

Media Release

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'Lock down' restrictions for Islanders to stay at home continue

The States of Guernsey can confirm 'lock down' restrictions will remain in place, following a 14-day review. The only change to the current restrictions is that non-essential retailers will be permitted to carry out home deliveries, provided this is done in line with guidance to mitigate the risk of spreading the coronavirus. This change will come into effect at 00.01 Wednesday 8 April. The restrictions will be kept under review.

The decision to extend the 'lock down' is based on the latest advice from the Director of Public Health Dr Nicola Brink.

Dr Brink said:

'We now have our on-Island testing capability up and running, which is a huge step and radically improves our ability to gather data and know what's happening in the Bailiwick. But while the number of tests we do each day has already increased, and we're getting results faster, we haven't had it in place long enough to gather the data that would give me confidence to relax the 'lock down' restrictions significantly.

'The clusters we've identified in certain care homes in the Island has meant a lot of new testing capacity has been concentrated on these areas. We still need more time to get a real sense of what's happening more widely in the Island. For now, staying at home is the best way we can stay safe and save lives.'

The only notable change will permit non-essential retailers to carry out **home deliveries**, but it will not allow these retailers to open their premises to customers. Sales must be by phone or on-line, not face-to-face. Retailers must adhere to social distancing and hygiene guidance, and have no more than two employees on their premises.

This change is being made primarily to support Islanders through a longer period of 'lock down' as providing access to a wider range of goods by delivery will be beneficial to the mental health and wellbeing of individuals, and can assist them in home-working whilst allowing some business to be transacted.

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

‘Our objective has not changed, we must reduce the spread of this infectious disease and make sure our health infrastructure, which includes our frontline nurses, doctors and health and social care workers, are not overwhelmed. The best way we can all do that, and help save lives, is by staying at home.

But we know we need to look after people’s physical and mental health and wellbeing. That is why we’re making some allowance now for a wider range of goods to be delivered to Islanders, as it will give us greater choice and more options while we stay at home. Helping more people to work effectively, at home or in a safe environment, will also have in itself a positive impact on our mental health.

We’re also conscious of the economic impact ‘lock down’ is having, with some businesses having to furlough or lose staff, or simply close down. If allowing deliveries means that happens even a little less, that is to be welcomed with the support of the Director of Public Health.’

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

‘Our absolute priority is dealing with this public health crisis, and protecting the lives of Islanders. That has meant some tough decisions that have made things very difficult for many businesses. But I’m impressed with how they have supported that objective, and put their community first.

As we’ve said before, businesses must respect the spirit of the restrictions, including the changes we’re making today. The vast majority have done that and I’m grateful. But if we find any businesses aren’t taking seriously their responsibility to their employees, their customers and to the Bailiwick, we will impose much tougher measures.’

Ends