



PRESS RELEASE

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Relaxation of Lockdown for the Over 70s

The Cabinet met today and decided to relax the lockdown rules which apply to those persons over 70.

This is based on medical and public health advice and it follows consultation between the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

It is also entirely voluntary for those affected to take advantage of the opportunity. There is no obligation to go out. Indeed, the advice remains that they should stay at home.

The position at the moment is that those over 70 can already leave home for the purposes set out in the law. This includes shopping for food or medicines, walking the dog, going to the bank, going to the doctor and going to work.

The data collected from other countries has shown that those in the over 70 age group will be worst affected in the event that they contract COVID-19. There are eight people in this cohort who have contracted COVID-19 in Gibraltar so far although thankfully all have survived.

The reason for this is because the Government moved swiftly and decisively to recommend self-isolation.

However, there are a small number of over 70s who have contacted the Government and expressed a desire to go out to exercise, in the same way as everybody else.

In addition to this, the advice to the Government is that after weeks of confinement, outdoor exercise for certain persons over 70 could prove beneficial.

The Government has therefore decided the following:

1. The advice remains unchanged. Over 70s are most at risk from this virus. The risk of catching it can be mitigated, but it cannot be eliminated completely. Therefore going outdoors constitutes a risk and it is safer for those over 70 to remain at home.
2. A degree of mitigation from the risks of going out will be provided at defined locations on specific days and times. Eastern Beach, Camp Bay, the Victoria Stadium and Commonwealth



Park will be reserved for persons over 70 only on weekdays from 10.00am until 12 noon. Bank Holidays are excluded. Entry and exit will be controlled by the Royal Gibraltar Police and other officials. It will be necessary to show a document like a health card which shows the age of the holder. The elderly will be expected either to walk to the area nearest to them, or to drive to the car parks at Eastern Beach or at Camp Bay next to the Nuffield Pool. They can be accompanied by an adult member of the same household. This means that in the event of using a car, they can only share a vehicle with an adult who lives with them. They can then walk in their chosen area for an hour and go back home afterwards. The different areas will be cleaned and disinfected before 10.00am on the relevant days. This is the “Golden Hour” scheme.

3. In addition to this, over 70s who wish it will be able to exercise with no restriction in the same way and at the same time as everybody else. The Government considers this to be the option which carries the most risk.

Those persons over 70 who decide to take advantage of the “Golden Hour” scheme or to exercise when and where they wish, are taking a risk by leaving home. Gibraltar has been successful so far precisely because this category of persons has remained in self-isolation all this time. No matter the precautions that are taken, the virus is invisible and may be present in the least expected of places.

Those who leave home are urged to be extra careful. They should not touch anything like lift buttons, door handles or handrails in communal stairs. They should maintain social distancing and must not use the opportunity to leave home as an excuse to meet or walk with friends and family. They must not touch their mouths, eyes or nose and on returning home must wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least twenty seconds.

The Government wishes to remind everyone that we are dealing with a virus that has killed tens of thousands of people all over the world, and that continues to do so on a daily basis. It is important to note if there is a change for the worse in the prevalence of COVID-19 in Gibraltar, these measures of relaxation will be reconsidered and possibly withdrawn. This will also happen if the system is abused. The workings of these measures will be monitored closely.