

Media Release

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Vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 - the virus causing COVID-19

Like countries across the globe, the States of Guernsey are preparing for when a vaccination against the virus causing COVID-19 becomes available.

As well as the practical considerations needed to embark on a large scale voluntary vaccination programme, a number of policy and legislative matters relating to the introduction of a new vaccine need to be considered.

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

‘Since the initial reports of a novel coronavirus being identified in Wuhan, China earlier this year, scientists have been accelerating the normal vaccine development processes. A number of candidate vaccines are in various phases of development and it is hoped that a vaccine may be available by the end of 2020.

For Guernsey to deliver a vaccination programme of this scale and complexity ahead of the detail of the precise vaccine has been confirmed, the appropriate legislative framework needs to be in place to enable the Bailiwick to respond to the unprecedented circumstances it is facing.’

In its Policy Letter entitled ‘Developing the legislative framework necessary for Vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 - the virus causing COVID-19, HSC will be bringing proposals to the Assembly in August 2020 recommending changes to the Prescription Only Medicines (Human) (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Ordinance, 2009.

Due to the speed of the development of potential vaccines, which ordinarily take around 5 years to develop, it is likely that some vaccinations will be granted a temporary authorisation for ‘early use’ in the UK through powers given to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in The Human Medicines Regulations 2012. HSC is similarly keen to ensure that the Bailiwick is ready to vaccinate, so that a vaccine/s can be procured from the NHS supply chain, when it becomes available.

However, in order to enable a vaccination programme to go ahead in the Bailiwick, legislative changes are required to recognise a temporary authorisation in a similar way as the UK, so that a vaccination programme can be carried out lawfully. In doing so, and in addition to the advice from Public Health Services locally, close correspondence will continue with the Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and Public Health England.

HSC is asking the Assembly to agree that:

- A vaccination programme is established for the Bailiwick to mitigate against the risks of SARS-CoV-2
- The Committee be authorised to designate any Covid-19 vaccine it considers appropriate, as long as the vaccine has a recognised marketing authorisation, or a temporary authority issued under the Human Medicines Regulations 2012.
- The Committee be authorised to specify by regulations the classes of persons (in addition to registered healthcare professionals) allowed to administer that vaccine.

Ends

Notes to Media

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