



## Media Release

**Date: 21 July 2021**

### **Public Health urging everyone in the community to act on the first sign of any symptoms**

---

Following instances of community seeding of COVID having been seen in Guernsey and Alderney, Public Health is urging all islanders to act immediately if showing any symptoms, however mild.

While the community seeding cases in the two islands appears to be unconnected, the message to the Bailiwick community is very clear: Regardless of the number of the active cases in the islands, or the extent of the vaccination programme, responding immediately to symptoms remains one of the most important thing that people can do, alongside practicing good respiratory and hand hygiene.

At the first sense of feeling unwell with any of the recognised symptoms of COVID, individuals should stay at home and contact the clinical helpline on 01481 756938 or 01481 756969.

This is essential even for those that are fully vaccinated (having received two doses of vaccinations administered within the UK or Crown Dependencies with 14 days since the second vaccination). At busy times, callers may have to wait to be put through to a call handler, but please stay on the line wherever possible.

Alex Hawkins-Drew, Lead for Public Health Nursing said: ‘Instances of community seeding are something we are expecting to see as we adjust to living with COVID. But we are well prepared for this and our robust contact tracing measures means we are well-placed to minimise onward transmission. However the most vital part of our defence is the responsibility of people to isolate when feeling unwell and promptly coming forward for testing. Contact tracing can only be successful if people don’t wait to report symptoms and be tested.’

The clinical helpline consistently sees an increase in calls on a Monday, which suggests some people with symptoms choose not to report them until after the weekend.

Mrs Hawkins-Drew added: 'We sincerely hope we do not see that trend continuing. We understand that people don't want to curtail any plans that they have, but at the same time I'm sure no one wants to be in a situation where they are increasing the risk to the whole community, including those close to them. Going out and about when you are symptomatic may put others at risk. Please do not dismiss any symptoms, act immediately.

'COVID isn't going away and we are having to learn to live with it. In the three weeks since relaxing our border restrictions in July we have only seen a small rise in cases in Guernsey, which is very positive. We of course have also seen a cluster of cases in Alderney, for which our tried-and-tested plans, including contact tracing, surge testing and isolation, are helping to control. We remain in a strong position, but everyone must remain vigilant. Throughout the pandemic we have always relied on a community-wide effort to help minimise risk, and that remains as important as ever.'

She reiterated that the island has very high testing capacity which is targeted where it is most needed to minimise any risk of transmission within the community.

**Ends**

**Notes to Media**

---