



Access to Public Information Request

Date of receipt: 14 January 2021

Date of response: 30 March 2021

Access to Public Information request regarding ban on non-essential travel

Request:

We are told that the systems put in place for detecting and managing any incoming cases of Covid-19 prior to the introduction of the 'Only Essential Travel' edict continue to be effective.

1. If these processes continue to be effective, what data/evidence demonstrates that they will become inadequate without the imposition of an 'Only Essential Travel' ban **that includes** the tiny number of Bailiwick Residents (who wish to do so) from travelling to the UK in the full knowledge that they will be subject to the associated Self Isolation Rules when they return? The 'Essential Travel Only' rules will effectively reduce the number of incoming travellers dramatically so are the existing isolation rules now suddenly inadequate OR would the arrival process be in danger of becoming overwhelmed by a very small number of returning residents?
2. What criteria have been established that, when met, will allow the retraction of the "Essential Travel Only" dictat with a return to the proven Test on Arrival, Self Isolation, Test after 13 Days (or 21 days isolation) regime?
3. What is the established criteria that will allow a reduction in the existing "14/21 day Isolation" to (possibly) the previous "Seven Day Isolation followed by a negative test?"

The so-called Exit Strategy document partially explains the implications of the various stages but is almost completely lacking in specific information as to what conditions need to exist internally or externally in order for progression towards some normality.

1. The Covid-19 virus is unlikely to be eradicated in the foreseeable future. Is there any thought given as to how The Bailiwick manages the disease in the long term? We accept the killer Flu virus without travel or Self Isolation impositions so, as long as vaccination remains effective, is there any reason why Covid-19 will not be treated in a similar manner?
2. If travel into The Bailiwick (ever) becomes unrestricted cases of Covid-19 will inevitably be imported. What level of population immunisation needs to be achieved before this is seen as an acceptable risk.

Response provided by the Civil Contingencies Authority:

1. If these processes continue to be effective, what data/evidence demonstrates that they will become inadequate without the imposition of an 'Only Essential Travel' ban **that includes** the tiny number of Bailiwick Residents (who wish to do so) from travelling to the UK in the full knowledge that they will be subject to the associated Self Isolation Rules when they return? The 'Essential Travel Only' rules will effectively reduce the number of incoming travellers dramatically so are the existing isolation rules now suddenly inadequate OR would the arrival process be in danger of becoming overwhelmed by a very small number of returning residents?

The 'Essential Travel Only' rules and associated permit regime were introduced in light of the devastating impact and speed of transmission of the Kent variant of COVID-19 across the UK. Regrettably, despite this additional measure four cases of COVID-19 from unknown sources of community seeding were identified on 22 January 2021. It was later confirmed that these four cases were the Kent variant and led at the time of writing to in excess of 500 cases being identified within Guernsey and one in Alderney.

The ban on non-essential travel was lifted on the 22nd March in light of the declining prevalence rates in the UK and Jersey and the latest wave of the virus in Guernsey appearing suppressed.

2. What criteria have been established that, when met, will allow the retraction of the "Essential Travel Only" dictat with a return to the proven Test on Arrival, Self Isolation, Test after 13 Days (or 21 days isolation) regime?

The CCA has published the Bailiwick Blueprint which sets out broadly how and when it expects to be able to remove restrictions on travel. This can be found here: [Bailiwick Blueprint | States of Guernsey - COVID-19 \(gov.gg\)](#)

3. What is the established criteria that will allow a reduction in the existing "14/21 day Isolation" to (possibly) the previous "Seven Day Isolation followed by a negative test?"

This relates to the categorisation of countries and regions, which are grouped into categories 1 – 4. The CCA hopes to be able to revert to this regime at the end of April, as set out in the Bailiwick Blueprint. When the categorisation of countries and regions is reintroduced, the length of time people will need to self-isolate and the associated testing regime linked to each of these categories is currently being reviewed by Public Health in light of the different characteristics of the Kent and other new variants. Arrivals from Category 1, 2 or 3 countries and regions would all have more relaxed requirements for arrivals.

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Certainly the impact and management of COVID-19 long-term is being considered. The vaccination programme is very likely to be key to this, however it is early in the roll-out of the vaccine internationally and there remain questions over what impact it has on the virus being transmitted. Other vaccines are also being developed and approved which may factor into this. Therefore it is too soon to say with certainty what is likely to happen long-term, locally or globally.

2. If travel into The Bailiwick (ever) becomes unrestricted cases of Covid-19 will inevitably be imported. What level of population immunisation needs to be achieved before this is seen as an acceptable risk.

The CCA will be carefully considering this and work is continually taking place in the background reviewing the latest scientific evidence and research. The Bailiwick Blueprint points to July as the time when the CCA expects to be able see travel become largely unrestricted, and this is based on all of the most vulnerable in our population having had both the first and second dose of the vaccine, and most of the remaining eligible adult population having their first dose.

The CCA is however mindful that there are significant uncertainties. The effectiveness of the current vaccinations against new variants such as those from South Africa and Brazil has yet to be proven. There is also additional concern that the slower countries are to vaccinate their populations, the more potential there is for the virus to mutate which creates an on-going and challenging global situation. The CCA however recognises that COVID-19 will become endemic.

