

# STATES OF JERSEY



## ENHANCED COVID-19 EXIT STRATEGY COMMUNICATION (P.88/2020): AMENDMENT

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Lodged au Greffe on 10th July 2020  
by the Minister for Health and Social Services

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STATES GREFFE

ENHANCED COVID-19 EXIT STRATEGY COMMUNICATION  
(P.88/2020): AMENDMENT

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**1 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (c) –**

After the words “that the only” delete the words “Ministers or”.

After the words “responsibility for scientific,” insert the word “technical,”.

After the words “or medical matters” insert the words “, or people invited by the Chair to assist with a specific matter”.

**2 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (e) –**

After the words “weekly press conference” insert the words “, briefing or engagement”.

After the words “should be held” insert the word “, including”.

MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**Note:** After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –**

- (a) that a dedicated page on gov.je should be established and maintained for the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell for the publication of the Cell’s membership, its minutes, the evidence considered by the Cell at its meetings and the data and recommendations produced by the Cell for the Government of Jersey;
- (b) that the minutes of the meetings of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell, its membership and appointment processes, the evidence considered by the Cell and the data and recommendations which it produces, should regularly be provided to the relevant Scrutiny Panels;
- (c) that the only Government officials authorised to attend meetings of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell should be those with responsibility for scientific, technical, health or medical matters, or people invited by the Chair to assist with a specific matter;
- (d) that the results of the ‘Test, Track and Trace’ undertaken by the Government of Jersey should be published and updated on a weekly basis on a dedicated page on gov.je, alongside any recommended isolation periods that apply in the event of a positive test for Covid-19 and any threshold applied by the

Government for introducing a self-isolation measure for all new arrivals on the basis of turnaround times for test results;

- (e) that a weekly press conference, **briefing or engagement** should be held, **including** by the Chief Minister, and other Ministers, Government officials and technical experts (as required) to update Islanders on the implementation of the Covid-19 Strategy and the Safer Travel Policy; and
- (f) to request the Chief Minister to take the necessary steps to ensure these measures are in place by 1st August 2020.

## REPORT

The Government welcomes this proposition to further enhance communications on aspects of the Covid-19 Strategy.

The Government already publishes substantial volumes of information on monitoring of the virus, and provides regular updates on the strategy and operational response, through Scrutiny briefings, States Member briefings, media engagements and press conferences, on our website and via social media. Nevertheless, the Council of Ministers recognises there is appetite for more information, especially when policy is updated.

### **Parts (a) and (b) – accept**

Ministers are content to accept parts (a) and (b) of the proposition, which relate to the creation of a dedicated web page and publication thereon of information, and papers, related to the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell (“STAC”).

It is perhaps helpful to highlight that the terms of reference and membership of STAC were published at section 10.2 of the Covid-19 Strategy on 3rd June 2020 ([R.55/2020](#)). The STAC terms of reference provide for the publication of minutes, supporting papers and advice notes (section 5.7 of the terms of reference).

The Chief Minister is content to take the necessary steps to ensure these measures are in place by 1st August 2020.

### **Part (c) – Amend**

The Council of Ministers strongly agrees with the intent and sentiment of part (c) of the proposition, and welcomes the clear acknowledgement in the Report that there is no evidence locally of undue political influence on the independent deliberations of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell (STAC).

In fact, while members of STAC meet with and advise Ministers, and draw on discussions at STAC meetings when they do so, Ministers do not attend STAC meetings. This ensures STAC discussions are independent of politics, and can be seen to be so. The words ‘Ministers or’ are therefore proposed to be removed from part (c).

The Report highlights the case of the UK Prime Minister’s ‘Chief Advisor’ attending Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (“SAGE”) meetings, and indicates that the same route for political influence of scientific discussions should not be allowed in Jersey. It is important to clarify that we do not have politically-appointed Special Advisers (aka ‘SpAds’) in the Government of Jersey, and therefore the same situation cannot arise. Civil servants across government may be invited to meetings of STAC on the discretion of the Chair. To date, the Chair has on occasion brought in key individuals to access specific operational insights to inform STAC deliberations.

Second, STAC is the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell, allowing the appropriate specialisms to be present in the room according to the nature of the challenge presented. The word ‘technical’ is therefore proposed to be added to part (c). Words are also added to ensure the Chair retains the flexibility to invite persons to attend upon STAC to assist a specific with a specific matter. This might, for example, include a representative of a pharmaceutical company if technical discussions were to take place in the future around the patient delivery mechanisms of a vaccine.

**Part (e) – Amend**

The Council of Ministers fully recognises the need for ongoing and open engagement with media and the public, and that this engagement should involve the Chief Minister and other Ministers, Government officials and technical experts as appropriate and helpful to the matter(s) in hand.

The proposed amendment to ‘a weekly press conference, briefing or engagement’ aims to enable multiple forms and channels of engagement to be used, rather than limiting to a single format of a press conference. The amendment takes account of the preferences of editors and journalists and the falling viewing figures towards the end of the recent series of press conferences.

**Parts (d) and (f) – Accept**

No additional comment required.

**Financial and manpower implications**

There are no additional resource implications for the States that would arise as a consequence of adopting this amendment.