

Media Release

Date: 8 April 2020

Use of the Hyperbaric Chamber suspended until further notice

HSC has suspended the operation of the Guernsey Hyperbaric Chamber until further notice as staff from the Emergency Department assist with decompression treatment and, therefore, this service cannot be prioritised at this time. All available resources are currently being prioritised to the current pandemic.

All commercial divers in the Bailiwick and Jersey have been advised and commercial diving, other than that required in an emergency, has ceased during the lock-down period. Scallop diving is not considered essential at this time and any fishing being undertaken by diving should cease immediately. Moreover, because even with careful planning and restriction of diving depth, it is not possible to exclude completely the occurrence of diving-related illness such as barotrauma, decompression sickness, immersion pulmonary oedema or (near) drowning, the provision for a medical first aid and evacuation plan remains mandatory for all diving. This kind of emergency planning is likely to be compromised during the current conditions of (self-) isolation and personal protection, as well as by the scarcity of medical resources.

Please note that across the UK, recreational diving has been suspended as directed by all the Dive organisations (i.e. BSAC, PADI, SAA etc)

Islanders are reminded that diving is not considered 'exercise' and should not be taking place during the 2 hours of exercise allowed per day.

Anyone who ignores this advice and decides to dive needs to be aware that they will require full insurance for medical transfers to the UK as well as any Emergency Department and Ambulance charges should they need treatment for decompression illness during this time – creating additional pressure on an already overstretched NHS.

Ends