

7 July 2021

Dear business colleagues

It has been a week of very big changes for the Bailiwick's overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you are likely to be aware, after more than a year with strict controls at our borders, the 1<sup>st</sup> July saw those restrictions removed for some passengers who present a significantly lower risk. Fully vaccinated travellers (those who have had two doses and 14 days have passed since the second dose) are no longer required to test and isolate on arrival when travelling from the Common Travel Area (the UK, Jersey, Isle of Man and Ireland).

This is a step that the Civil Contingencies Authority have taken, in line with the recommendations from their scientific and technical advisors, having analysed the risk to the community. That risk profile has changed a lot in light of the vaccination programme which has already dramatically reduced the likelihood of serious illness and hospitalisations.

All the way through the pandemic the CCA has had to justify that its extraordinary border restrictions are proportionate to the risk posed by the virus. Before the vaccination programme, there is no doubt that they were. But given the levels of protection in the community now thanks to the vaccine, especially for older generations who are more at risk, the justification is no longer there.

We realise that all this results in a significant change in the Bailiwick's approach to COVID. We've used the phrase 'living responsibly with COVID' a lot, but we appreciate there are still questions and anxieties about what that means.

There are a few things we would very strongly recommend. These are contained in our online guidance, but for example, we would strongly ask all businesses to ensure they have hand sanitiser and hygiene facilities, that they observe the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' respiratory etiquette, and that they do not allow staff to attend work if they are symptomatic. Our full business guidance is available online and can be found at [Business guidance with effect from 1 July 2021 | States of Guernsey - COVID-19 \(gov.gg\)](#). This is

intended to help businesses make their own decisions about what COVID measures are appropriate for them.

We're writing to you today because we know that even after considering this guidance you may still have questions, particularly around our testing and contact tracing strategies. Firstly, we want to explain our testing strategy, as this may help reassure you and guide what measures you decide to introduce in your business. Testing at the borders or self-isolation is no longer required for fully vaccinated arrivals from the CTA - their fully vaccinated status means they are at **LOW risk of catching or transmitting Covid-19**.

Restrictions do remain in place, however, for those travellers who are unvaccinated or part-vaccinated who will be required to test and self-isolate in accordance with the country/regional categorisation. Children between the ages of 12 and 17 who travel into the Bailiwick with a fully vaccinated adult are required to take a test on their arrival in Guernsey and to self-isolate until receipt of a negative result with a further test on Day 7.

Border Agency staff continue to proactively check on any individuals mandated to self-isolate, to ensure the self-isolation requirements are being met.

In addition, a surveillance testing programme is still in operation across the Bailiwick. This involves regular testing of employees and contractors operating in sectors where there is a higher potential risk of onward transmission of COVID-19. This includes, for example, testing of some supermarket staff.

The levels of testing will remain very high for a jurisdiction of our size. We can test as many as 2,000 individuals per day. In the weeks ahead of 1<sup>st</sup> July, we have only needed to test at levels significantly below this capacity. No border testing programme has ever been expected to catch every single case, and our strategy does not and never has relied on this alone. Border testing is one tool used in combination with other testing in the community and in particular testing of those who develop symptoms. By using the testing where it is most effective, we will continue to have good visibility over how many cases there are in our community. **Currently the number of positive cases remains low.**

For those who work locally and are fully vaccinated, we have also said that there would not be a requirement to self-isolate if you are contact traced (though there may be some restrictions depending on your occupation, such as health workers, which Public Health would discuss with you if you are contact traced). We appreciate that this still leaves concerns for some businesses if many staff members are not yet fully vaccinated. While it is not a requirement to restrict access to your business premises for any specific group of customers, we realise some businesses have chosen to do this – for example, asking customers not to attend if they have recently travelled.

Businesses should keep in mind what is likely to be considered a 'contact' of a positive case. While some discretion needs to be applied by the contact tracing team depending

on the individual circumstances of a case, generally someone would be considered a close contact if they have had:

- direct physical contact with a positive case or case secretions (e.g. handshake, touching dirty tissues);
- spent more than 15 minutes face-to-face or in a closed environment with a positive case at a distance of less than two metres; or
- spent more than 1 minute with a positive case at a distance of less than one metre.

This would apply to anyone who came into contact with the positive case after they became symptomatic or 72 hours before or if asymptomatic 14 days before their positive result.

This may mean, depending on the nature of your business, there are simple steps you can take to reduce the risk of your staff becoming a contact and help ensure your business is not significantly impacted.

It may be that still you are concerned of the risk to your business. We cannot guarantee that no business will ever see a positive case and have its operations affected, and we never have been able to. But we do want to support businesses as much as we can, while being proportionate about the restrictions imposed on the freedoms of our wider community. **If you have any questions please contact us on 01481 220003 or [trade@gov.gg](mailto:trade@gov.gg)**

As the largest employer on the island, operating with many public facing staff, the States has implemented its own risk management policies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, both amongst its workforce and for the safety of its customers. We're sharing those here in case it helps you make decisions for your own business. Our risk mitigation measures include:

- hand hygiene stations at multiple points across the organisation;
- a 'stay at home' policy for any staff experiencing symptoms of COVID-19;
- spacing out staff by 2 meters where feasible;
- providing protective screens at reception areas.

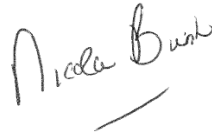
Businesses and their workforces have adapted a lot during the pandemic and the ever-changing challenges it has presented us. We know that isn't easy, but we also know how successfully and positively our local businesses have met these challenges. As we move to a period where we begin to live responsibly with COVID, businesses will need to adapt once again.

We are here to help in any way we can so please contact us if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully



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