

Friday, 20 March 2020

## All Islanders to social distance

To help reduce the spread of coronavirus, the Government of Jersey is now advising Islanders of all ages to immediately follow the principles of social distancing.

Social distancing means limiting contact with people outside of your household unless absolutely essential.

This move will delay and flatten the curve of infection more than any other measure and is now crucial in order to preserve the good running of our health services.

Islanders are advised to work from home, if possible, and avoid leisure and social activities that cannot obviously accommodate social distancing.

Chief Minister, Senator John Le Fondré said: "We have entered a new phase in our strategy to contain coronavirus in Jersey.

"We have been preparing for this phase for some time. The Medical Officer of Health indicates that we are now entering this new phase and must therefore further increase our response.

"We need Islanders to closely adhere to our advice. If Islanders socially distance in a serious and proper manner, we can save lives, and potentially prevent, or at least delay, the need for over 65s to self-isolate.

"We ask all Islanders to do their bit and help us save lives. It may feel odd initially, but in our current circumstances, keeping your distance is the best way to show you care."

### Definition of social distancing

Social distancing means limiting contact with people outside your household. Reducing social contact significantly reduces spread of Covid-19.

To prevent the need to advise further restrictive measures, everyone in Jersey should observe the following principles strictly:

- Keep a distance of 1 metre (3 feet) between you and other people when outside your own home. This means not standing too close to people or congregating inside.
- Avoid public gatherings where maintaining this distance is not obviously possible.
- Reduce to essential travel if this involves contact with others, and avoid using public transport during peak hours unless you must. When using public transport do not wait for the bus standing too close others, and do not sit next to anyone. You can, for example, go for a drive in your own car by yourself or with other members of your household as long as you do not have contact with others.
- Work and study from home if you can. You can take breaks outside, but do not meet with other people unless you can maintain a distance from them.
- You are advised to avoid going to restaurants and bars, nightclubs and other leisure facilities, unless you are confident that the venue has measures in place to maintain social distancing
- Do not come into close contact with older people. You need to protect them from the virus you may be carrying.

#### Social distancing and self-isolation

Social distancing and self-isolation are not the same, because distancing does not mean isolation.

#### *Distancing*

While you are practicing distancing, you can still go out, get fresh air, do your gardening, walk your dog along a quiet lane or go the beach and undertake similar activities.

Activities can be adapted to accommodate social distancing, for example:

- Outside space - parks, beaches, public squares and streets - can all be enjoyed.
- Gathering outside with space between people can continue. Children can play together, but should maintain social distance.
- Sports like tennis, sea swimming, athletics, and jogging can all continue.
- Going to restaurants and cafes that have taken the right steps to accommodate social distancing, or offer take-out.

#### *Self-isolation*

Self-isolation is quite different. Distancing is not the same as isolation. Isolation requires you to avoid contact with others and to remain in a physically isolated space so you cannot transmit or acquire infection to or from others.

We recognise that social distancing represents a significant change for all of us. Further updates will be provided in the coming days.

**- ends -**

## **Notes to Editors**

1. For further information, please contact the press office on 01534 440430 or [pressoffice@gov.je](mailto:pressoffice@gov.je)
2. Included are three factsheets:
  - Policy on social distancing
  - Frequently asked questions for individuals
  - Frequently asked questions for businesses