

I said at the last briefing on 28<sup>th</sup> August that it was to be the last one planned until after the general election. But the pandemic is not going to wait for the outcome of the election and we cannot simply stop communicating in the meantime.

So I am disappointed that we've needed to call today's briefing at short notice.

As ever, let's cut to the chase. The single positive travel-related cases in each of Guernsey and the Isle of Man and their impact on the air bridge would not of themselves justify calling a briefing. However, the rapid rise in infection rates in the UK in general and in England in particular does.

On Thursday last week, England's infection rate for the first time exceeded 30 per 100,000 – the trigger point to put it on the Group B watch list. The trend seems clear – and it's in the wrong direction.

If we have 7 days above this level, it will trigger a move of England from Group B to Group A – which would mean that those travelling from there would need to self-isolate for 14 days, without an opportunity for a test on day 7. This has already happened in relation to Northern Ireland of course. The fact that England is obviously our most common point of origin means this would have a significant impact on those travelling – and there has been increased traffic recently as parents take students across and so on.

The position is, however, more complex in that the prevalence rates are not uniform and different regions are having different experiences.

In light of this, as we have done before, we felt it was right and proper to give as much notice of our current thinking. This will enable the community to make informed decisions – well as informed as possible – in respect of their travel plans.

So, if the trends continue, our **current** plan is to move a number of English regions onto Group A from the early hours on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September, in other words one minute past midnight. A final decision in this regard will be taken and communicated in 2 days' time, on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September. This approach is a pragmatic and proportionate response to the rapidly changing position in the UK.

I must emphasise this is the **current** thinking and it is subject to both change and a final decision. As ever, with this pandemic, events are fast moving and we must be dynamic in our response. It is possible that other regions across the whole UK will be added in time too – and this may happen at short notice. Anyone planning travel must do so knowing there are risks that the rules for their re-entry to the Bailiwick may change whilst they are away.

This move would raise a raft of questions, including:

- If you are travelling from Wales or Scotland or another Group B region or jurisdiction transiting through Group A region, will you still need to self-isolate for 14 days? Nikki can explain how this will work in practice.
- With rising infection rates in lower age groups and no significant increase in death rates, why does the trend

in England matter? Dr Brink can again explain why we cannot simply ignore this development.

- Would this move impact on any decision by the CCA to the introduction to Phase 5c? The answer to that is, 'no, not necessarily' – once we have all the infrastructure in place, we can still activate Phase 5c in respect of Group B areas as and when we decide it is the right thing to do.
- What about compassionate and medical travel? Heidi will speak about these issues in a minute.

I will restate, once again, that elimination of the virus from our community **is not** the objective. Managing and containing it is; and the reason we want to manage and contain it is so that we can continue to allow our community to go about their working and social lives normally and without fear. That is in the best interests of islanders' mental health and wellbeing, the education system and our economic and business life.