

2020.09.08

25. Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of the Health and Social Services Minister regarding why organised singing continues to be prohibited: (OQ.230/2020)

[Please note that the Minister for Health and Social Services subsequently provided the response below to the oral question from Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St Saviour which was not asked due to time constraints.]

Question

Will the Minister explain why organised singing continues to be prohibited under the Level 1 guidance issued by the Government, highlighting the specific medical advice and research on which this guidance has been based? (OQ.230/2020)

Answer

At Level 1, the Government was able to introduce a very limited package of changes, consistent with the careful approach recommended by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell (STAC) to Ministers corresponding to the rapidly increasing COVID-19 rates in countries around us and therefore the increasing threat to Jersey.

There continue to be multiple activities that continue to be limited or not permitted in Level 1 of the Safe Exit framework, including singing.

The evidence for transmission of COVID-19 through singing as well as the playing of brass and woodwind instruments is from both observational studies of aerosol spread or from studies where group singing preceded diagnosis in COVID-19 clusters.

In observational studies the spread of aerosols from singing, wood and brass instruments is projected and likely to be similar to that of loud talking and shouting. Studies relating to clusters of infection, including from choirs, found that multiple routes of transmission including, prolonged close contact, touching common objects, or sharing food, and poor ventilation had contributed to spread.

STAC concluded that the status quo in terms of singing and playing brass and wind instruments should be maintained. However, in preparation for school opening in line with the lower risk to children, music guidelines with appropriate mitigations to reduce risk have been provided as part of school guidelines. This will allow small group singing and playing of wind instruments to the minimum number required by exam boards to ensure students music learning is not negatively impacted. This is consistent with the appreciation that returning education to normal or near normal is paramount.