



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **CHIEF MINISTER'S SCRIPT NOTES FOR COVID-19 PRESS CONFERENCE 17th MARCH 2020**

Good afternoon

Today is the first of the daily press conferences which I announced last night that the Government will offer on the developing COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Today I am joined by the Acting Medical Director, KRISH RAWAL

Different post holders will be addressing you on different days.

As the PANDEMIC continues its progress through our community, we have to ensure that our resources are structured properly

That means our human resources as much as anything else.

We will therefore be relaying responsibility between relevant medical professionals and relevant members of the political executive.

For that reason, Krish is here with me today.

At the moment we anticipate that the Director of Public Health and the Minister for Public Health will be with you tomorrow.

On Thursday we anticipate that the Civil Contingencies Coordinator and the Deputy Chief Minister will be informing you of developments.

TODAY, I can tell you that the total number of people confirmed as having been infected with COVID 19 has been 3

Of these two are already fully recovered.

Another remains infected but well.

This patient is in hospital but is only mildly unwell.



We have now sent a total of 100 swabs for testing.

We have 48 results pending.

We have had 49 negative results.

This information will be available on the government social media channels and will be on the text message that citizens will receive in coming hours.

This morning I held a detailed and lengthy briefing with Opposition members.

The leader of the opposition attended, with Elliott Philips and Marlene Hassan Nahon.

We were also joined by conference call by Daniel Feetham, who has many of you will know is self isolating at home.

This was a lengthy, two and a half hour meeting.

I want to thank both the Acting Medical Director and the Director of Public Health for giving so much of their time to us all this morning as we worked through issues and questions that opposition colleagues wanted and needed answers to.

We had to end the meeting without time for all their questions.

I anticipate that we will have more time for a similar session if possible in coming days and weeks.

Again, this is not politics as usual and I want to thank opposition colleagues for their support for the government's action at this time.

Later this morning I hosted a meeting of the Cross Frontier Group.

We were joined by our friend Loren Perianez by telephone call and in person by Michael Netto and John Isola for Unite and the Chamber respectively.

We were able to reflect on issues relating to the economic package I announced last night.

We reflected also on the situation in Spain and how this is affecting the frontier.

We were able to confirm that the frontier is flowing for those who are at liberty to move under the rules of the State Of Emergency in Spain.

The movement of goods does not appear to have been impaired in any way that reflects any abnormality.

We are looking forward to working together to ensure that the package we prepare to protect and boost our economy works well for all our businesses and all workers in our economy.

This afternoon I have met at length also with representatives of the NASUWT, as we said we would every 48 hours, to review the issues in our schools.



We have noted the advice of the NASUWT in the UK that our schools need, in particular, to continue to impart the curriculum to those of our students who are undertaking GCSE and A level studies whilst these are not postponed.

This is an important fetter on our ability to make free standing decisions about schools in Gibraltar.

TODAY:

20% of teachers have been absent from our schools.

60% of pupils have been absent from our schools.

The GHA are contacting teachers with medical concerns (relating to themselves or others that they cohabit with) to provide them with advice and reassurance where appropriate.

After our consultation with the NASUWT committee, Schools still remain open for now.

We will continue to deliver the curriculum as best as possible, within the circumstances, with particular emphasis on the exam classes.

This is principally as a result of the UK position is that although they are reviewing the position with GCSE and A Level examinations, they have not said yet that these are being postponed, and therefore we must continue to prepare students for those exams.

Although schools are open, we are aware from attendance data, that there are parents who are opting not to send their children to school.

\*If you take this position, we strongly advise that the children should remain at home or with their parents during the school day.\*

We nevertheless still believe that schools are the right environment for pupils.

Parents are asked not to contact schools with requests for work packages for children being kept at home.

School staff are already under a lot of pressure and are focused on providing for the children who are in school.

Our intention, at present, is to provide as close to a normal learning experience as is possible at this time.

Arrangements are nevertheless being made, should the need arise, to be able to provide electronically, children with guidance and structure on home learning.

We will meet again with the NASUWT on Thursday to review the position.

Circumstances may change for Monday.

I want to thank all the professionals and staff who are making such extraordinary efforts in these difficult times.



I also want to thank all of those of you who are following our advice and self isolating.

I know its tough.

You are not on holiday and it doesn't feel like that I know.

If you are at home, use your time wisely please.

Volunteer if you have not yet done so by filling in our form.

If you have computers and telephones, we will need your help in coming weeks.

I want to thank all our public servants for continuing at their stations and those who are working from home.

You are really stepping up now by being at your desk, your work station and delivering your service.

That is how we will get through it.

I told you last night that there would be many heroes amongst us these difficult days.

Those of you who are volunteering are really turning out to be heroes.

Thank you all.

Thank you also to all of you who are going about your business.

Delivering normality to your staff and your customers is something or which I thank you.

I also want to thank the unsung heroes of our roads and front doors.

The delivery drivers of the food and service delivery companies who are around Gibraltar.

Hungry Monkey

Rock Hero

So many others, not all of which I can name.

But all of you

Thank you for continuing to man your stations and deliver to our homes at these difficult times.

FINALLY

DO NOT BE AFRAID

WASH YOU HANDS

CATCH IT BIN IT KILL IT



IF YOU ARE OVER 70 STAY HOME IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW

IF YOU ARE VULNERABLE, ACT IN KEEPING WITH YOUR DOCTORS ADVICE

LET'S BE SENSIBLE

LET'S STAY SAFE

FOLLOW GOVERNMENT ADVICE

HELP THE GHA AND ALL OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS DELIVER THE GREAT SERVICE THE CAN DELIVER.

THANK YOU

I WILL NOW TAKE YOUR QUESTIONS.