

## Media Release

embargo until 06.00 Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Date:** 15 March 2020

### **Stricter border control measures introduced for the Bailiwick of Guernsey to contain the spread of COVID-19 – with Immediate Effect**

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The global situation regarding travel is changing at pace and with that in mind, and following the advice of the Guernsey Director of Public Health, it has been agreed that, with effect from **TODAY - Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020**:

- **Spain and France will be added to the list of Group A countries. This means that anyone returning from these areas will be required to self-isolate for 14 days regardless of whether they have any symptoms of COVID-19: fever, cough and shortness of breath.**
- **The UK, together with the rest of the world will be considered a Group B country – with the exception of those countries detailed in Group A above. This means that anyone returning from one of these areas who becomes symptomatic with a fever, cough and or shortness of breath should self-isolate for 14 days immediately – even with mild symptoms**

Deputy Gavin St Pier, President *of the* Policy & Resources Committee said:

‘Last Thursday, we issued strong advice that there should be no travel to or from the Bailiwick unless it was essential. I am grateful for the advice we have received from Dr Brink and her expert team over the weekend, which has resulted in timely evidence based decisions. With rapid developments globally, and particularly in Europe and mainland UK, it is essential that Guernsey constantly reviews its response to meet our needs.

There will be a further review of this advice today, Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020, which will take into account the latest information from and the developing position in the UK. It is very likely that a decision will be made during this week, to move to a point where anyone entering the Bailiwick will be requested to self-isolate for 14 days regardless of any symptoms or point of origin. We are not afraid to take a proactive approach to help protect our Island infrastructure and the resilience and welfare of

our Island community, even if that means to all intents and purposes there are no movements in or out of the island, other than those which are completely unavoidable. As we made public last week, the Civil Contingencies Authority is in the advanced stages of preparing Emergency Powers Regulations which will give the Director of Public Health all the powers that are required to enforce the advice now being given, if any individuals fail to comply.'

### **Travel advice for the Bailiwick is now as follows:**

- All non-essential travel must cease with immediate effect.
- Businesses need to enact their business continuity plans where appropriate and be ready to change their working practices and implement, for example, home working.
- Businesses or individuals who are expecting visitors to the Islands in the near future are reminded of the measures the Bailiwick has in place to manage the coronavirus i.e business or individuals should consider ceasing non-essential travel with immediate effect. In addition, if travel is deemed essential, business or individuals should ask their visitors not to travel if they are unwell with a fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- Any individual leaving the island for essential reasons must take into account the requirement which will be upon them to self-isolate on their return as well as the risk of falling ill outside the island and the treatment that may or may not be available at that time in the location in which they find themselves.
- Students. In view of the rapidly changing environment across the world including the closure of many institutions, potentially for an extended period, we would encourage students and their parents to consider whether they should return to the island sooner rather than later, even if this requires a period of self-isolation.

Deputy Heidi Soulsby, President *of the* Committee *for* Health & Social Care said:

'The focus of our Public Health advice that we are issuing to our community, in response to COVID-19, is all about preparedness and doing everything we can to slow down the potential spread of the virus across the Islands.

I am very aware that the advice is changing at pace. I would urge the community to keep working with us and to follow the advice posted on [gov.gg/coronavirus](http://gov.gg/coronavirus) as well as the information on the States of Guernsey Facebook, Twitter and Instagram feeds. For those at risk, who do not have computers or access to the internet, we are

working to ensure we make contact and information reaches you by different communication channels.

Bailiwick advice will differ from that being issued by the UK and Jersey as it is specifically tailored, with advice from the Director of Public Health, to meet the needs of our Island community. We continue to appreciate the collaboration and support we are receiving’.

Details of Group A and Group B country requirements are set out below. **Please note, it is essential that you take the necessary action when returning to the Bailiwick based on your origin of destination. i.e. if you return to Guernsey via the UK (Group B country) but your travel originated or transited through a Group A country, you MUST self-isolate for 14 days regardless of symptoms.**

### **Group A: Self -Isolation for all returning travellers irrespective of whether they have symptoms or not:**

With effect from **16 March 2020**. Public Health Services are recommending that any individual should self-isolate for 14 days, irrespective of symptoms if they have returned from the following areas:

- **Mainland China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau)**
- **Iran**
- **South Korea**
- **Specific lockdown areas designated by the government of Italy.**
- **The whole of Italy – (returning since 10 March 2020)**
- **Spain (returning since 16 March 2020)**
- **France (returning from 16 March 2020)**

If you experience symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath, no matter how mild) and have returned from the above countries in the last 14 days, then contact the **coronavirus helpline on 01481 756938 and 01481 756969**, or, if you are feeling very unwell, phone 999 telling the operator of your symptoms and travel history.

**DO NOT ATTEND YOUR GP PRACTICE, PHARMACY OR THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT UNANNOUNCED.**

**Group B: Travellers from other specified countries – mainland UK and the rest of the world who have symptoms, even if these are mild:**

With effect from **16 March 2020**. Public Health Services are recommending anyone returning from the following countries in the last 14 days who have symptoms of COVID-19 self-isolate and contact the coronavirus helpline :

**Countries on the list up to and including 15 March 2020 – and which will continue to be included in Group B with effect from 8 am 16 March 2020:**

- Thailand,
- Japan,
- Hong Kong,
- Taiwan,
- Singapore,
- Malaysia
- Macau
- Vietnam
- Cambodia
- Laos
- Myanmar
- Indonesia
- France
- Egypt
- Tenerife - returning since 17 February 2020
- Germany - returning since 2 March 2020
- Mainland Spain - returning since 2 March 2020
- USA - returning since 10 March 2020
- Switzerland - returning since 10 March 2020
- Netherlands - returning since 10 March 2020

**Countries added to the Group B list with effect from 16 March 2020**

- The United Kingdom (returning since 16 March 2020)
- The rest of the World (returning since 16 March 2020) – excluding the Group A countries identified above

If you experience symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath, **no matter how mild**) and have returned from the above countries in the last 14 days, then stay indoors and call the **coronavirus helpline on 01481 756938 and 01481 756969**, or, if you are feeling very unwell, phone 999 telling the operator of your symptoms and travel history.

**DO NOT ATTEND YOUR GP PRACTICE, PHARMACY OR THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT UNANNOUNCED.**

## Advice for all Islanders with flu-like symptoms

In addition to the advice regarding travel and as an extra layer of caution to protect the local community, Dr Brink is advising anyone who has recently developed flu-like symptoms (cough, sore throat, running or blocked nose, muscle pains, fatigue) or a fever needs to self-isolate **for the duration of these symptoms AND for 48 hours after the resolution of these symptoms.**

By asking them to self-isolate it will help reduce the risk of the coronavirus spreading. For clarity, it is not necessary for these people to be tested for COVID-19 in the way that travellers returning from Group A (or Group B countries and exhibiting symptoms) are tested. In these circumstances, if the individual is able to, home working should be considered.

While in many of these cases Islanders will have only a normal cold or flu, it is good infection prevention control whilst the Island is working to ensure it can contain the spread of COVID-19. Evidence proves that this advice could reduce the potential spread of respiratory illness by 60%.

Regardless of a person's travel history Islanders are reminded of the current advice regarding self-isolation and social distancing:

**Self-Isolation:** is the act of separating yourself from physical contact with the rest of the community for a specified period of time. You or the person you are caring for should remain in your home, except for getting medical care (which you should phone ahead to arrange and advise the health professional you, or the person you are caring for, are in self-isolation) Do not go to work, school, or public areas, pop to the shops, go out for a drive and do not use public transport or taxis until you have been told that is safe to do so. You will need to ask for help if you require groceries, other shopping or medications.

**Social Distancing:** is the introduction of measures to reduce the contact people have with each other. These measures may well include things like temporarily reducing socialising in public places such as entertainment or sports events, reducing our use of non-essential public transport or recommending more home working. You can still go out for a walk, pop to the shops or go out for medical appointments but the strong advice is to limit the contact you have with other people as much as possible.

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## Notes to Media

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