.'

Ends
