

Cases more than double in under a week and self-isolation rules tighten

The number of Covid-19 cases has more than double in five days, with the Gibraltar Government tightening restrictions on self-isolation.

On Monday, active cases stood at 79, but five days later on Friday cases reached 164.

The number of people in self-isolation has also more than doubled in this time from 236 to 574, seeing more than 338 asked to isolate in five days. In response to the increased number of cases, a statement from No6 Convent Place announced all household contacts whether vaccinated or not will need to self-isolate.

"Given our successful vaccination programme, the practice until recently has been that a vaccinated close contact of a positive case no longer needed to self-isolate," the Government said.

"That person could leave home as long as a mask was worn in all settings and could even continue to go to work depending on the circumstances of the workplace."

"The public is advised that those rules have now changed."

The Government warned the reason for the change in rules is because the Delta variant of the virus is more contagious and therefore spreads more quickly.

The more transmissible Delta variant, first found in India, is the dominant variant in Gibraltar, and has spread worldwide.

In Gibraltar, all active cases which have been tested in the Gibraltar Health Authority's genome sequencing laboratory have the Delta variant, bar one case where the lab was unable to sequence the test.

This means in Gibraltar there are 79 people with the Delta variant and 84 test results still pending.

Genome sequencing typically takes the GHA labs around 48 to complete.

"This means that if someone in a household contracts the disease, the

likelihood is that other members of that same household will follow," the Government said.

"Household contacts of a positive case are now required to self-isolate whether they have been vaccinated or not."

"The Contact Tracing Bureau will at first circulate a text message to all known contacts."

"This will be followed by a telephone call to each of them where the details surrounding the nature of the contact will be discussed, looked at more closely and new instructions issued accordingly."

On Friday 32 new positive cases were identified, 30 residents and two visitors, of which 29 were vaccinated and three were unvaccinated.

The age group with the highest number of positives was those 20 to 30 years, making up 12 of the 32 cases, this was followed by the 40 to 50 age range with seven cases.

Of the 30 new resident cases in Gibraltar on Friday, 12 were close contacts of existing active cases.

Overall including residents, visitors and cross frontier workers active cases in Gibraltar stood at 183 on Friday, with 151 residents, 19 cross frontier and 13, visitors active.

But even with cases rising the number of hospitalisations remains low with one person in the Covid-19 Ward and no cases in Elderly Residential Services.

The rise in cases has seen the Government remind to public to exercise caution.

"The Government urges the public to follow the advice that has been given throughout the pandemic."

"This includes washing hands regularly with soap and water, or where not available, the use of hand sanitisers instead."

"It remains important to keep your distance from others and to avoid large crowds or gatherings if you are elderly or otherwise vulnerable in any way."

"It is still a legal requirement to wear a mask in certain settings, like shops

and public transport. Gibraltar has a world class testing programme and a world class vaccination programme which means that an essential part of the framework to tackle this disease is already in place."

"However, it is vital that everyone plays their part in the fights against the virus and that we all behave in a sensible and responsible manner as well."

