

Media Release

For immediate release

Date: 27 July 2021

Fully vaccinated travellers to receive lateral flow tests on arrival

Fully vaccinated travellers into the Bailiwick will be provided with lateral flow tests on arrival from Tuesday 3rd August 2021, provided the necessary testing packs arrive in the anticipated timeframe.

The Civil Contingencies Authority has confirmed that it will introduce lateral flow tests on arrival for adult ‘blue channelers’ – those travelling from within the Common Travel Area who have received two vaccine doses plus 14 days having passed since their second jab. The Authority is also strongly recommending that those who are not local residents arrange to take a pre-travel test (either PCR or lateral flow).

Visitors who arrange to be tested pre-travel will protect themselves and their families from the costs and difficulties they will experience if they subsequently test positive after arriving in the Bailiwick. In addition, this will afford additional protection to those who travel with them on the same flight or ferry and to others within the Bailiwick.

Fully vaccinated travellers will be charged £25 per travelling adult for a pack of five lateral flow tests they will receive on arrival. This charge will be collected at the point of the traveller completing the Travel Tracker and is necessary for them to be confirmed as a ‘blue channeler’. Travellers are asked to take the lateral flow test immediately on arrival at their home or accommodation, then every other day, to help protect themselves and the wider community in line with the consistent Guernsey Together spirit since the start of the pandemic.

Anyone who receives a positive result from a self-administered lateral flow test must immediately self-isolate and contact the clinical helpline to book a PCR test. Lateral flow tests are not to be used if any traveller has Covid-19 symptoms, as in such instances people must contact the Clinical Helpline on 01481 756938 or 01481 756969 to be booked in for a PCR test.

Children aged 11 and under travelling with fully vaccinated adults will not receive, or be charged for, lateral flow tests. Young people aged between 12 and 17 travelling with fully vaccinated adults already receive, and are charged for, PCR tests on arrival and day 7, and this will continue.

The CCA has in recent days carefully considered options that can support its desire to provide greater levels of protection to our small communities, while balancing the need for the Bailiwick to live responsibly with Covid-19 and the desire of many islanders to travel. Since the beginning of July, several important factors have changed, including the rate of our own vaccination programme (which is slower than was then projected), and aspects of the Covid response in our neighbouring jurisdictions from where people are travelling to the Bailiwick. Our border policy now balances greater protection to the community afforded by this additional testing with practical considerations for those needing or wanting to travel.

Significant work has been carried out to secure the necessary stocks of lateral flow tests, which has enabled this decision to be made.

At this stage, arrivals from Jersey will still require a negative PCR test within the 48-hour period before travel, as per the decision on 19th July 2021. However, this will be kept under review.

Deputy Peter Ferbrache, Chairman of the Civil Contingencies Authority, said:

‘As most in our community understand, and we are grateful for their continued support, the CCA often has very difficult decisions to make where we try to balance the needs, desires and safety of our whole community. We are by no means perfect and, as has happened on occasion throughout the last 18 months while trying to manage this pandemic, we won’t get every decision right. Where we get things wrong or change direction we will say so and hold our hands up, and having reflected on our decision of last week, and importantly having had the opportunity to examine other options in more detail, we listened to our community and found a better way forward. However, we recognise this has impacted some members of our community, to whom we apologise.

‘The decision we have made today, to introduce lateral flow tests on arrival while continuing to strongly recommend that anyone not locally resident in the Bailiwick takes a pre-travel test, seeks to provide an additional level of mitigation to help further protect our community without significantly impacting those who are fully vaccinated and want to travel. We must embrace living responsibly with Covid and this includes when we travel. We are continuing to place our trust in the community to do the right thing, as we have seen continually throughout the pandemic as part of Guernsey Together.

‘Paying for the test will be a condition of travelling into the Bailiwick and therefore compulsory if you are a blue channeler, and travellers must use the authorised tests we provide, rather than any they might bring themselves. We will keep the need for lateral flow testing on arrival under review in the coming weeks.’

Ends