

The chair and deputy chair of the Consell de Formentera, Alejandra Ferrer and Ana Juan, respectively, held an virtual meeting today with Balearic first minister Francina Armengol and health and consumption minister Patrícia Gómez to monitor and assess the Covid-19 situation on the island. After the gathering Ferrer announced that in light of spiking local infections and in a bid to swiftly bring cases under control, Formentera would enter a stricter form of tier 4 public health alert on Saturday 30 January.

Among the biggest changes in restrictions in force for the next two weeks: gatherings are limited to people from the same household; restaurants must close (takeaway service can continue till 10.00pm and delivery till midnight); gyms must close; continued enforcement of “perimetric sealing-off”; small shops must reduce capacity to 30% and close at 8.00pm, except for essential services.

Info-sharing meeting

Before meeting with Armengol, Ferrer and Juan sat down face to face with the regional director of public health, Maria Antònia Font, to review the specifics of Formentera’s public health situation:

Of 162 infected islanders, four are currently at Can Misses while the rest are at home and receiving at-home care. Ninety-six of the cases can be traced to active local clusters that have been registered, meaning that, since individuals’ close contacts can be easily traced, the situation is under a degree of control and the rate of infection relatively stable.

Though top regional health department officials speak of stability, the local premiere said the island’s passage to “reinforced” Tier 4 protocol aimed for cautiousness in light of serious issues such as Covid variants already present on Eivissa, occupancy of hospital beds there and the rising number of cases.

Ferrer added that the island’s government was once again looking at the option of massive local testing, saying Balearic officials have made assurances that if infections didn’t drop in the next

seven to ten days, wholesale screenings would be used to “pinpoint positives and introduce appropriate lockdown measures”.

At a meeting last week, party representatives and Formentera’s league of small- and medium-sized businesses supported the move to more restrictive “Enhanced Tier 4” measures to contain the local Covid spread.

Other issues
President Ferrer additionally spoke to Balearic officials about pressing Madrid and Europe to hasten vaccine production and distribution to ensure the local population’s immunity by summer. She also insisted improved contact tracing would be key to isolating close contacts and curbing transmission, and said primary care services needed urgent help in order to provide proper care.

To conclude, Ferrer once again exhorted islanders to be responsible by respecting restrictions and forgoing gatherings: “From Saturday we’ll be limited to meeting with members of our household, but some people will still go to work and children will go to school, so we need to remember to respect distancing rules and wear masks.” She encouraged people feeling cooped up to “enjoy the island, go outside, go for walks with family”. “But at the smallest sign of symptoms, contact infocovid”, she continued, “because if you have caught the virus, stopping its spread and getting professional help are crucial.”

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