

Media Release

CCA will not renew emergency regulations when they expire on 17th February – end of legal requirement to self-isolate for COVID-19 cases and border restrictions

-Civil Contingencies Authority will not use emergency powers from 17th February 2022

-CCA announces end to legally mandated self-isolation for COVID-19 cases and end to border restrictions

-CCA trusts community to do the right thing, urges people to stay at home when unwell and use common sense to minimise risk of outbreaks

The Civil Contingencies Authority has today announced that, from 17th February 2022, it will no longer use emergency powers to manage COVID-19 – signalling an end to legally mandated self-isolation for cases and the removal of all border restrictions.

However, the need for vigilance has not disappeared and the Authority is urging the community to continue to act responsibly, particularly regarding the absolute need for people to stay at home if unwell to minimise the risk of outbreaks. All islanders and employers are asked to take this important Public Health message onboard and support it by not only acting responsibly themselves, but also by encouraging everyone around them to do the same.

The CCA decided that it was no longer proportionate or necessary to continue utilising emergency regulations to manage the implications of COVID-19, largely because of the high vaccine uptake amongst the community resulting in very few hospitalisations due to the virus. Furthermore, there is now strong evidence, following the recent Omicron wave, that critical services across the Bailiwick can be maintained, despite having to work through challenges.

In addition to the removal of legally mandated self-isolation and border restrictions, the way the islands will manage the continued impact of COVID-19 from 17th February 2022 includes (these measures will be kept under review):

Public Health

- Strong request for people to stay at home if unwell, which needs to become the cultural norm as part of living responsibly with COVID-19.
- Free packs of LFTs will continue to be available for anyone who wants to use them, with positive results able to be reported through the current online platform or by calling the COVID helpline on 220001/2. Confirmatory PCR tests will continue to be available. We continue to encourage people to test if they have symptoms or before attending large events or visiting vulnerable people.
- All positive cases will be requested to stay at home for 10 days with early release if they are asymptomatic and LFT negative from day 5 and again 24 hours later. This is voluntary – we are asking the community to work together to keep everyone safe.
- No routine Public Health-led contact tracing; positive cases asked to notify contacts with seven days of LFTs advised for contacts.
- A continued awareness of the importance of good ventilation and fresh air in reducing the spread of the virus.
- Continued community engagement with good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene and respecting people’s personal space;
- Daily publishing of COVID-19 case numbers on gov.gg to move to weekly.

Travel Tracker

- Arrivals into the Bailiwick no longer required to complete Travel Tracker.
- The Travel Tracker will remain active for islanders to be able to access their vaccination status when traveling outside the Bailiwick.

Education

- Current use of LFTs to continue until half term. Following the half term break, all staff and students are asked to undertake an LFT on first three days of new half term (28th February, 1st and 2nd March 2022).
- From 3rd March, there will be no surveillance testing for primary students.
- From 3rd March, surveillance testing for secondary and post-16 students and all staff (primary, secondary and post-16) will reduce to a request that they take LFTs on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week. Anyone with symptoms is asked to take an LFT and stay at home if they are unwell.
- Schools will no longer carry out contact tracing. As such schools will no longer notify parents if their child is a contact.
- Schools will risk assess large events on a case-by-case basis and make individual decisions.

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

‘Today’s announcement is hugely significant as it marks the date – 17th February 2022 - when the emergency powers, which have impacted all of our lives in the last two years, will no longer be used for the ongoing management of COVID-19. While we can of course never say never in terms of needing to move backwards and use them again, now is the right time to move the Bailiwick out of an emergency and begin managing COVID-19 without the use of regulations.

‘But in order for that to be possible in the long term, we still need the community’s support. I know that the vast majority of people in the Bailiwick want to do the right thing and have demonstrated that throughout the pandemic. That must continue if we’re going to be successful in moving forwards. Everyone must heed the Public Health advice and we must develop a culture where it is considered unacceptable for someone to be out and about willingly and knowingly spreading their germs if they are unwell. Staying at home if you are unwell is the number one thing we must as a community take away from all that we have learnt in managing this pandemic.’

Dr Nicola Brink, Medical Officer of Health, said:

‘We have seen four waves of cases of COVID-19 in the Bailiwick in the last two years and on each occasion we have as a community pulled together. The support of islanders, including the huge take-up of the vaccination programme, has put us in the position where we can now move with confidence towards the ongoing management of the virus outside of emergency regulations. We have said this previously but it is not within our gift to say the pandemic is over; it is for the World Health Organization to make that distinction. But what we can say is that we, in the Bailiwick, are now moving towards treating COVID-19 as an endemic disease. This is a huge step forward for us.

‘We have consistently said that nothing is risk-free, and there may well be times in the months ahead where further waves will occur, but right now with the evidence we have this is the right time to further de-escalate the measures in place. It is absolutely essential, however, that the vigilance many islanders have shown around staying at home if unwell remains. In fact, it needs to go further and become ingrained in our culture that it is socially unacceptable to put others at risk by going to work, events or anywhere where you’ll be in close proximity with other people, if you’re unwell. We will continue pushing this message very proactively going forwards as it is simply the best mechanism to avoid outbreaks.’