

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 1st FEBRUARY 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 8th FEBRUARY 2021**

Question

Will the Minister advise, in relation to genomic testing –

- (a) where the Covid-19 samples are sent to be tested and the time interval from dispatch to receipt of the results;
- (b) how many samples of Covid-19 have been sent to the U.K. each week since 1st December 2020 to determine whether any variant strain of the virus has reached the Island; and
- (c) whether any new strains of the virus have been identified in the Island and, if so, their characteristics?

Answer

- (a) Samples are sent to Public Health England (PHE) for sequencing. The time interval is currently around 7 to 10 days.
- (b) Initially the maximum number of samples PHE would accept for sequencing per week was 10, but from 1/2/21 it is accepting up to 50 per week.
- (c) The presence of the UK Kent variant (B.1.1.7) in Jersey has now been confirmed in 4 of the last 25 samples sent to the UK. No particular Jersey-specific strain has been noted. No other variants of concern have yet been noted, but we are, of course, continually monitoring for these.