

Mr. M. Capern, Principal Youth Officer, Jersey Youth Service reminded the Cell of how different the summer of 2020 was for the young people and adults in Jersey as there was a lack of the usual activities and summer work available to them and because there was no night time economy many more young adults were socialising and spending time in outside public locations. He explained that a proposal to the Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES) had been prepared by the Jersey Youth Service in order to address the changed situation and assess outcomes, he advised that this presentation could be forwarded to the Cell for its review, if desired.

The Principal Youth Officer advised that detached youth work was underway but would be increased to 7 days a week. The Youth Service intended to have a proactive rather than reactive way of working and Youth Workers (approximately 25 staff and volunteers) were providing young people with updated advice in relation to Covid-19 and encouraging social distancing where possible. Youth Workers had engaged with young people and focussed on various popular gathering locations and certain geographical areas where the relationship between young people in the local community and staff already existed. Mr. Capern advised that by listening to the concerns of young people and gathering information to feed through, Youth Workers and the Youth Service provided them with a voice. Due to the much altered circumstances, the Jersey Youth Service had planned new initiatives to engage with the most vulnerable young people (approximately 115 individuals), for example undertaking 'walk and talk' sessions and, also, scheduling activities such as paddle board tours.

The Cell noted from the verbal update that there were concerns about some young people having little activity to do and that the Jersey Youth Service had a significant challenge. It acknowledged the endeavours that were being taken to address the need for safeguarding. The Cell asked if it could offer specific advice that would reduce the risk for the public across the board, noting that its advice for Level 2 would include approval for the re-opening of youth and community projects which would allow the congregation of 20 people in structured events and 40 people at unstructured events. The Principal Youth Officer confirmed that this information was useful as a starting point but advised that, in practice it would be useful for work with young people with additional needs and, potentially, some of the uniformed youth groups (such as the Scouts, Guides, etc.) but that it was less practical for youth clubs and other activities to retain the structured environment. He advised the Cell that the Youth Service had a good working relationship with colleagues in CYPES, schools, and the police, which allowed them to target work with certain individuals where required. He opined that the Youth Service's plan was a good one and, most importantly, was adaptable to the situation.

The Principal Youth Officer asked the Cell to confirm whether Youth Service staff could get tested for Covid-19 following close contact with young people, particularly after administering first aid. Dr. I Muscat, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, confirmed that if people had concerns about acquiring an infection they would be assessed and tested where this was required.

The Cell thanked the Head of Crime Services and the Principal Youth Officer for the update and requested that a copy of the formal proposal presentation mentioned by the Principal Youth Officer was circulated to its members to review and provide comments. It was suggested that when the guidance for Level 2 was released, the details for the discussed group could be modified.

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Schools.

A4. The Cell welcomed Mr. M. Rogers, Director General, Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills, Mr. K. Posner, Director, Education, Mr. S. O'Regan, Group Director of Education, and L. Jones, Environmental Policy Officer to the meeting and received a presentation on the proposed further re-opening of schools as part of the safe exit strategy and the practical challenges that this posed. Dr. A Muller, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance provided an update to the Cell on the public health intelligence available in respect of school reopening.

Mr. K. Posner, Director, Education explained that from 8th June 2020, Year 6, Year 10 and Year 12 students had returned to school and explained that the Safe Exit Strategy projected the further reopening of schools from 22nd June 2020. However, he advised that there were a number of matters that needed to be considered in order to decide how schools could open to more pupils on that date.

The Director advised the Cell that secondary schools (Years 10 and 12) were currently adhering to the 2 metre rule and that primary schools (Year 6) had "bubbles" for social interaction and 2 metre distancing. The Department was aware of the advice from the Cell that this physical distance could be lowered to 1 metre, however, Mr. Posner advised, that even with a 1 metre distance between pupils, there would not be capacity to have every pupil back in a class of 25 – 30 children.

The Cell was advised that the key issues to be addressed, in order for schools to open to more pupils, included:

- The number of pupils (due to the space available);
- The number of teachers available (some teachers were shielding, or had dependants who were, which reduced availability. Also, as some classes had been (or would be) split, it increased the number of teachers required);
- Children of critical workers and vulnerable children still needed to be accommodated (the pressure for this service would be ease as normal classes returned);
- Room size (as an example, classes of 30 Year 6 students had been split over 3 or 4 classrooms. It was noted that even with a reduction to 1 metre social distancing, more than 1 room per class would be required);
- Workplace guidelines (as 2 metre distancing was still required for adults the ancillary areas of schools, such as toilets and classrooms would be put under pressure. Safety was important for staff and children and the Director requested specific advice from the Cell on this matter); and
- Day to day management of schools (practicalities, such as movement around the building, pick up and drop off times, *et cetera*, required consideration).

The Director, Education, advised that numerous challenges were being addressed but that, whilst restrictions and guidelines remained in place, a return to the education system for all pupils would not be possible. He suggested that as businesses were returning to work, there was an expectation for schools to do the same. He referred to previous advice from the Cell which provided supportive evidence for the return of children to schools and the Director advised that this aspiration was shared by many parents and children. However, he acknowledged that there was also certain parents, children and groups, such as teaching unions, who had raised concerns and anxieties about the re-opening of schools.

The Cell was advised that 2 options were under consideration in order to return more students to education by 22nd June 2020. The first, was to welcome particular year groups back to school. The second, was to provide education to all pupils at some point before the end of term, for example, welcoming back different groups on different days. It was advised that the first option would mean that certain year groups (such as Primary Years 1, 2 and 3) would not get any education until the end of the year. The second option would require a significant amount of planning from the schools and it was noted that each faced a different scenario in terms of available teachers and the existing physical space. The Director explained that there was not an option that would satisfy all stakeholders until schools could return to normal service and open fully.

To provide the Cell with further information and context, Dr. A. Muller, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance provided an update on public health intelligence in relation to the proposed reopening of schools.

The Cell noted that there had been 7 cases of Covid-19 in children recorded in Jersey
xx, but that overall there was proportionally less cases in the younger age groups, with 75% of all cases occurring in individuals aged 40 and above.

For further context, it was estimated that there was approximately 12,500 0-10 year olds and 5,900 11-15 year olds in the Island, and there was therefore a large number of children missing out on education. The Cell noted that there would be a disproportionate effect on those who lived in households with low incomes (estimated as 29% in the 2014/15 IDS report), or in overcrowded accommodation (9% as per 2011 Census).

Review of the International context and studies into Covid-19 had also identified low numbers of Covid-19 cases in under 14s, with a slightly higher prevalence in age group above this (which covered 15 - 44 year olds). Dr. Muller provided the Cell with a case study of the Netherlands data, which detailed that the age and gender distribution of all Covid-19 cases, hospitalised cases, and deaths attributed to Covid-19, which were all very low (and no deaths recorded) for the age groups under-14.

Data to review how effective school closures had been in affecting the curve had been analysed in studies by Imperial College (COVID-19 Response Team 30 March 2020) and Banholzer *et al.* (28 April 2020, Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions on documented cases of COVID-19). Dr. Muller explained that, in both studies, the closure of schools had been considered to have a relatively low impact on the number of documented cases, but that consideration of the impact of other measures on the curve therefore meant that the data should be read with caution.

The Director of Strategic Planning and Performance provided the Cell with information about the approaches that other countries had taken in respect of the reopening of schools, to consider whether it had impacted the number of new infections. The Cell noted that there was no theme to the approaches taken by a number of other countries:

- Denmark, which had recorded a total of 11,875 confirmed cases, had a lockdown for a period of one month and had allowed children aged 2 – 12 back to day care and schools on 15th April 2020. Data published on 28th May 2020 indicated that this had not worsened the outbreak;

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- Austria had recorded 16,803 cases over time. Exam classes had been open since 4th May 2020, primary schools since 18th May 2020, and all other schools from 3rd June 2020. This had not, to date, increased cases;
- Switzerland had recorded 30,853 confirmed cases since March and borders to Germany and Austria had been open since mid-May. Different cities had taken different approaches, as an example, Basel had opened primary schools since 11th May 2020 and secondary schools from 8th June 2020. Schools had operated a normal schedule, including sports and swimming lessons, with no physical distancing between pupils but 2 metre distance between adults and children and adults and adults;
- The Netherlands had recorded 47,152 confirmed cases. Primary schools had reopened from 11th May for 50 per cent of children in each class. From 8th June 2020 primary schools would accommodate all children in normal teaching hours. Teachers and staff who fell into one of the 'at risk' groups identified by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment were advised to stay at home, as were children and parents if they had cold-like symptoms; and
- France had recorded 49,495 confirmed cases. The country had split into 'red' and 'green' zones but it was noted that, overall, there was a very restrictive approach in comparison to other European countries. Primary schools had opened from 11th May 2020 (initially 15 pupils per class and continuation of distance learning) and secondary schools from 2nd June 2020. There was 1 metre physical distancing for all.

From the various case studies indicated and other findings cited in the presentation, the Cell noted that data indicated that there were low Covid-19 infection rates in children and that, where infections did occur in children or adolescents they exhibited no, or mild, symptoms. For most Covid-19 infections in children, an adult was the source of the infection and children did not have higher concentrations of Covid-19 virus levels in their respiratory tracts than adults.

The Cell noted a specific case study from France in which a 9 year old had been at 3 different schools and a skiing school within one week, however, following tracing of their 172 contacts, all had been negative. A further case study was referred to in New South Wales, Australia where a number of positive teacher and pupils had been identified but there was little evidence that infection had passed to any of their close contacts.

Dr S. Chapman, Associate Medical Director for Unscheduled Secondary Care, referenced the different international approaches taken to the return to schools and queried if it was possible to find any evidence of the most successful method, or approach.

N. Vaughan, Chief Economic Advisor, queried whether parents would be in breach of the law if they did not send their children to school once these opened. The Cell was of the understanding that parents would not be obliged to send pupils to school and acknowledged that there were diametrically opposed views on this matter. The Director General of CYPES confirmed that children would not be marked as 'truant' if they did not come to school. The Cell was mindful of the Government's pledge to 'put children first' and considered that there could be wider negative long term impact of school closures on children and parents, which would outweigh the limited impact of infection spread reduction.

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The Cell considered the requirement to scale up and down virus containment measures in the future, for example, if it was recognised that the number of cases of Covid-19 had begun to increase, it was queried how this information would be analysed in order to take a decision on school opening or closure. It was stated that the messaging around these decisions would need to be robust. It was confirmed that the RAG spreadsheet, the 'active cases' spreadsheet, and the Dashboard (Minute No. A2 of 4th June 2020 refers) would all act as part of the system to identify significant context changes that could require attention.

The Cell acknowledged that further discussions, with a wider remit, would be needed with colleagues and stakeholders on this matter. Members were advised of various meetings that would take place during the course of the week. The Cell clarified that its advice should not be shared with other stakeholders (such as headteachers) until an advice note had been completed and its minutes were formally agreed.

Shielding.

A5. The Cell recalled that during the lockdown period those with underlying medical conditions, which put them at severe risk of Covid-19, were strongly advised not to leave their homes. The Cell received an update report from Ms. B. Sherrington, Associate Chief Nurse, in respect of the key issues and draft communication requirements for the shielding of 'severely vulnerable' and 'vulnerable' individuals. The Cell noted the content of the update report.

As background, the Associate Chief Nurse advised that the newly published Government of Jersey strategy advice specified that 'severely vulnerable' people should remain cautious but were encouraged to assess their own risk, on account of the low levels of Covid-19 cases in the Island. In practice this meant that these individuals could spend more time outdoors, within physical distancing guidelines, if they wanted to. People who were in the 'vulnerable' category could return to the workplace if it was agreed with their employer that this could be done safely. It was noted that there was increasing evidence that people at risk and in the 'severely vulnerable' category would alter as the understanding of Covid-19 increased, however, Public Health England (PHE) had not yet changed its advice. It was further noted that the existing shielding advice for extremely vulnerable Islanders, which had been issued by letter from GP practices, expired in mid-June 2020.

The Cell considered whether the Government's advice should remain in line with the PHE categories of 'vulnerable' and 'severely vulnerable', or if it would be more appropriate to review broader International evidence and act independently. The Cell acknowledged that the PHE advice was quite prescriptive, but that it provided a suitable and evidenced benchmark for information that could be easily referenced and checked by interested parties, or members of the public. Whilst recognising that provision of advice other than that provided by PHE would allow a wider evidence base and more tailored responses, it was recognised that it would be harder for General Practitioners to follow and therefore potentially create additional pressures to keep the advice up to date. The Cell was conscious that it would potentially be asked to justify why the PHE was thought to be wrong on any advice that differed from that guidance.

The Cell was mindful that, in some cases, patients were worried about employers taking a view on shielding, and there were a number of anecdotal examples reported to the Cell about the disparity in approach and the problems it created for individuals. The Cell advised that it was important to reduce confusion and create a clear, solid and practical message for the public. The Cell resolved that remaining consistent with PHE advice would be preferable.

The Cell considered the Island to be in a strong position, but that factors such as the

opening of borders would change the context and therefore it noted the requirement to remain wary of the triggers that could require a reversal of the decisions on shielding. Mr. R. Sainsbury, Managing Director, Jersey General Hospital, opined that it would be difficult to deviate from PHE and suggested adopting the PHE guidance but to consider certain adaptations for the Jersey context.

N. Vaughan, Chief Economic Advisor queried the likelihood that PHE would revise its guidance in the future. He also noted that individuals with learning difficulties were currently included in the vulnerable group and asked for clarification of whether this was from a health or behavioural (risk management) perspective. Dr. I. Muscat, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, confirmed that PHE had updated guidance as recently as 31st May 2020 and that it was possible that they would continue to update advice to reflect the changing situation and latest evidence. In respect of individuals with learning difficulties, he advised that it was largely dependent on the individual situation. Some individuals would be affected because of health concerns, for example, with certain conditions a person's immune system could be immunosuppressant but he confirmed that it could also be because of behavioural factors.

The Cell considered the proposed lines of communication on the subject of shielding, which would focus on the fact that viral circulation in the Island was low and encourage a spectrum-based risk approach, which would provide individuals with control over their activities and management of their own risk. The Cell agreed with the outlined communication strategy approach.

The Cell discussed the use of the terms 'vulnerable' and 'severely vulnerable', as it was suggested that these could be stigmatising. The Cell agreed that it would be suitable to alter the term 'severely vulnerable' to 'high risk' in order to remove any associated judgements from this category of individuals.

Move to Level
2 of the Safe
Exit
Framework:
review of
policy.

A6. The Cell, with reference to its Minute No. A4 of 4th June 2020, recalled that it had reviewed and commented on the draft public health policy relating to the Covid-19 Safe Exit Framework: Level 2. Dr. M. Mathias, Group Director for Policy, provided the Cell with an update on the latest version of the policy statement, which had incorporated the Cell's advice. Dr. Mathias invited questions from the Cell in connexion with the policy and the updates to the draft.

The Cell agreed that it was suitable to move from Level 3 to Level 2 of the Safe Exit framework, but discussed a number of the particular messages and "pinch points" identified in the policy:

- The Cell referenced its previous discussions on gatherings (Minute No. B3 of this meeting refers) and opined that the policy provided a mixed message to the public. It was confirmed that this matter would be raised for further debate and clarification;
- There had been industry pressure to allow gyms to open, but the Cell noted that full-use of gyms would not be permitted in Level 2, due to the risk posed by respiratory droplets and the large number of touch points. However, it was recognised that gyms provided health and fitness benefits and would therefore be permitted to open in Level 2 to allow clients to undertake low intensity activities (such as yoga). Use of changing rooms would not be allowed;

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- Swimming pools were considered to be safe for swimming and would therefore be allowed to open, but Dr. I. Muscat, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, explained that the risk in this environment was posed by changing room hygiene and, as in gyms, these would remain closed. The Cell queried the practicalities of “swim and go” without changing facilities, but it was noted that this was a compromise to allow the health benefits of swimming;
- Beauty salons would not be encouraged to undertake close contact, face to face treatments such as facials; and
- Hospitality had pushed back on the proposed closure times for public houses, restaurants, and cafes, which was recommended as 10.30 pm. It was noted that the earlier closure was intended to avoid customers reaching levels of inebriation that would cause them to forget about the requirements for physical distancing, but it had been suggested that longer opening hours would help businesses do more covers over the course of the day (where they may be able to serve fewer tables in the space available) and that it would also assist with the issue of unregulated licencing.

The Cell discussed hospitality opening times and queried if the issue caused by unregulated licencing would be impacted by groups that would be likely to use seated table food service. Members noted that the most important factor was to ensure that people were suitably distanced, and therefore considered whether pubs that were unable to serve food could be permitted to open to address the issue of unregulated licencing (if there were requirements in place for seated drinks service). Members opinion was divided on this matter and the Cell queried if there was any available evidence available on the impact of opening public houses. The Group Director for Policy advised that, due to the timeframe for the initial publication of the Level 2 guidelines this could not be considered for action before Thursday. The Cell agreed that this matter should be revisited for discussion prior to consideration of Level one of the Safe Exit framework.

The Cell was advised that the language used in the policy that would change the requirement for the space of physical distancing from 2 metres to one metre was in discussion and required approval from the Minister for Health and Social Services.

Dr G. Root, Independent Advisor, Epidemiology and Public Health, referred to the preamble of the Level 2 document and suggested that wording, which referred to the possibility of returning to lockdown, should be removed (as its effectiveness was debatable) and he advised that further emphasis should be placed on the requirement to revert back to further distancing.

With reference to schools, the Cell requested that further emphasis was placed on the low risk to children and the explanation of the proposed change from 2 metres distancing to 1 metre distancing. Dr. A. Muller, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance explained that proposed changes to schools did not align exactly with the timeframes for Level 2 and, therefore, the message had to be tailored carefully. Mr. D. Danino-Forsyth, Director of Communications, referred to the evidence provided to the Cell suggesting that there was no benefit from distancing between children and he queried whether the requirement could be removed altogether. The Cell asked for a review of the evidence where this approach had been taken and for further consideration of the suggestion before any recommendation was provided to Ministers.

It was noted that there was no reference in the document to the prison and it was queried if this should be included. The Group Director for Policy explained that the prison wanted to move its development slowly and therefore was not included in the

policy changes for Level 2.

The Cell opined that the travel advice in the policy document for Level 2 of the Safe Exit Framework left room for manoeuvre. It was suggested that further information was required for the Cell to provide any further advice to Ministers. This would be followed up by email.

Border testing scenarios.

A7. The Cell, with reference to its Minute No. A5 of 4th June 2020, recalled that it had reviewed possible border testing scenarios that had been mapped to estimate levels of inward infection from inward travellers (seedings).

Mr. S. Skelton, Director of Strategy & Innovation, advised the Cell that the update on borders could be deferred, but requested that it was considered during the course of the week. He explained that the next step was to draft a strategic position (to be ready within weeks) and that the paper was intended to be used as an early discussion point for the Cell and to obtain its advice.

As part of the travel strategy and advice that would be required on borders, the Cell requested that an update was provided to it on the Island's preparedness for contact tracing, including the use of a contact tracing app.

The Cell agreed to reconvene during the course of the week to discuss the paper on border testing scenarios.

Care home visiting.

A8. The Cell deferred discussion on this agenda item until its next meeting.