

Media Release

Date: 22 December 2021

Islanders advised to limit contacts where possible to further slow spread of COVID-19

The Civil Contingencies Authority and the Director of Public Health are advising Islanders to limit the numbers of people they interact with socially where possible, as a further way of slowing the spread of COVID-19, and especially to slow the spread of the Omicron variant.

The CCA met yesterday and discussed how cases are again on rise as the Omicron variant spreads in the community. Hospital cases remain low which is encouraging, as is the good progress made by the booster programme in recent days, but given there are still uncertainties around Omicron because of a lack of data the CCA is advising Islanders to consider all their options for preventing transmissions. This includes the use of face coverings and staying at home if you have any symptoms. It also includes the regular use of Lateral Flow Tests, especially before attending any setting where there will be crowds or it's not possible distance from each other, such as pubs, clubs or parties.

Dr Nicola Brink, Director of Public Health said

“As we prepare for the Omicron wave what we’re seeking to avoid is a very steep rise in cases. Islanders know well the ways in which they can prevent the transmission of the virus. It’s good to see face coverings being widely used, and we know many people are using lateral flow tests. Both of these things really do help prevent transmissions. Our aim is to slow the speed of transmission so our health services or other critical infrastructure aren’t overwhelmed. Clearly if we interact with fewer people, that is also a way of reducing those transmissions. That doesn’t have to mean avoiding all contact with people, but it might mean organising smaller get togethers, or not ‘party-hopping’ if you’re on a night out.”

Deputy Peter Ferbrache, Chair of the Civil Contingencies Authority said

“We are keeping a very close watch on the case numbers mindful of the potential impact of Omicron. We’re conscious it is also early days for the variant and while data is gathered, there are things we don’t know, but we’re anticipating a big wave and if we can spread that wave over a period of time so all our cases don’t come at once, we’ll help to minimise the disruption.

As much as we can, we are seeking to reduce the transmission by working with our community, urging them to follow the good guidance that forms part of living responsibly with COVID. We are aware many jurisdictions are introducing a range of more severe restrictions. We would want to avoid that if at all possible but given the unpredictability of this new variant, we can't rule anything out. We'll keep those under consideration and advise our community as soon as we have any information or evidence that warrants a change in our response, but right now we'd ask Islanders to keep doing all they can to reduce the spread, and still enjoy this festive period."

Ends