

Media statement

Date: 3 February 2021

Further to HSC President, Deputy Al Brouard's remarks about hospital attendance in today's media briefing, please refer to a statement below by the HSC Medical Director, Dr Peter Rabey

We want to assure islanders that we currently have sufficient capacity in the hospital for treating COVID patients for those rare cases where hospital admission and treatment is deemed essential. But of course thankfully the vast majority of people suffering from COVID can safely recover at home, without such acute level of medical intervention.

It is worth noting in respect of this that we are seeing some people with COVID attending our Emergency Department that will not need to be admitted to hospital. Some of these individuals have come to the Emergency Department themselves and some have been referred by GPs.

If a person presents at the Emergency Department with COVID, they will be fully assessed, but would only be admitted to hospital if they need an acute level of care.

It is far better for the majority of individuals who are COVID-positive to recuperate at home rather than in hospital. Primary Care remain available to support islanders, with telephone consultations in the first instance, but also with arrangements for face-to-face consultations if required.

We won't ask someone with COVID to recover at home if we are not completely confident that it is the best place for them to be at that time. This is nothing to do with hospital capacity, it is about what is best for the individual.

In terms of a COVID patient getting to and from hospital, if you are already isolating with a member of the same household, it is perfectly ok for them to drive you to or from the

Emergency Department for urgent medical care. Sensible precautions should be adopted for such journeys including the use of masks and the opening of car windows when travelling for example, and they should not enter the hospital unless essential. You don't need to travel by ambulance unless it is a medical emergency. This is particularly applicable to those going home from hospital. We need to be mindful of not putting unnecessary strain on our ambulance services.

We are confident that sufficient ambulance capacity exists for where it is needed, whether that be for medical or mobility requirements, or a lack of alternative options. But if you are able, we are asking you to travel by car with a member of your household.

So our clear message is we currently have sufficient capacity for treating people with COVID who need acute, hospital level care, and we are here if you need us, but we will only admit those cases that need such levels of care. Home is the best place for you if you are able to recover at home and Primary Care GPs can support most people if they need more routine medical intervention.

Visitors to the hospital are necessarily very restricted currently, and are only allowed for very specific reasons. If you are thinking of attending the hospital for any other non-clinical reason and have even the mildest COVID symptoms, including a new cough, a sore throat, you must not attend at this time.

If you are due to attend as a patient and have any relevant Covid symptoms, please phone to discuss your situation before your visit.

Ends

Notes to Media

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