



## Media Release

embargo until **19.00 hrs Tuesday 24 March 2020**

**Date:** 24 March 2020

### **Strict new measures come into force from midnight tonight**

---

Following the advice of the Director of Public Health, Dr Nicola Brink, the Civil Contingencies Authority has today made further emergency regulations requiring strict new measures on staying at home and away from others which will come into force from midnight this evening (00.01 hrs).

Dr Brink made this evidence based recommendation based on the number of positive cases of COVID-19 on the Island, the testing protocol due to laboratory capacity in the UK and the identification of the first case of community transmission (community seeding).

As at 14.00 hrs today the testing results are as follows:

Number of samples taken	Negative results	Positive results	Awaiting results
398	286	23	89

Dr Brink said:

‘The Public Health Team having identified a case of community seeding together with reviewing the broader local evidence of COVID-19 cases and international developments has decided that the most appropriate course of action is to introduce these strict measures for an initial period of 14 days. This will give us time to commission and start on-island testing which will give us a clear idea as to the extent of on-Island seeding.

The single most important action we can now take as a community in fighting the coronavirus is to stay at home in order to protect our Island and our medical infrastructure and save lives. ‘

Reducing our day-to-day contact with other people, will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why the States of Guernsey is now introducing three new measures.

1. Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes
2. Closing non-essential shops and community spaces
3. Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public

Every Islander must comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, will be given the powers to enforce them – including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

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

‘These measures introduce the most far reaching deprivation of personal liberties since the Second World War. These are not decisions that we have taken lightly. The impact of these decisions are far reaching but I am absolutely certain that it is the right thing to do to protect our community.

Stay in regular touch by ‘phone or video call with friends and family. We will continue to update *gov.gg* so that you have reliable source of facts. This decision does not change my other advice from yesterday: don’t panic; keep calm; stay strong; and maintain good personal hygiene amongst your household.

Rest assured that the whole of government is mobilised to continue to do everything we can to protect you, your families, as well as ours. We will never compromise or risk that overriding objective.’

Full details of these strict measures are available online at [www.gov.gg/coronavirus](http://www.gov.gg/coronavirus) and will be delivered to all households tomorrow by Guernsey Post.

These measures must be followed by everyone. Separate advice will be available for individuals or households who are isolating, and for the most vulnerable who need to be shielded.

**If you start to feel unwell, you should continue to follow the public health advice on how to self-isolate from others within your home call the coronavirus helpline 01481 756938 or 01481 756969. These two numbers will be manned between 8am and 10pm.**

Due to the late hour of this direction, it is acknowledged that Islanders will need to complete vital actions in regard to safety, security and contractual obligations i.e. properly securing building sites to make safe for a minimum 2 week period, securing and locking of vulnerable property equipment, Islanders going through the house move on the day of

exchange i.e. contracts have been signed, furniture is in transit to new home and the legal obligation to vacate.

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

‘Today a significant and life changing decision has been made to impose these new measures on our community. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their efforts. The situation has developed at pace and we need a community approach to protect each other during these difficult times.

From tomorrow we will be collating information and resources to support people’s mental wellbeing during this challenging time. We will make this information available online and work with our media colleagues to ensure Islanders are aware of support that they can access. ‘

Education Provision for the children of Critical Workers will continue during this 14 day period. Children of workers who have been identified as critical will be able to attend their usual school and school transport will continue to be available for those who need it. This arrangement will continue to be provided over the Easter break. This will ensure that our critical services can still be delivered during this period – in particular health and care workers.

The supply chain of goods and services into the Bailiwick is secure. The retailers will have measures in place from first thing tomorrow in order to manage supplies and ensure people don’t buy more than they need.

Deputy St Pier said:

‘This final and significant decision was made at 17.00 hrs and therefore, whilst planning has taken place, implementation of these plans is being pulled together this afternoon. We know islanders will have many questions following these announcements. We have attempted to anticipate questions that might be asked. These are now online at [www.gov.gg/coronavirus](http://www.gov.gg/coronavirus) . These will also be shared with the media for those who do not have access to the internet.

The key take away message from this announcement is STAY INSIDE. I cannot stress this enough - if there really are any sceptics out there, even they, surely, have now grasped the importance of everyone doing what we have been saying – namely, you must follow public health advice. ‘

**Ends**

## Notes to Media

---

**Issued by:** Emma Walton

**Tel:** 01481 725241

**E-mail:** [emma.walton3@gov.gg](mailto:emma.walton3@gov.gg)

This is a list of questions we have already anticipated:

- **Will my rubbish still be collected?**
  - Yes.
  - Islanders should continue to put out their waste and recycling for collection as normal, unless they have symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Public Health is providing specific advice and support for anyone who has tested positive, as well as general advice for anyone who is self-isolating because they have potential symptoms – cough, fever, or shortness of breath.
  - Public waste sites – such as Household Waste & Recycling Centre at Longue Hougue and the garden waste site at Chouet, will be closed.
  
- **Will Public Transport (Buses) still operate?**
  - Yes, scheduled bus services will be running to the normal timetable tomorrow.
  - Separately, education are making transport arrangements for children of key workers who are still attending school.
  - Taxis will still be available.
  
- **Will the Post still be delivered?**
  - Yes. And mail will still be collected from post boxes. Post office counters may not be open – Guernsey Post will clarify the position imminently.
  
- **My Driving Licence is about to run out what happens?**
  - Anyone whose driving licence has expired will NOT be able to drive legally, and there will be no automatic extension.
  - The Driving and Vehicle Licensing Service is looking to maintain a skeleton operation, to process urgent renewals. They can be contacted by email on [DVL@gov.gg](mailto:DVL@gov.gg).
  
- **Will the Courts operate**
  - The courts will continue to operate for urgent matters. Anyone who currently has been given a court date appointment will be contacted and advised if there is any change.
  
- **Are Marriages, Baptisms and Funerals still going to happen?**
  - *(In the UK weddings and other church services have all been cancelled, but not funerals).*

- Anyone with a marriage ceremony booked at the Greffe will be contacted and rescheduled.
  - If anyone has any church services booked they should contact the church directly to advise on options.
  - Islanders will still be able to register births and deaths. Advice will be provided by the hospital staff.
  - *(I have no answer on funerals specifically)*
- **Which States Buildings will still be open**
  - Frossard House will be closed to the public until further notice.
  - Edward T Wheadon House will be open but customers are being asked to please avoid visiting in person wherever possible, and to call 732516 instead.
  - The Driving and Vehicle Licensing office at Bulwer Avenue will be closed. Any enquiries can be directed to [dvl@gov.gg](mailto:dvl@gov.gg) or 243400.
  - All public waste sites will be closed.
- **Parking**
  - SORRY, DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER. TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY ARE UNSURE AS IT IS AN ENFORCEMENT MATTER.
- **Will vital goods and supplies still be available?**
  - Yes. The ports will still be operating but for essential supplies and travel, including emergencies.
  - There will be no impact on imports of food, medicines, and other essential supplies. So there is no need for anyone to panic buy!
- **Will cesspits still be empties?**
  - Yes.
- **Can I still get oil for heating?**
  - Yes. The fuel companies have all confirmed that they have adequate supplies and their staff will be classed as essential workers as will the other critical national infrastructure suppliers.
  - At least some petrol stations will be open.
- **Can I still get my benefits/ unemployment, rent rebates etc?**
- **I'm going to lose my job what happens, can I get benefit?**
  - Customers are asked to please avoid where possible visiting Edward T Wheadon House in person, but the office will be open.

- Claims made through the new Hardship Fund are being prioritised to ensure that support can be given quickly to people who have already been impacted.
  - (All new claims for sickness benefit, unemployment benefit, income support and the hardship fund can be registered by either calling (01481) 732516, or alternatively emailing [hardshipfund@gov.gg](mailto:hardshipfund@gov.gg).)
- **If other questions (or cannot answer)**
    - We have addressed the majority of areas but as you will appreciate this is a complex situation. If you have specific questions please email to [covid19enquires@gov.gg](mailto:covid19enquires@gov.gg) or phone