

Media Release

Date: 21 December 2020

New variant of COVID-19 and Bailiwick border controls

New evidence is emerging of a new variant of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19).

This new variant appears to spread more quickly and appears to be responsible for rapidly rising cases of COVID-19 in the South East of England.

Public Health Services are continually monitoring the evidence with a view to how this new variant might impact on our self-isolation and border controls. There is no current evidence to suggest that this new strain causes a higher mortality rate or that it affects vaccines and treatments, although urgent work is underway to confirm this.

Following the UK's announcement regarding changes to their COVID-19 requirements on Saturday, along with countries in Europe implementing strict border controls, we know that our community will be worried about how this impacts the Bailiwick.

Our current self-isolation (14 days self-isolation from category 4 countries or regions) and testing requirements (day 1 and day 13 testing) have served us well in managing the detection of COVID-19 in the Bailiwick. We have no current evidence of community seeding in the Bailiwick. Indeed, other jurisdictions are now looking to implement similar testing regimes to ours now the new variant has been identified.

In order to keep detecting cases and preventing community spread we would ask anyone who is travelling into the Bailiwick to take the test on day 1 and also take up the offer of the Day 13 test. If you have friends or family due to arrive in the Bailiwick please encourage them to take both tests. The day 13 test is important as it identifies people who have incubated the virus whilst in self-isolation with no symptoms. This final 'belt and braces' check ensures the virus is contained and the risk of community seeding is removed.

We also need people to self-isolate properly. We know it is boring and very difficult for people but it is essential to keep our community safe and to allow us to go about our daily business with no restrictions. Please follow the guidance on travelling from the ports of arrival to your self-isolation address.

Testing and self-isolation are our first and best line of defence in reducing the impact of COVID-19. We are asking the community to continue to work with us as we deal with this current phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CCA will be meeting early tomorrow morning to review the latest developments and consider if any changes to the Bailiwick's current restrictions should be made. The CCA will then hold a live COVID-19 press briefing at 1pm.

Ends