

Good afternoon.

On Wednesday at midnight, the island will have been locked-down for 14 days. I would like to begin by thanking the whole community for engaging with this extraordinary restriction on personal liberties. Understanding of, and compliance with the rules has not been perfect but it has been very good. So thank you to all of you for following the requirement to 'Stay at home.' In doing so, you have saved lives by helping to break the chain of the virus' transmission in our community. We must acknowledge how difficult lockdown is for so many people – not only those struggling with anxiety, loneliness or social isolation but all those now experiencing job losses and financial hardship as well as those who are unable to see loved ones, particularly elderly relatives being looked after in the care environment – to be so close and yet kept so far apart is tough.

We imposed mandatory self-isolation on 19th March for any inbound traveller; we closed pubs and clubs from 20th March; we closed schools early for Easter from 23rd March; and we introduced lock down on 25th March. Is it working?

I will leave Dr Brink to talk in more detail about the statistics, but the evidence is emerging that the strategy of acting early and trying to stay one step ahead is indeed working. Whilst we have, sadly, had 4 deaths (only 1 of which would have been reported as a Covid-related death in the UK), the testing regime and contact tracing has identified cases that would not have otherwise have been found, meaning that the majority of cases are clusters, with only 13 positives coming from unidentified community seeding; we've had no-one require critical care yet - and 34 individuals have fully recovered. In short, the strategy is working, remembering the objective was never about preventing all cases, which would be unrealistic, but rather is about flattening the curve, ensuring that our healthcare system is not overrun and can best treat those who need it. But we cannot be complacent; particularly in Alderney and Sark which have had no positives, yet. The experience so far here in Guernsey is no different to elsewhere - and that is that the oldest are the most vulnerable, which means the older populations in the other islands *are* at greater risk but have even more fragile healthcare systems. So, whilst so far, so good, I must level with you once again and tell you that we still have a long way to go to get through this.

When I announced the lock-down, I said that it would be for an initial period of 14 days - but I warned that the island should prepare for it to be 28 days. The Civil Contingencies Authority met yesterday and received, reviewed and challenged the evidence and the advice led by Dr Brink. We agreed that the lock down does need to continue for the remainder of this week and next, during which the position will remain under review. The lockdown is subject some minor changes which the Committee *for* Health & Social Care agreed yesterday – which Heidi will speak to in greater detail. These provide that businesses (excluding takeaways) that *can* home deliver, may resume doing so from tomorrow, provided: firstly, that all sales and orders must be taken by ‘phone or online, not face-to-face; and, secondly that they do so following strict public health guidance on how to deliver safely, including the use of only **one** delivery person. It is simply not possible to maintain a safe social distance with more than one person in a delivery vehicle. This change will self-evidently mean that there are more vehicles on the roads - but we should all welcome that as a tiny, baby step towards the normality that will help the whole community.

The first priority was, is and will remain public health and minimising the loss of life from Covid-19.

The second priority was, is and will remain the resumption of normality, as swiftly as it is safe to do so. This is in the interests of the whole community’s mental health and wellbeing, as well as the economic wellbeing of individuals, families, business and the public finances. We announced financial packages to support continued employment in the immediate term and help businesses through their current cash flow problems. But we are also thinking further ahead to the next wave of economic challenges we will face. We do not want lives, livelihoods and businesses to be lost from experiencing overwhelming economic challenge. So I can reassure you that we are actively developing an exit strategy from lockdown and a recovery strategy for the economy. It is likely to be staged. The pace at which we can unlock, will be driven by the Bailiwick’s experience in managing Covid-19, in which everyone can play their part by complying with the public health directions and hygiene advice; and it will be driven by the evidence and the data, the quality of which is improving daily now we have our own on-island testing. For example, the next stage could be in relation to solo outdoor workers. We will also likely need to make some decisions next week, ahead of the scheduled start to the school term, 2 weeks today, on Tuesday 21st April.

Some will think we need to move more quickly; some will think we need to move more slowly; some will be frustrated; some will be nervous; some will think a particular activity or sector should be unlocked, whilst others will think the opposite. So I am under no illusions how difficult this phase will be and how it will itself place stress on the community. It may even make the decision to go into lockdown look easy. I've said several times we may make mistakes. With this, we may move a few days early or a few days late but, please, never doubt our intent to make the best possible judgements we can. These are difficult decisions which we will continue to make based on evidence; they will be proportionate and designed for the Bailiwick's needs. And our success in making them will only ever be judged later, with the benefit of hindsight. So I say this to you: you trusted us as we took you into lockdown; and I need you to trust us when we take you out.

I want to cover off a couple of other matters. I want to briefly mention a number of Regulations which the Civil Contingencies Authority made last Thursday. These deal with a range of issues from the: temporary registration of health professionals – for example, those coming out of retirement; temporary arrangements in relation to death certificates and cremations; temporary changes to the Mental Health law; and provisions in relation to some health and safety legislation and parish meetings; as well as in relation to the cutting of seaweed to allow our local producers of hand sanitiser to continue production after mid-April. These may seem esoteric but it is yet another example of planning ahead, ensuring we have the powers before we need them, rather than reacting when we hit a crisis.

Finally, with regards to the ever present challenge of securing enough PPE, personal protective equipment, together with colleagues from Jersey, I spoke yesterday with one of the ministers in the UK health team and we were pleased to receive the assurances we were looking for, in relation to our supply chain of PPE and the identification of clear communication routes in the event of any concerns emerging. Whilst we cannot be complacent on this issue, because of the global shortage at the present time, we are doing everything we can to ensure that a challenge does not become a problem.