



States Greffe

Senator John Le Fondré
Chief Minister
BY EMAIL

29th November 2021

Dear Chief Minister

**Considerations following discovery of new
Covid-19 variant in Southern Africa**

Please could you provide the Panel with an update on the actions that the Government of Jersey will be taking to safeguard Islanders following the announcement of the new variant of Covid-19 (B.1.1.529), now known as Omicron, which has been discovered in Southern Africa. At the time of writing, nine cases have been reported in the UK.

The Panel is aware that Jersey's border policy is to follow the lead of the UK in imposing restrictions on the affected African countries, however, the Island does have strong community links with South Africa.

In particular, the Panel would like to understand:

- What current information do you have on variant B.1.1.529?
- Have any of the positive cases reported in Jersey to date been identified as the new variant?
- Whether the emergence of this variant will trigger any further update to the testing regime at the Island's ports and the changes introduced on 24th November and what those would be?
- Whether any additional travel restrictions will be considered over and above those already in place.

Further, in the light of these developments, the Panel would ask that you consider reintroducing regular and transparent communications with the public to allay the concerns of the community in relation to this new variant, it's potential impact locally and on travel plans over the festive period.

Given the fast-moving nature of the situation, the Panel would appreciate a response by close of business on Tuesday 30th November 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Robert Ward
Chair, Safer Travel Guidelines Review Panel