

We have had several weeks of good news. But I want to begin with some realism. On Wednesday, the World Health Organisation reported 106,000 new known reported cases worldwide – the largest number on any given day since the pandemic began. Yesterday in the UK, 338 died from COVID-19; and 2,615 new cases were recorded.

When we say that ‘we cannot be complacent,’ this is why; when we say ‘we’re not of the woods,’ this is why. This infection remains a very, very real threat around the world. And it therefore remains a very, very real threat to this community.

I want to emphasise now how important is that every member of the community continues to be vigilant for signs of COVID-19 in themselves and members of their household. We all need to know what symptoms to look out for are. As a reminder, if you have: muscle ache (fatigue, exhaustion), a headache (sinus pain, pain around eyes), a loss of smell/taste, a sore throat, a fever (high temperature, or chills,) a shortness of breath, chest tightness or continuous new cough then you must stay at home and contact the clinical helpline on 756938.

And as we move through the remaining Phases, there is another issue which we want to emphasise today. Social distancing remains and will remain really very important. As we go into a bank holiday weekend with fine weather and everyone starts to relax about COVID-19, it will be easy for any of us to forget; we all do still need to maintain our social distance from each other. That will continue for the foreseeable future.

We know Islanders have been watching the statistics daily and are waiting for the day that we get to zero known active cases. That will indeed be a momentous day. But, we do need to prepare ourselves to see more positive cases occurring again. And when that happens, we must not see it as a failure. Actually it will be a sign of success

that our enhanced test programme and 'test, trace and quarantine' strategy is doing what is supposed to be doing - identifying cases.

We've now had 22 consecutive days with no new positive cases; and we only have 2 known active cases. The affected care homes are now all clear. All this is very positive and Deputy Soulsby will explain in a moment what this now means for business and the community. The final decisions will be taken next week, assuming no substantial bad news emerges.

I know how difficult it is for islanders to be separated from family and loved ones who are off island. I and my family are feeling that too. Inevitably, as we head towards the summer and with today's announcements, Islanders will inevitably speculate how long it will be before off-island travel is a possibility without the need to self-isolate for 14 days. We know there is a pressing need for travel to return to a new normal as soon as possible. We also know that we cannot stay in fortress Guernsey or fortress Bailiwick forever or even just until we have a vaccine, which may never emerge. We have to assume and plan to re-start travel on the basis that there is no vaccine – because, as a matter of fact, right now there isn't one. Obviously we need to balance the risk, having particular regard to the prevalence of COVID-19 in our near neighbours. And we need to be aware that the UK is just about to introduce the same quarantine rules as us – why? For exactly the same reasons: to prevent new cases being imported in to the UK.

So we are actively discussing how off-island travel can recommence safely. No decisions have yet been made. I know that will be frustrating for some; but we have got to this point faster than we could reasonably have expected only a few short weeks ago. And to keep the community safe, we need to plan changes carefully and

logically, which means concentrating our limited resources on the most immediate problems – which right now is the move to Phase 4.

As Dr Brink can explain, there are flaws with many of the travel-related measures in use elsewhere: temperature checks on arrival; immunity certificates; anti-body tests; full tests on arrival. If we need to put in place additional arrangements, we are confident that we will be able to do so. But none of the measures currently available is perfect; so we will have to work out what is the most appropriate mix of measures for our community. When we do, we will update Islanders as soon as we can. But I'm not going to put a timeline on that today.

In the meantime, we are in regular conversation with air and sea carriers who have provided superb support to the Bailiwick.

We are also keen to understand how other jurisdictions, outside the British Isles, have been responding to the pandemic; to share experiences and the learning that has been gained, and to discuss exit strategies and ways of safely opening up travel to jurisdictions again, including for example the use of so-called 'air bridges'. It will be particularly useful to exchange experiences with other small island jurisdictions, such as the Faroe Islands, as well as with larger ones like New Zealand, that have followed a similar strict and early lockdown to Guernsey with a test, trace and quarantine strategy. And we are seeking to establish dialogue with them.

Our colleagues in the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture have reviewed their previous decision, which was announced last week, in light of the updated public health position. The Committee for ESC are issuing a media release today to explain that it met last night to review the latest advice from both public health and senior education staff, and has decided that States-run schools will re-open to all students, five days a week from Monday 8th June, obviously

with appropriate measures in place to safeguard the health and wellbeing of both students and staff. For clarity, in terms of the dates, next week is half term and all schools will be closed. The following week, starting 1<sup>st</sup> June, will be distance learning as schools remain closed to all apart from vulnerable students and the children of essential workers. This will ensure schools have in place all necessary measures as advised by public health by the 8<sup>th</sup> June.

Early years providers will also be able to welcome all children back from 1<sup>st</sup> June, as long as they have submitted their plans to do so to the States Early Years Team and had them approved, so I would encourage providers to make contact with the team.

I'm aware that Deputy Fallaize will provide interviews later and further information will be provided to parents next week in the form of a guidance document.