

I am keeping my update relatively short and sweet today as we have a bigger panel than normal.

Firstly, you may have seen the front page of today's paper detailing HSC's response to the Scrutiny Management Committee regarding contracts offered to Primary Care to provide resilience in the healthcare system as we entered lockdown in March this year.

Let me be very clear, there has been no secrecy over these contracts. Quite the reverse actually.

These contracts were developed at pace, following approaches from the 3 practices when the crisis began to affect them and as the possibility of 1,200 COVID-19 related deaths was a reality we thought we were facing. There were real concerns about the resilience of the health and care system at that time. Something we were very open about when we sat here back in March.

We had to protect the island and we worked with Primary Care practices to ensure we did just that.

At the heart of these negotiations was a desire to both ensure best value for taxpayers' money and make primary care more affordable for Islanders – something which government and the public have been requesting for some time. So, anyone with COVID-19 related symptoms did not have to pay for an appointment and the costs for telephone consultations and repeat prescriptions were reduced.

All practices, as private businesses, were offered the choice of signing one of two contracts time limited for 3 months – one which required on-going joint working with HSC and another which paid an agreed rate for doctors and nurses in a 'call off' contract for time spent. Queens Road Medical Practice chose to sign the joint working

contract. The other 2 practices chose not to sign a contract at all, but they were all offered the same contracts and all could have worked out the value of each contract to them at the time. The final contract signed by Queens Road had minor changes that were generally of a technical issue and the contract value was unaffected. As private businesses, once a contract has been signed there is no reason to share this information with the other businesses. However, all Practices have shared this publicly in the spirit of openness and transparency.

And also in the interests of transparency, the full response to Scrutiny, along with copies of the two contracts that were offered, have been published today on the States website – www.gov.gg/coronavirus

So now I've got that out of the way, on to some new news.

I'm pleased to advise, further to the announcement 2 weeks' ago when I advised that exemptions would be granted for compassionate or specific medical reasons, that anyone who is an in-patient at a UK hospital will, if they choose, only have to self-isolate for 7 days on their return to Guernsey if their 7 day test proves negative. Further details will be out next week, but in the meantime, if people have a question please email publichealth@gov.gg.

And to keep up the positive note, and echoing Deputy St Pier's welcome to those passengers who have arrived in Guernsey from the Isle of Man using the air bridge, I'd like to announce today that discussions are taking place to establish a reciprocal health agreement between Guernsey and the Isle of Man. We know that such an agreement will give residents of both Islands confidence to travel (particularly where they might otherwise struggle to obtain medical insurance) using the air bridge that is now in place.

On another front, during lockdown, HSC introduced new ways of working to enable as many services as possible to continue to be delivered. This included offering telephone consultations, meetings via Microsoft Teams and the introduction of helplines.

Now in Phase 5, staff have asked for feedback on these new ways of working to establish which ones were seen as improvements by services users.

COVID-19 meant that health visitors had to cancel the traditional well baby clinics, which were held on a drop in basis, and offered individual appointments to either have babies weighed or discuss any concerns parents may have had about their baby or child. These appointments have given parents more flexibility with when they could attend and more privacy and have gone down well and it has been decided to continue them for the future.

Making changes like this is very much in the spirit of the Partnership of Purpose which will have a key role to play as part of the Revive and Thrive Recovery Plan.

I also want to use today to give our Community Survey one more big push. We're really grateful to everyone who has responded so far, we've had 3,100 responses. There's a week to go before it closes,

the last day is the 30th July. Interestingly, most of those who have responded so far are women, only 30 per cent of those 3,000 responses are from men, so chaps we do want to learn how the public health emergency and the measures we have taken have affected you, so please do take time to fill it out. That includes Mr Soulsby if he's listening in.

You can find it on gov.gg/communitysurvey. There are Latvian, Portuguese and Polish versions as well as an 'easy-read' version of the survey. Along with the ongoing 'community monitoring tool', this survey is a big part of how we plan to really learn from these past few months and make sure we are even better at responding to this crisis, or others like it, going forward.

And to end my update today, a reminder that people need to be vigilant about symptoms of COVID-19 no matter how mild. We need you to look out for muscle ache, headache, loss of taste/smell, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath or a new continuous cough.

Please don't ignore them and hope they go away. Please don't worry that you are being a nuisance. Please don't worry about being another positive case in the Bailiwick. If we know about it then we can contain it. You will be doing everyone a favour.