

Sunday, 29 March 2020

Government tells Islanders to ‘Stay Home’ to slow the spread of Coronavirus

The Government has today announced that all Islanders should now stay home to tackle the spread of Coronavirus in Jersey. These stricter measures will take effect from 8am tomorrow.

The decision was made following delays in receiving test results back from the UK laboratory last week. This delay means that the Government’s public health team cannot see what effect the existing social distancing measures are having on slowing the spread of the virus.

Recently, there has been an increase in the number of positive cases of COVID-19 on the Island, with some new cases indicating that it is spreading within the community. While the rise in positive results corresponds with the projection for Jersey by the Medical Officer of Health, Dr Ivan Muscat, without regular tests results it is deemed too much of a risk to allow the community to carry on only social distancing, when a stay home order could save more lives.

As of 4pm on Sunday 29 March, we have now conducted 832 tests, of which 63 are positive, 668 are negative, we have unfortunately had two deaths and 101 test results remain outstanding.

The announcement is in line with the Government’s previous statement that it would impose a form of lockdown when the medical advice was that the time was right.

From 8am tomorrow (Monday, 30 March):

1. All Islanders should stay at home, whenever possible, except for very limited purposes for a maximum of two hours a day. Islanders who are engaged in essential work are permitted to travel to and from their place of work
2. All non-essential shops and community spaces must close, apart from the exceptions listed on gov.je
3. No gatherings of more than two people are allowed in public.
4. **Staying at home**

Islanders who are not engaged in essential work should only leave their homes in the following limited circumstances and for no more than two hours a day:

* If you need to shop for food, medicine and other basic necessities, which must be as infrequently as possible, with online shopping preferable
* For daily exercise or caring for animals, either alone or with members of your household. You must stay two metres away from everyone else and you should take advantage of Jersey’s open spaces – beaches, coast and countryside – where you can, but you must spread out from other people
* For any medical reasons, including providing care or to help a vulnerable person.
1. **Closure of non-essential shops and community spaces**

The Government had already instructed the closure of many places. The full list, published on gov.je, is now:

* Restaurants and pubs, wine bars and other drinking establishments, and other food and drink establishments, including within hotels and members’ clubs (except for takeaways and deliveries)
* Cafes and canteens (except for food services at the hospital, care homes or schools, prison and services providing food or drink to the homeless. Measures should be taken to minimise the number of people in a canteen/break space at any given time, for example by using a rota)
* Hairdressers, barbers, beauty and nail salons, including piercing and tattoo parlours, laser and cosmetic clinics delivering non-essential cosmetic treatments
* Non-essential shops (see below and on gov.je for the full list of shops which can stay open)
* Outdoor and indoor markets (except market stalls which offer essential retail, such as grocery and food)
* Auction houses
* Schools (except those open to care for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers)
* Hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, campsites and boarding houses for commercial use (excluding permanent residents; people who live in them while their primary residence is unavailable; key workers; non-UK residents who are unable to travel to their country of residence; and people who are unable to move into a new home)
* Caravan parks and camping sites
* Libraries
* Community centres, youth clubs and similar (except to host essential voluntary or public services, such as food banks, homeless services and blood donor sessions)
* Places of worship (except for funerals or to host essential voluntary or public services, such as food banks, homeless services and blood donor sessions)
* Museums and galleries
* Nightclubs
* Cinemas, theatres and concert venues
* Betting shops
* Spas and massage parlours
* Fort Regent (except for Government purposes relating to Coronavirus)
* Fitness studios, gyms, swimming pools or other indoor leisure facilities, including changing rooms
* Arcades, bowling alleys, soft play centres and similar
* Playgrounds, paddling pools, sports courts and pitches, mini-golf courses and outdoor gyms or similar
* From 4th April, all construction site/service operators must close unless they have received written confirmation from the Government of Jersey that they conform to new operating procedures required to ensure strict social distancing while not compromising health and safety requirements.
1. **Public gatherings**

The Government had already banned large public gatherings and imposed restrictions on weddings. Now the Government is prohibiting all public gatherings of more than two people, with four exceptions:

* Where the gathering is of a group of people who live together – so a parent or guardian can, for example, take their children to the shops if there is no absolutely option to leave them at home. However, they must not have visitors, such as friends and family, in their home.
* Funerals – although these should be attended by the immediate family only, and social distancing must be observed between people from different households.
* Marriages where one party has a critical medical condition can go ahead. All other marriages booked from 30 March – 30 June may not go ahead
* Where the gathering is required for the completion of essential work– although workers should minimise all meetings and other gatherings in the workplace, and maintain strict social distancing.

Every Islander must comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, will be given the powers to enforce them – including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

The Chief Minister, Senator John Le Fondré, said: “I have made it clear that when the time was right to impose further restrictions on Islanders, based on the advice of our medical experts, the Government would do so.

“Everyone, apart from those people who are providing essential services, must now stay at home to slow the progress of this virus, protect our Island and its health service and save lives. This is not advice: this is now an instruction and it is backed by powers of enforcement.

“Unless they are essential workers, Islanders can now only go out of their homes for essential shopping, for medical reasons and for limited exercise, and must keep two metres apart from each other at all times when doing so.

“The Government is grateful to those who have been strictly following our advice so far and we ask you to apply the same discipline under these new measures. It gives me no pleasure to restrict Islanders’ freedoms, but it is now essential to limit the spread of Coronavirus, avoid pressure on our health services and save lives.

“We have already made some extraordinary changes to our way of life in just a few short weeks, and it will be difficult to adjust to these new restrictions. But we are all in this together and we must act together for our Island’s health and future.”

Health Minister, Deputy Richard Renouf, said: “Last week, we saw an increase in the number of positive tests for Coronavirus, but more importantly we saw evidence that the virus has now begun to spread within our community and is no longer confined to infection among people returning from abroad.

“The delay in receiving test results is also having an impact, as it means our public health team cannot see what effect our health advice is having on slowing the spread of infection.

“As you know, we have now seen two Coronavirus-related deaths of elderly patients with serious underlying health conditions. I have already announced that people aged 65 and over and people with severe health conditions must self-isolate, to shield them from the virus.

“While the number of positive tests is still relatively low, the Medical Officer of Health has advised the Government that now is the right time to impose further restrictions on our community, to slow the spread of the virus in our Island.

“We are therefore requiring all Islanders who are not performing essential services to stay home and slow the spread of the virus. Stay home and protect each other. Stay home and protect our health services. Stay home and save lives.”

The Council of Ministers and our medical experts will keep these restrictions under review.

**Essential workers**

People engaged in work that is designated as being essential to the safe running of the Island during this time are permitted to travel to and from work. Essential work is defined as:

* Health and care services – both in the hospital and in the community (covering emergency/necessary medical and dental work; pharmacies; opticians, audiologists; residential and nursing homes; mental health care; management of the deceased)
* Paid and voluntary work to care for vulnerable and elderly people in their homes, for example home care providers, caretakers, the Community Taskforce and Parish volunteers
* Transportation, production and retail of food, beverages, household supplies, fuel, medicines and medical supplies
* Transportation and retail of construction supplies; hardware products necessary for home and business maintenance, sanitation; farm equipment and supplies, pet and livestock feed; gardening tools and supplies
* Maintenance of Jersey’s ports, air and sea links
* Public transport and regulated taxis
* Food delivery and takeaway services
* Public sector staff and contractors, including Parish staff, who form part of the formal emergency response structure
* Public protection, emergency services and justice system (police, Honorary Police, ambulance, fire, coastguard, lifeboats, customs and immigration; courts, law officers, Viscount, probation, prison)
* Social work, and residential childcare work
* Teaching, school support, and youth work where engaged in schools, as well as nursery and child-minding provision, for critical workers (at minimum levels)
* Maintenance of critical Island infrastructure, utilities, postal and telecommunications networks, Met Office
* Waste management and recycling services
* Postal and parcel delivery services
* Cleaning services for working environments, where that can be undertaken while adhering to social distancing guidelines
* Essential emergency home and building repair and maintenance services
* Essential vehicle, boat and bicycle repair and maintenance services
* Fishing, farming and farm work, while adhering to social distancing guidelines
* Care of livestock and animals in captivity, necessary veterinary and pest control work
* Critical branch-based banking services to enable cash and other financial transactions, maintenance of ATMs, call referral systems, credit application systems and payment systems
* General financial services – critical firm management and maintenance of core on-site services such as IT systems, banking and mail collection and delivery
* Advocates essential to ongoing court matters, limited staff critical to legal firms’ management and maintenance of core on-site services such as IT systems, banking and mail collection and delivery
* Essential government regulatory roles, including those related to financial stability and banking supervision
* Public service broadcasters and other mainstream news media
* Ministers, States Members, and staff enabling the functioning of the democratic system

Workers engaged directly in these categories of work, and ancillary staff providing essential support on-site to these categories of work (such as sorting officer staff for postal services, caretakers supporting vulnerable residents of apartment blocks and school administration staff), are also considered essential.

Employers should consider whether their organisation provides goods or services essential to the safe running of the Island during this time. If not, they should close, and all employees and their families must stay at home.

Where an organisation is providing essential goods or services, they are asked to pare back to necessary activity only and maintain only minimum staffing levels. Where possible, parents should be enabled to stay at home, so that their children can also be kept at home, to minimise demand for school places and childcare.

**Retail places which can stay open**

Businesses and organisations engaged in essential work, listed below, should remain open and should strictly observe all public health guidance on social distancing and hygiene:

* Supermarkets and other food shops
* Emergency medical services (such as emergency dental work, opticians and audiology clinics, emergency physiotherapy clinics, chiropody and podiatry clinics, and other emergency professional vocational medical services)
* Pharmacies and chemists, including non-dispensing pharmacies
* Fuel stations and heating fuel providers
* Hardware shops and equipment
* Veterinary surgeries, blacksmiths and pet shops
* Corner shops and newsagents
* Off-licences
* Laundrettes and dry cleaners
* Post Offices
* Vehicle rental services
* Retailers and services involved in the repair of boats, motor vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles (eg tyre sales and repairs)
* Car parks
* High street banks, short-term loan providers, credit unions, insurance agencies and cash points
* Storage and distribution facilities, including delivery drop off
* Public toilets.
* Garden centres
* Retailers of safety supplies (e.g. personal protective equipment)
* Office supplies and related support services
* Electrical, IT and phone retailers, repair and maintenance services
* Golf courses can stay open as long as social distancing is fully observed, ensuring there is no congregation on the course or in other outdoor spaces. All indoor facilities (club houses, changing rooms) must remain closed.

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**Notes to Editors**

1. For further information, please contact the press office on 01534 440430 or pressoffice@gov.je