TYNWALD CHAMBER AND INFORMATION SERVICE

Coronavirus: Exiting from the emergency

RESEARCH PAPER   ISSUED 20/05/2020

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ISLE OF MAN GOVERNMENT'S EXIT STRATEGY

The Isle of Man Government's Medium-Term Response to COVID-10 (GD 2020/0013) was published on 4th May 2020. The report was debated and approved by Tynwald on 5th May 2020.

The strategy sets out three levels:

- Level 1 – Stay at Home (i.e. lockdown measures)
- Level 2 – Stay Safe (continued restrictions for the individual, some business open with strict social distancing measures, restricted travel)
- Level 3 – The new normal (more normal levels of freedom for the individual, businesses open, border controls)

The principles behind the strategy are the following:
- Protection of life
- Maintain critical national infrastructure
- Maintain public safety, confidence and welfare
- Support a controlled return to normality, balancing social, economic and health impacts.

The decision framework for moving from one level to another is based on a traffic light system. The following indicators will be used to make decisions about whether to relax measures:

- Health indicators
    - Staff availability
    - Community bed capacity
    - ITU capacity
    - Nobles capacity
- Social indicators
    - Number of breaches of regulations
    - Number of people in custody due to breaches
    - Domestic abuse calls
    - Mental health calls
    - Poverty indicators
    - Police staffing
- Economic indicators
    - Number of jobseekers
    - Wage support schemes
    - Earnings replacement allowance
    - Manx Industrial Relations Service concerns
    - Monthly cost to the Treasury

The overarching key indicators, which determine the risk to the public, are:

- Total number of positive cases;
- Three day average of new cases;
- Calls to 111;
- Number and size of cluster outbreaks.

RESPONSES TO THE STRATEGY

According to a survey of 404 residents in the Isle of Man by Island Global Research, 58% were in agreement (45% agreed, 13% strongly agreed) that the Government's exit strategy was the right approach. 27% of respondents were neutral.

59% said the speed for withdrawal of restrictions was 'about right'.

64% of respondents said that they would feel not feel comfortable going to bars and nightclubs or to public, music or sporting events after the restrictions are lifted.

STRATEGIES FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS

UNITED KINGDOM

The lockdown and how it is lifted is a devolved matter in the United Kingdom. An overview and comparison of the strategies in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland can be found in this short Senedd Research blogpost published on 15th May 2020. Information about the Republic of Ireland's strategy is also included.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The 'Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business' sets out five phases, each with planned dates for when they will come into effect. The country is currently in Phase 1 of the roadmap.

The Taoiseach has explained that there are five criteria for decision-making on restrictions:

- The progress of the disease;
- Healthcare capacity and resilience;
- Testing and contact tracing capacity;
- Ability to shield at risk groups;
- Risk of secondary morbidity.

JERSEY

The government of Jersey announced its exit strategy on 1st May 2020.

The Safe Exit Framework sets out four levels:

- Level Four – Lockdown
- Level Three – Stay at Home order lifted; some businesses able to operate
- Level Two – More businesses reopen; off Island travel allowed again
- Level One – Gatherings in private homes; most venues permitted to open

The public health policy behind the framework can be read in full here. The guiding principles underpinning the measures and levels in the framework are:

- Businesses and activities should resume as soon as possible, as long as measures are taken to minimise the risk of spreading the virus;
- Changes must be easy to understand and relatively easy to implement, with guidelines issued where appropriate;
- Where possible, the levels should introduce changes that are fair, accepting that some inequality of experience is inevitable;
- Indoor spaces should be opened up in stages, due to the increased risk of transmission;

- Avoid unnecessary risks, i.e. continue working from home where possible;
- Services and premises that require or risk close personal contact should not open at the same time as other changes that will trigger a large increase in social contact;
- Large gatherings should be avoided;
- Physical distancing and good hygiene remain fundamental.

There is no timetable for transitioning between levels. Jersey will consider moving down a level when there is a) evidence that the number of new cases is only rising gradually, is steady or declining, and b) evidence that there is sufficient health system capacity for the next 14-28 days.

Jersey moved to level three on 11th May.

GUERNSEY

The government of Guernsey announced its exit strategy on 5th May 2020.

The Exit Framework sets out seven phases, from full lockdown to phase 6:

- Full lockdown – Restriction on all movements, closing all non-essential businesses, closing schools, stopping non-essential travel
- Phase 1 – Full lockdown with restrictions on all but essential business activities, except retail home delivery
- Phase 2 – Full lockdown with some gardening, building and other trades able to work under strict controls. Limited recreational activity with social distancing measures.
- Phase 3 – Easing of lockdown with a progression towards a more normal level of activity
- Phase 4 – Further progression towards a more normal level of activity
- Phase 5 – Return to a normal level of activity within the Bailiwick
- Phase 6 – Return to the global community

There are several 'release triggers' for progression between phases and 'adaptive triggers' for reversal to an earlier phase. These triggers revolve around the number and type of COVID-19 cases in hospital and the community.

The public health recommendations for easing the lockdown measures are:

- That there is a gradual easing of lockdown using 'test, trace and quarantine' as the backbone of the release strategy.
- That this is linked to an adaptive trigger or triggers that would lead to a return to lockdown.
- That progression through the phases of lockdown should be informed by Public Health analysis on the current risk to the Bailiwick from COVID-19, social and economic wellbeing; we have called these our 'release triggers'.
- That exploration of the further expansion of testing for the virus that causes COVID-19 needs to be scoped to further support the release of the Bailiwick from lockdown.

Guernsey moved to phase 3 on 16th May 2020.

OTHER INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO EXITING LOCKDOWN

The UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) has published a brief analysis of measures taken in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, China, Sweden, and South Korea (as of 18 May 2020).

Noting that local circumstances will affect policy-making in each country, the briefing identifies the following shared principles between the various countries' approaches:

- Self-isolation for people who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms is essential;
- Appropriate respiratory and hand hygiene must continue;
- Social distancing – all countries have a phased approach to lifting restrictions, but there is divergence on measures related to this;
- Testing and contact tracing – with varying capacity for testing and different approaches to contact tracing, sometimes supported by national or regional technological solutions (notably contact tracing apps).

GUIDANCE FROM NGOS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

On 16th April 2020, the WHO published a paper titled 'Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19'. The paper states that: 'Decisions to tighten or loosen or re-institute [public health and social measures] should be based on scientific evidence and real-world experience and take into account other critical factors, such as economic factors, security-related factors, human rights, food security, and public sentiment and adherence to measures.'

The paper makes the following recommendations in particular:

- The decision to introduce, adapt or lift measures should be based on a risk assessment with a standard methodology, based on epidemiological factors, health care capacity, public health capacity, and availability of effective pharmaceutical interventions (such as vaccines).
- Lifting measures should be done in a 'controlled, slow, and step-wise manner', while maintaining basic individual measures.
- Any adjustment of measures should minimise the risk of a resurgence by ensuring:
  - o Transmission has been controlled;
  - o Sufficient public health workforce and health system capacities are in place to allow all cases to be detected and isolated, regardless of severity;
  - o Outbreak risks in high-vulnerability settings have been minimised (reduction of transmission in health care facilities, prevention of transmission in enclosed spaces, physical distancing in crowded public spaces)
  - o Preventative measures have been established in workplaces, along with appropriate directives/guidances;
  - o The risk of importing and exporting cases can be managed;
  - o Communities are fully engaged, informed, and consulted; the 'infodemic' should be managed as well.

An annex, focusing on measures for the workplace, was published on 10th May 2020.

WHO EUROPEAN REGION

An adapted version of the above paper for the European Region was published on 24th April 2020. A summary of the recommendations can be found here; they are substantially the same as the recommendations outlined above. The European paper also identifies four 'cross-cutting mechanisms' that are described as 'essential enablers throughout the transition process':

- Governance of health systems
- Data analytics to inform decisions
- Digital technologies to support public health measures
- Responsive communication with populations

INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNMENT

On 30th April 2020, the Institute published a paper with recommendations for how the UK Government should approach a coronavirus exit strategy.

The report recommends that, whatever objectives and plans for easing restrictions the UK Government has, the following areas need to be worked on to ensure that the strategy works:

- Effective implementation, by ensuring capacity is in place
    - Surveillance regimes that can spot any resurgence in the virus quickly
    - Confidence that data is reliable and comprehensive
    - System that works in practice
    - Capacity and supplies available in right place at right time
    - Coordination with other groups (local and devolved governments etc)
- Clear communication and enforcement
    - Making a clear distinction between guidance or preference and law
    - Expand enforcement as complexity increases
- Encouragement and incentives so that people feel confident to resume normal life
    - Public messaging about risk
    - Reducing generosity of support packages
    - Adapting packages for businesses to help transition
- Adjustment of economic policies to facilitate and support recovery
    - Supporting sectors with deficient demand
    - Withdrawing emergency economic packages
- Public consent
    - Compliance with existing laws, including human rights legislation
    - Explaining the reasoning and trade-offs behind decisions
- Evidence-gathering and iteration of approach and policies where necessary
    - Phased changes allow for better decision-making
    - Traffic-light systems may be too simplistic

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The OECD has highlighted the role that testing can play in strategies to lift restrictions in a paper updated on 4th May 2020.

The paper recommends three main ways of using testing to manage the pandemic and lift lockdown measures:

- 'Strong and effective' testing, tracking and tracing (TTT) of individuals, claiming that this would help to bring the epidemic under control without requiring lockdown, as well as providing key data on the spread of the virus (section 3.2).
- Testing for the immunity of certain priority groups of people (i.e. health and other essential workers), allowing them to work without the need for isolation; this could also assist in restarting economic activity if extended to other groups (section 3.3).
- Widespread testing to collect data about 'herd immunity', using the information to adjust social distancing measures (section 3.4).

The paper notes that testing for immunity (serologic testing) has not yet been fully developed for the coronavirus (section 2.2).

KEY CONCEPTS

REPRODUCTION NUMBER (R0)

The average number of people infected by each person who has COVID-19. This describes how an infection is transmitted within a population, and indicates whether the number of infections is increasing or decreasing. If R is below 1, it will slow down or stop the infection from spreading.

VIRAL LOAD

The total amount of virus in a test sample taken from a patient. The number reflects how well a virus is replicating in an infected person.

FURTHER READING

EXIT STRATEGIES AROUND THE WORLD

BBC News (19 May 2020): 'Coronavirus: How lockdown is being lifted across Europe':
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-52575313

Politico (updated 13 May 2020): 'Europe's coronavirus lockdown exit strategies compared':
https://www.politico.eu/article/europes-coronavirus-lockdown-exit-strategies-compared/

IMFBlog (12 May 2020): 'Emerging from the Great Lockdown in Asia and Europe':
https://blogs.imf.org/2020/05/12/emerging-from-the-great-lockdown-in-asia-and-europe/

The Guardian (18 Apr 2020): 'The exit strategy: how countries around the world are preparing for life after Covid-19': https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/19/the-exit-strategy-how-countries-around-the-world-are-preparing-for-life-after-covid-19

RESTARTING ECONOMIES

McKinsey & Company (6 Apr 2020): 'How to restart national economics during the coronavirus crisis': https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/how-to-restart-national-economies-during-the-coronavirus-crisis

IMF Special Series Notes on the economic effects of COVID-19:
https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/SPROLLs/covid19-special-notes

ACADEMIC RESEARCH AND COMMENTARY

Castellani, Brian and Caiado, Camila (18 May 2020): 'Coronavirus: why we need local models to successfully exit lockdown', *theconversation.com*: https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-why-we-need-local-models-to-successfully-exit-lockdown-138358

Woolley, Thomas (15 May 2020): 'Coronavirus: Why the maths behind 'COVID alert levels' makes no sense', *theconversation.com*: https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-why-the-maths-behind-covid-alert-levels-makes-no-sense-138634

UK Parliament POST (7 May 2020): Light switches and clusters: social distancing strategies for COVID-19: https://post.parliament.uk/analysis/light-switches-and-clusters-social-distancing-strategies-for-covid-19/

UK Parliament POST (29 Apr 2020): Face masks, face coverings and COVID-19:
https://post.parliament.uk/analysis/face-masks-face-coverings-and-covid-19/

Rawaf, Salman et al (26 Apr 2020): 'Unlocking towns and cities: COVID-19 exit strategy' in: *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, *emro.who.int*: http://www.emro.who.int/in-press/commentaries/unlocking-towns-and-cities-covid-19-exit-strategy.html

ROLE OF PARLIAMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

House of Commons Library (4 May 2020): Coronavirus: Parliamentary consent for the lockdown in England: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/parliament-and-elections/parliament/coronavirus-parliamentary-consent-for-the-lockdown-in-england/

Institute for Government (17 Apr 2020): Parliament's role in the coronavirus crisis:
https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/parliament-role-coronavirus

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