

INCIDENT EXECUTIVE GROUP (IEG) – 19 NOVEMBER 2020

TOP LINES FOR RADIO BRIEFING

Home Quarantine

- **The IEG has had numerous recent political discussions on Home Quarantine and based on medical evidence and advice has decided to introduce mandatory 14-day Home Quarantine for all new arrivals, who have pre-approved accommodation. This will take effect from the January charter flight, subject to a satisfactory risk assessment and education campaign**
- The decision not to introduce Home Quarantine from the November charter flight was made by the councillors on IEG after discussion with members of LegCo. The advice from officials involved in IEG was that home quarantine should be available from the November flight
- Further public information will be initiated to help the public understand how this change in January to the quarantine arrangements will be implemented and the quarantine management measures that will be in place
- Passengers arriving on the November charter flight will undertake the existing centralised, mandatory 14-day quarantine at Bradley's Camp unless directed to Home Quarantine by a Proper Officer. Reasons why the Proper Officer can direct Home Quarantine include:
 - Arrivals from Ascension Island which is considered low-risk
 - Arrivals with medical conditions whereby Bradley's Camp would not be appropriate accommodation. All passengers returning from medical referral will be quarantining at home for November's flight
 - Arriving families with children aged 10 years or younger, as following a risk assessment by Children & Adults Social Care, Bradley's Camp was found not to be appropriate accommodation.
- Councillors are aware that many Saints were planning to travel on the November charter flight but unfortunately due to the number of people that can be accommodated at Bradley's Camp they will not be permitted to travel. Passengers who can travel will continue to be prioritised
- Quarantine remains our primary method in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and is still our first line of defence in protecting the Island
- Other preventative measures include testing everyone on arrival and after the 14 days of quarantine
- Management and assurance processes are in place for those arrivals who have been directed by a Proper Officer to quarantine at home. They are:
 - Accommodation assessments in advance against established criteria
 - Daily phone calls and other assurance measures to ensure compliance
 - Signage not to enter to indicate the accommodation is being used for home quarantine and notification to residents in dwellings in the vicinity

- The legal framework to address breaches of any quarantine as a severe deterrent.

Background

- Home Quarantine is widely adopted throughout the world in response to COVID-19 e.g. Tristan, Ascension, Guernsey and Isle of Man - who are COVID-19 free practice quarantine from home or rented accommodation. Best practice in relation to home quarantine is already established and using WHO guidelines have already been used on St Helena [https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/considerations-for-quarantine-of-individuals-in-the-context-of-containment-for-coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)](https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/considerations-for-quarantine-of-individuals-in-the-context-of-containment-for-coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)). It has been found over the preceding months with the specific cases that have been granted approval that no one has breached the Home Quarantine rules.

Visit of French Journalists – November 2020

IEG considered a request from the French Ambassador and agreed that a small group of French journalists could quarantine at Longwood House together with the French Consul subject to the following conditions:

- **The group will undergo COVID-19 testing before departure, with the result communicated to the Senior Medical Officer in advance of travel**
- **Longwood House has been assessed as a suitable quarantine location**
- **A COVID-19 test to be conducted on arrival at St Helena and after 14 days.**

Background:

- A request was received from the French Ambassador to South Africa to allow a group of French journalists to visit St Helena at the end of November for media activities in advance of the Napoleonic Bicentenary in May 2021
- The journalists will compile footage to be used for coverage of the Bicentenary - an opportunity for St Helena to receive international coverage
- The exemption request was specifically to allow quarantining at Longwood House to facilitate the work of the journalists. Working with the French Consul, the journalists will use the time to undertake filming and reporting activities within the confines of Longwood House
- Longwood House has been assessed by the Senior Medical Officer as suitable for quarantine
- It was stressed that quarantine was a key part of the defensive measures against COVID-19 and that there was no plan to move away from it
- It was proposed and agreed that COVID-19 testing would be done before departure, with the results communicated to the Senior Medical Officer. A positive test result for any individual before departure would prevent travel

to St Helena. An enhanced testing regime would be implemented which will include testing on arrival to the Island and during the quarantine period

- This would be a 'bubble arrangement', but the group would remain in Longwood House for the duration of the quarantine period
- Longwood House will be closed to the public for the period of the quarantine and the week following
- An enhanced testing regime would be followed, and normal quarantine rules would apply

Members supported the request and recognised that these types of requests might come up more often and should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In all cases where exemptions are requested, the Senior Medical Officer works closely with the relevant individuals to ensure that appropriate health protocols are in place and observed.

Voluntary Testing on Arrival

The Senior Medical Officer provided an update on the voluntary testing on arrival trial that took place following the October charter flight:

- Passengers were not informed of the voluntary testing on arrival in advance. This was done to see how processes worked on the day and to understand resource implications
- Testing was not carried out on under-10 year olds
- 15 voluntary tests were carried out and all were negative
- The handling and testing process worked well and the Health Directorate is instructing the AG's Chambers to draft Regulations to be considered by the Public Health Committee and ExCo to make testing on arrival mandatory from November's flight. This will exclude transit passengers to Ascension because they will be tested on Ascension, children younger than 10 and passengers arriving from Ascension because they are low risk. At the end of 14-days quarantine all will be tested, including children.

Public Education

The COVID-19 community awareness programme introduced by the Health Directorate was highlighted. It was noted that the Chief Medical Officer had been on the radio and had published two articles in local newspapers. A third one will be published this week and a presentation will shortly be aired on the promo TV channel. The flow of information will continue to ensure that people have up-to-date and factual information regarding the Pandemic.

IEG

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