



PRESS RELEASE

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We must protect our elderly from COVID-19 warns the Government

Gibraltar today has the highest number of resident active cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic reached us in March (62). This could become very serious if the situation continues to deteriorate. Therefore, the Government reminds the public that we must not let down our guard in the face of the continuing fight against this deadly disease.

In order to protect the elderly and the vulnerable it is important that everyone continues to follow the rules. This includes the use of face-masks, washing your hands regularly, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth, maintaining a social distance and avoiding large groups.

The situation in the United Kingdom has deteriorated significantly once students have gone back to university. There are now thousands of young people in lockdown and restrictions have been imposed in different parts of the country. A prime factor in spreading the disease has been student gatherings and parties.

In this context, it is important that everyone understands that gatherings of more than 20 persons remain illegal. This means that such gatherings should not take place, even in private households. There have been reports that such parties have been organised, or continue to be planned in Gibraltar. The object of this restriction is to protect our parents and grandparents from COVID-19. There is a very real risk that anyone who contracts COVID-19, even if young, can then pass it on to adults some of whom may be over 70 or have underlying health conditions.

The situation in neighbouring Spain has deteriorated significantly. The increased incidence of COVID-19 has meant that additional restrictions are now in place at a local and at a regional level in different parts of the country. It is essential that any Gibraltar resident who intends to travel to Spain takes additional precautions and familiarises themselves with the rules during their route and at their destination. In Spain a considerable number of cases have been traced to family gatherings and a distinct trend developed during and after the summer of younger persons becoming infected passing it on to their elders.

The Government cannot stress enough how important it is to avoid contact across the generations between younger and older people. There are many ways of keeping in touch including telephone, video-calls and social media. In the event that a face to face contact is absolutely essential, then it is better outdoors and maintaining social distance. Our students are now at school and in contact with each other. The spread of the virus between them is to an extent unavoidable. However, the contact between schoolchildren and those who are over 70 or who have underlying health conditions can be easily avoided and for the sake of our elders it must.



The Government understands that this is very difficult, but equally everyone must understand that there is no excuse for not protecting our elders.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that over one million people across the globe have died after contracting COVID-19. This includes people of all ages and all health conditions. Indeed, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson himself was particularly badly affected by the disease, even though he is in his fifties and known to cycle and jog. However, it is clear that those persons who are over 70 and who have a pre-existing medical condition are most at risk and it is our sacred duty to do everything we can to protect them.

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