

STATES OF JERSEY



INCOMING PASSENGERS FROM GREEN CATEGORY JURISDICTIONS: REQUIREMENT TO SELF-ISOLATE

Lodged au Greffe on 2nd October 2020
by Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

to request the Minister for Health and Social Services to take the necessary steps to introduce, with immediate effect, a requirement for all incoming passengers from 'Green' jurisdictions or regions to self-isolate until receipt of a negative result from their first test for COVID-19.

DEPUTY I. GARDINER OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

Background

The [media recently reported of a case](#) whereby 6 people tested positive for COVID-19 having visited the same venue in Jersey between 16th and 17th September 2020. Two arrived from London on different flights and went into isolation following a positive test at the airport. Another person was visiting family in Jersey and was identified as positive when back in the U.K. This person developed symptoms several days later and tested positive. A fourth person was a family member of this person – a household contact – with 2 more members of the same household having since tested as positive. There will be many more people who were at this same venue who are being tested as positive, who may have unknowingly spread the virus around shops, schools, and elsewhere. This scenario could have been prevented by introducing a compulsory isolation period for all arriving passengers from green category jurisdictions whilst they await their test results.

Increases in Asymptomatic Cases in the U.K.

A [new report from Imperial College](#) involving a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test of a random sample of the U.K. population estimates that 1 in 200 people in the U.K. have COVID-19, compared to the 1 in 1,000 estimate previously reported. This is the highest infection rate recorded **to date**. Many of these cases are asymptomatic.

It is therefore highly likely that we will see an increased rate of U.K. passengers testing positive at our own borders. Travellers to Jersey will have judged the risk of bringing COVID-19 to Jersey acceptable by the very act of choosing to travel by public transport and are likely to have interactions with a wider number of people and venues as part of their travel itinerary.

Compulsory Isolation for All Arrivals

Basing our decision to introduce mandatory self-isolation for new arrivals on our ability to return test results with a 12-hour timeframe rather than on the likelihood of COVID-19 arriving into Jersey from the rest of the world is not the right approach. As reports show, cases are rising incrementally in the U.K. and elsewhere. The Minister for Health and Social Services has previously said that quarantining new arrivals would be introduced “if the situation changed”. My concern is that waiting until we have a number of new cases emerging from in-bound travellers to introduce isolation is not a proactive approach and risks seeing accelerating a second wave of COVID-19 infections.

Protecting Our Community

As a result of the incident involving local community seeding of COVID-19 from free-roaming U.K. arrivals, scores of other people are now in self-isolation as they await testing, unable to work or study, and anxious that they will have unknowingly transmitted the virus further afield. The net effect of incidents such as this being repeated will have a knock-on effect on our economy, and risks increasing the likelihood of another lockdown.

We must put the wellbeing of our own population ahead of tourists. Incoming arrivals to Jersey should be expected to plan for an isolation period as part of their travel arrangements. During the summer, all new arrivals to Madeira were expected to quarantine for a short period until their test results were ready. These rules did not significantly affect inbound travel to Madeira nor result in a reduction in bookings of hotels and flights. There is no reason why we cannot introduce a similar system here. Ultimately, the wellbeing of our own community, and our ability to continue to work, study and see family on Island is what needs to be protected.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial and manpower implications arising from this proposition.