

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY J.H. PERCHARD OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 2nd NOVEMBER 2020**

Question

Will the Minister advise how many Islanders are classed as being in the highest risk category for Covid-19, and will he explain what actions are planned to ensure that these Islanders are able to safely maintain their independence when accessing essentials over the next 6 months?

Answer

There are around 3,000 Islanders in the high-risk category regarding COVID-19.

We have worked hard to avoid needing to return to a position of asking these islanders to take steps that will cause them to be isolated from loved ones and lose their independence. Advice for Islanders at high risk currently continues to be to make personal decisions around the activities they engage in, with the help of the bespoke Activity Risk Guide and other advice and support, which is available on www.gov.je/shielding and which has been sent to individuals at high risk by letter through their GP. We are *not* currently advising Islanders at high risk to avoid activities such as shopping, but to follow the risk guidance which highlights factors that can make activities higher risk, and to be especially careful to follow public health guidance such as around hand hygiene and wearing masks in these situations. Islanders at high risk may also choose to discuss their individual situation with their GP, who will be most familiar with their specific medical circumstances and health status.

The strong public health measures we now have in place, such as a well-established, effective track and trace system and our world-class borders testing infrastructure, mean we are in a strong position to continue with this less restrictive advice for Islanders at high risk, and to avoid the negative impact on mental health and wellbeing that isolation and loss of independence can bring.

However, COVID-19 activity is being carefully monitored and if expert medical advice changes for this group, for example, if the recommendation is once again for Islanders at high risk to avoid indoor activities such as shopping, then work through 'Connect Me' has ensured preparedness for meeting the needs of Islanders. This service, which can be accessed through the Helpline, Parish Halls, or www.gov.je/connectme connects Islanders to the right support, whether this is government support or help from our dedicated parish volunteer support network, and whether the need is something practical such as help with shopping, or around mental or physical health, concerns around family or finances, ideas on how to stay connected and active, or just needing to be connected with someone to talk to.