

Media Release

Date: 29/03/20

New guidance for businesses under ‘lock down’ restrictions to support the message, ‘STAY AT HOME’

New guidance for businesses and workers has been issued, which supersedes all previous guidance given and supports the key message that in order to protect our community Islanders should, apart from specific reasons, STAY AT HOME.

These restrictions were originally announced on Tuesday, and came into force on Wednesday, after the Director of Public Health confirmed community seeding of the coronavirus was taking place in Guernsey. This marked a definitive need to deliver the Island’s strategy and bring in further measures mitigating the spread of the virus.

This new guidance has several significant amendments including the removal of the following businesses from the list of those permitted to open:

- Boat, vehicle and bike repairs (apart from emergency vehicle repairs for essential workers)
- Retail hardware stores
- Retail sellers of office products
- Retail sellers of IT equipment
- Restaurants, cafes, takeaways and kiosks

In addition:

- Retailers selling animal feed are permitted to remain open but must adhere to the strict social distancing guidance and hygiene guidelines.
- Outdoor trades will only be permitted to provide critical or emergency repairs and maintenance, and businesses such as gardeners, window cleaners and domestic cleaners should cease trading with immediate effect.

Those businesses still permitted to have workers on their premises must do so following the strict guidance limiting the number of workers on site to no more than two, and ensuring they take measures to observe social distancing and adhere to strict hygiene guidelines.

The guidance for individuals remains unchanged. They should only leave their homes for necessary food, medicines and supplies, for medical appointments, to exercise, or to travel to work where that work is designated as essential.

Deputy Gavin St Pier, Chair of the Civil Contingencies Authority said:

‘Our message remains the same: stay at home. We must lock down at this critical time to slow the spread of the coronavirus and protect our health infrastructure from being overwhelmed. Clearly since making our announcement there have been many questions and many people asking for clarity on what this means for their specific circumstances. As I said in my open letter last night the government has worked incredibly hard to give that clarity, quickly. But it’s not been straightforward and we know it’s far from perfect – it isn’t going to be perfect, we don’t need it to be perfect, but we do need it to work.

We know our original guidance issued on Friday evening was not clear enough, and not strict enough in limiting those workplaces which should be allowed to open. We have quickly reviewed the position, which has led to the new guidance we are releasing now. It is better, but we’re acutely aware it cannot cover every eventuality and will include decisions not all will agree with.

We’re asking Islanders to stay with us, to work with us, and to remember the point of all this. We must slow the spread of the coronavirus by reducing unnecessary physical contact. We need you to make sure that’s what happens, and not seek to bend the rules or push the boundaries. Tougher restrictions are an option that is absolutely on the table and we will use them if we have any doubt that people are following these measures.’

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

‘We are ready to make decisions that aren’t popular in the interests of our community. But in fact, as we’ve already introduced restrictions to protect public health and our health infrastructure we’ve been hugely encouraged by the support we’ve seen by most in the community. We don’t want our message to be muddied, or misunderstood, people must stay at home and stay away from others who are not members of their household as much as possible. The exceptions must be for exceptional reasons. We are doing things in hours and days that would ordinarily take government months to consult on and produce and with no template to work on. However, thanks to a lot of hard work over the weekend, we believe that the new guidance provides the clarity that is needed.

Thanks to the overwhelming support of Islanders we have already bought enough time for significant preparations to be made to the Princess Elizabeth Hospital in anticipation of more cases, and those needing greater care. But we must continue

to do everything we can do to slow the spread and keep the pressure off our acute services and our frontline health care workers.’

Dr Nicola Brink, Director of Public Health said:

‘This is a critical time in our response to the coronavirus. Everyone has a duty to ensure they do as much as possible to minimise their interactions with other people outside their household. These restrictions are a big part of ensuring that happens. But even where the restrictions don’t explicitly prohibit you from doing something that means you’ll be physically close to other people, you should not do it unless absolutely essential. For example, while food retailers are open so you can get essential supplies, you should limit your shopping trips to as few as you can, don’t pop to the shop every day for a few extra bits. Our response to this virus, as an Island, depends on each of us taking extreme care and making sensible, health-focused choices.’

The new guidance on critical businesses and workers can be found here www.gov.gg/covid19businessguidance.

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Notes to Media

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