

## Media Release

**Date: 9 December 2021**

### **On-island sequencing confirms the Bailiwick's first Omicron case in recent traveller**

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The Bailiwick's on-island sequencing has today confirmed a case of the Omicron variant in a locally-based person who recently travelled from the UK to Guernsey.

The individual had not travelled outside the Common Travel Area.

They were advised that they may have been in contact with a patient who was a positive Omicron case in the UK, and they immediately contacted Guernsey's Public Health Services who carried out a rapid PCR test, sequencing and contact tracing.

Contact tracing has identified only a small number of close contacts who are now isolating and undergoing PCR tests in line with the requirements for Omicron contacts which were announced at the beginning of last week.

Alongside these developments, the Civil Contingencies Authority is of course aware of the announcements for new measures announced by the UK Prime Minister last night. With only a single case of Omicron identified locally, there is no immediate change in the requirements for Islanders. But the mandatory use of face coverings in certain settings such as shops and public transport remains in force, alongside the strong recommendations to regularly carry out Lateral Flow Testing, to stay at home if experiencing any symptoms and to report those symptoms to the clinical helpline – even if you have had a negative LFT result.

Deputy Peter Ferbrache, Chair of the Civil Contingencies Authority said

“We recognise that there is still uncertainty around the Omicron variant. We therefore need to take a cautious, but proportionate, approach in the coming days.

It is no surprise that we have identified a case of the new variant, we had expected this and that is why we announced last week new requirements for any suspected contacts of Omicron cases, which are stricter, as a precaution. Our on-island sequencing is also proving effective and it has confirmed this case is of the new variant in less than a day. Our expert staff will now continue the work of testing contacts of this confirmed case of Omicron and sequencing any found to be positive

to give us a clearer picture. The CCA will also continue to meet regularly. As we gain new information, we will keep the community informed, and should we see a changing picture that requires any new measures as part of our response, we will announce these quickly and clearly so Islanders understand what's happening and why."

Dr Nicola Brink, Director of Public Health said

"I'd firstly like to thank the individual who has been confirmed as a positive case of Omicron, for coming to us as soon as they were made aware that they had been in contact with a suspected case of Omicron in the UK. They have done everything right and that has helped us to contact trace locally in a quick and effective way. At this stage, the contacts we're now working with are few and that's good. But we will need to take a little bit of time to see if there has been any further spread.

In the meantime, Islanders should of course continue to follow the current requirements and all of the strongly recommended guidance, and I'd like to thank them for all of their efforts so far in limiting transmission. We're not recommending any new measures at this immediate stage but we will continue to assess the evidence, advise the CCA and keep our community fully informed."

Details of the requirements for contacts of cases, including suspected contacts of Omicron cases can be found at [https://covid19.gov.gg/contact\\_of\\_a\\_case](https://covid19.gov.gg/contact_of_a_case)