

Media Release

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Civil Contingencies Authority sets out plans to further de-escalate COVID-19 restrictions

- The Civil Contingencies Authority to publish ‘Bailiwick Blueprint- The Next Steps’ setting out timeframes for review and further de-escalation of COVID-19 restrictions**
- The CCA agreed to remove mandatory requirement for face coverings from midnight**
- ‘Enhanced passive follow-up’ for positive cases released from isolation before day 10 is removed with immediate effect, and replaced with guidance asking individuals to follow sensible precautions**
- Other restrictions, including the requirement for positive cases to isolate are under review with further de-escalation intended for after February 17th**

The Civil Contingencies Authority has discussed and agreed a further phased reduction of remaining COVID-19 restrictions. This week it will publish these in the ‘Bailiwick Blueprint – The Next Steps’ which sets out the measures which it intends to review and remove, giving indications where possible of the likely timeframes.

Already some of the recent restrictions and guidance have begun to be relaxed, such as the removal of work-from-home guidance this week, and the reduction in isolation period for positive cases to just 5 days (with release on day 6 provided they test negative on lateral flow tests on days 5 and 6).

Further to this, today the CCA agreed to remove the mandatory requirement to wear face coverings from midnight tonight (00.01 26 January 2022). However, the CCA continues to recommend face coverings are used especially in enclosed spaces, in crowds or where there is poor ventilation.

Also being removed, with immediate effect, is the requirement to follow ‘enhanced passive follow-up’ rules for positive cases who have been released from isolation before day 10. This is because these cases have left their isolation on the basis they are symptom-free and completed two negative LFT tests on consecutive days. Instead, these individuals will be

asked to follow some sensible precautions including not attending a hospital or care setting, limiting contact with vulnerable people, wearing face coverings in crowded and enclosed spaces and speaking with their employer before returning to their workplace.

The Bailiwick Blueprint also looks ahead at how other aspects of the COVID-19 response will be reviewed:

- De-escalation of lateral flow and PCR testing and contact tracing with focus more on testing and tracing for certain settings, for clinical reasons or to manage outbreaks
- Review of border policy for travel from outside the Common Travel Area
- Move away from emergency legislation to advice and guidance only
- Contact tracing will focus on specific situations, for example the control of outbreaks.
- Work towards the removal of the mandatory self-isolation for positive cases, with people being asked to stay at home if they are a symptomatic case

As it reviews these measures and seeks to relax or remove them, the CCA will make further announcements. These steps will put yet greater emphasis on the need for all Islanders to live responsibly with COVID, meaning it will be down to all Islanders to take sensible steps to mitigate the spread of the virus so that it can remain at manageable levels, working together to protect each other.

Deputy Peter Ferbrache, Chair of the Civil Contingencies Authority said

“We have come a long way over the course of the pandemic. In March 2020, we had little choice but to lockdown and close our borders, despite only seeing a couple of hundred cases. Now, thanks to our high vaccination rates, including good uptake of the booster vaccine, and the cooperation of Islanders, we have managed several thousand active cases over the last month while keeping restrictions to a minimum. We’ve kept our society, businesses, schools and borders open; without putting our health service under more strain than it can cope with. Of course for some it’s still been a very difficult period, but there’s no doubt we’re better placed now than ever before for living responsibly with COVID-19. Our next steps need to reflect that.

As far as possible we intend to rely less on legislation, mindful that there are some aspects of our border policy that need to be reviewed carefully and discussed with the UK and other members of the Common Travel Area to ensure we remain aligned where we need to. These conversations are happening now so we will update Islanders further as soon as we can.

But for today, we are pleased to be able to further remove some of the restrictions that have been in place and to see we are moving in the right direction.”

Dr Nicola Brink, Director of Public Health said

“The timing is right now to begin preparing for a phased removal of restrictions, and this plan is supported by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell. After two years of having to manage the unpredictable and changing threat presented by COVID-19, to reach this stage is very encouraging. It’s down to the cooperation and commitment from all Islanders. COVID-19 has not gone away, but we’re in a good position to change how we manage this infection. Instead we will work with Islanders to minimise the impact of COVID-19.

We expect to see more cases of COVID-19, indeed we may see a further wave of infection. As before, we will work with Islanders, asking for their cooperation to respond to any increasing risk, rather than rely on the reintroduction of formal restrictions. For now that means we will continue to actively promote the guidance around mitigating the risk of transmission through the use of face coverings and lateral flow testing. Most of all we need people to continue to stay at home if they are unwell, this will be an even more important message when we eventually remove the formal requirement to isolate if you are a positive case. It’s down to Islanders to continue being responsible and avoid spreading the virus to their friends, families and colleagues.”