



Media Release

Date: 1 April 2021

Appeal to act on any COVID-19 symptoms immediately this Easter – if unwell, stay at home and report symptoms

As we head into a 4-day weekend, Public Health is urging islanders not to be complacent about feeling under the weather. If a person develops any of the symptoms of COVID-19, no matter how mild, they should stay at home and report their symptoms to the clinical helpline or their GP.

It follows a surge in calls being received by the clinical helpline on Monday, suggesting a number of people had developed symptoms on Saturday or Sunday but not acted on them until after the weekend.

The helpline, which is run by JESSC, saw a seven-fold increase in calls on Monday and Tuesday compared to Saturday and Sunday.

Director of Public Health, Dr Nicola Brink, said: 'If you're feeling unwell don't delay – act today. We are at a critical stage in our exit from lockdown as we are just under two weeks from when restrictions were significantly lifted and large amounts of people started coming into closer contact with each other.

'It is inevitable that face-to-face interactions will be increasing every day as islanders get more used to life returning to normal. But if there was any COVID-19 in the community when Guernsey entered Stage 3, this is when we would likely see symptoms emerging from possible transmission.

'We are managing to move through our exit from lockdown framework at pace and a big part of that is due to the vigilance of the community in being responsible about reporting symptoms, alongside the extensive and swift testing capacity we have. We now have a lot of freedom back that was not possible just a few weeks ago.

'No one wants to go backwards, so we can't afford to be complacent about symptoms. It might just be a common cold, but it might be COVID-19 and we need the community to be remain well aware of that. The risk of COVID-19 transmission in our community, and the

associated possibility of further restrictions on our liberties, will remain for some time. The most important thing we can all do as a community to keep that risk at bay is to act on any symptoms immediately.'

The symptoms to look out for are:

- Tiredness, new and severe fatigue (recent onset)
- Aches and pains, new muscle ache for no obvious reason (recent onset)
- Headache (sinus pain, pain around eyes)
- Conjunctivitis (itchy, watery, painful or pink eye(s))
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Fever (high temperature, rigors, chills, can't get warm)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Dry cough (Continuous new cough)
- Diarrhoea
- Children and Over 80s – loose stool, mild fever, not themselves with a cough presenting later
- A rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes (seek urgent medical advice)
- Chest pain or pressure, shortness of breath, chest tightness (phone the emergency services on 999)
- Loss of speech or movement (phone the emergency services on 999)

If you start to experience any symptoms, no matter how mild, please contact the Clinical Helpline by calling 01481 756938 or 01481 756969.

If you feel very unwell, phone 999 and tell the operator of your symptoms. Please do not visit your GP or the Emergency Department at the hospital unannounced.

Ends

Notes to Media

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