

Media Release

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Civil Contingencies Authority announces outline of Phase 5c border controls

Today (Friday 28 August) the Civil Contingencies Authority has released further details of Phase 5c of the Exit from Lockdown, what it will mean for travellers and how it will mitigate against the risk of COVID-19 returning to the Bailiwick.

Work has been progressing quickly in mapping out how Phase 5c will work, sourcing the necessary equipment to upscale the Bailiwick's testing capability, recruiting additional specialist staff such as pathology staff and building the necessary infrastructure at the ports. However it must be stressed that **no decision has been made on when Phase 5c will be introduced**. It may be weeks or even months away, and also remains possible that the Bailiwick moves back to earlier phases of lockdown before it continues to move forward.

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

“Phase 5c will make travel a much more viable option for many of us. Those travelling from Group B countries will need to observe only a very short self-isolation period to allow for test results on entry at the ports to be processed, provided those tests return ‘negative.’ We have set a tight deadline for the public service to design and deliver a model for Phase 5c that is ready to go, as and when the CCA decides it is right to make the change and that work is nearly complete. But, and it is a very big ‘but’ the CCA has not yet decided to make that move, and has not set any date as to when that should happen.

We are mindful that Phase 5c does increase the risks of COVID-19 returning to our Bailiwick. The mitigations which will be put in place mean that increased risk is as small as it can be, but we must still be confident that it is an acceptable risk before we make any change. That is partly dependent on the situation in jurisdictions around us. At this very moment, these do not show signs of improving. But things may change, this pandemic has shown that can happen very quickly, and by having everything ready for Phase 5c, we will be able to respond just as quickly when the time is right.”

How will Phase 5c work?

Phase 5c will continue to see countries treated as either Group A, Group B or Group C. We will also be considering a regional classification in the future. However it will mean significantly less in the way of self-isolation requirements for arrivals from Group B countries, and increased testing for most travellers.

As is the case currently, in Phase 5b, arrivals from Group A countries will need to observe a mandatory 14 day self-isolation period. There will continue to be penalties for those who are found to have breached this requirement. Currently there is no requirement for these passengers to be tested unless they develop symptoms while in self-isolation. But in Phase 5c they will be expected to test on arrival, at testing facilities provided at the airport and harbour. Testing on arrival will allow for the Public Health team to contact trace any people who have had contact with the infected person during transit.

Arrivals from Group B countries currently have the option to be tested on day 7 of their self-isolation, and if their result is negative, they can leave their self-isolation while remaining in 'passive follow-up' up until the 14th day after they arrive. In Phase 5c, these arrivals will be able to test when they arrive at the airport or harbour testing facilities and remain in self-isolation only until they receive a negative result from that first test. **But importantly, these travellers will be required to test again on day 7.**

All travellers will need to register details of their travel to Guernsey 48 hours before their journey. A new website is being developed which will make the flow of data between key agencies such as the Guernsey Border Agency and Public Health more efficient. This will support the 'track and trace' capability of the States of Guernsey providing mitigation against the increased risk that comes from reducing the self-isolation requirement for Group B travellers.

Other than the need to pre-register their travel details online, there will be no change to the travel arrangements for Group C countries (the Isle of Man) in Phase 5c, or for those travelling as critical workers or through business tunnels, who must continue to make specific applications for their travel.

Deputy Heidi Soulsby, member of the Civil Contingencies Authority said

"Again our staff across the public sector are showing how they are working with no barriers to deliver a coordinated model for Phase 5c. Public Health and other health and care teams, Law Enforcement, the Ports, the civil service and our digital partners, Agilisys, have worked incredibly hard to design a model that means we can make a big reduction in the self-isolation requirements for many travellers.

But I echo Deputy St Pier's comments that we have not yet decided to make the actual move to Phase 5c. Depending on how things develop in the UK, France and elsewhere, it may be some time before we do that. We want Islanders to understand the model that will form our next step, but not to assume it is imminent."

Testing in Phase 5c

New equipment is being sourced to increase Guernsey's on-island testing capability to a potential capacity of more than 2,000 tests a day, and additional skilled staff are being recruited while others are undergoing training to upskill in this area. Ensuring our testing capability is on-island, delivered by locally-based professionals is a key part of the reliability and resilience of the testing programme. The new equipment was ordered in July but the manufacturer has had to delay its arrival which is now expected to be in the last week of September. This will be followed by a process of commissioning and testing the new equipment before it can be used in practice.

In Phase 5c, the COVID-19 tests that travellers will need to take will be a supervised 'self-swab' tests. The self-swab test will help allow increased numbers of travellers to move quickly through the process, but it is recognised this can have a small impact make the overall efficacy of the testing. Ensuring the testing on arrival is supervised, and clear instructions are provided to travellers is key in mitigating that. Children under 12 who are still at primary school will not be required to take a test.

These tests will be done at purpose-built testing facilities at the airport and harbour terminals, and on the East Arm of North Beach. Work has already begun to build these facilities. A video with the self-sampling instructions will be available prior to travel. In each testing booth, travellers will be provided with testing kits and instructions for how to take the test. Support staff will also be available to help anyone who is unclear on what they need to do. If someone is unable to self-sample, they will be referred to the testing team for sampling. Under 12s still in Primary School will not require sampling unless a member of their family is positive, in which case they will be referred to the testing team for sampling.

The test carried out on arrival must be handed in at the testing facility, there and then. Travellers will also be able to collect a self-swab kit and instructions for their day-7 test with guidance on where that needs to be handed in at a designated test drop-off point, which will be alongside the existing testing facility at the Princess Elizabeth Hospital.

While travellers are not mandated to take any tests, anyone who chooses not to will need to observe a mandatory 14-day self-isolation period regardless of which country they have come from (with the exception of Group C country arrivals).

In terms of costs, the testing of travellers in Phase 5c for a six month period is forecast to cost approximately £3.7m, plus a capital cost of £600k.

The testing facility at the Princess Elizabeth Hospital will continue to operate and provide testing for local residents who develop symptoms.

Dr Nicola Brink, Director of Public Health said

“In Phase 5c we are increasing our test, track and trace capability, with additional testing staff and equipment and digital solutions to support our contact tracing. We

still feel it is important that we test arrivals on day 7, as well as when they first arrive, as this will allow us to identify the vast majority of those who may have contracted COVID-19 before or during their travel to Guernsey. But the additional mitigations mean we can feel more confident that they do not need to also self-isolate for the entirety of that time as we can use our contact tracers more effectively to locate any contacts and prevent the spread of the virus.”

The testing facility that will be set up at the East Arm of North Beach will be for car passengers arriving by ferry, and work will begin on this from Tuesday next week (1st Sept), meaning part of the East Arm will be cordoned off and some of the parking spaces within this area will not be available. Once construction is complete the majority of parking spaces will be returned for public use until such time as the testing facility becomes operational. This will mean a reduction in parking spaces and options for providing alternative parking are being reviewed.

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