In a letter sent today, Consell de Formentera president Alejandra Ferrer explained to the premier and health minister of the Govern balear, Francina Armengol and Patrícia Gómez, respectively, that since the invocation of the state of alarm, members of local law enforcement, firefighters and Civil Protection corps have been implementing control measures to see to it that restrictions put in place to prevent the local spread of Covid-19 are respected.

In recent days the island government has supplied the forces with protective equipment that's key to their safety, however, as Ferrer pointed out in her missive, the very nature of such individuals' work puts them at risk. The president underscored the profound importance of emergency responders' protection, since an infection among their ranks could trigger "a drastic reduction of services and a stunting of local emergency responders' reactive capacity".

Formentera's president detailed to the Balearic officials the local government's voluntary registry of more than 300 recent arrivals—individuals who are tracked, given updates, and encouraged to call 061 if they present symptoms. The Formentera Department of Social Welfare contacts older islanders living alone and pitches in with tasks that pose particular challenges, while members of Civil Protection are due to make their own rounds to give elderly islanders information updates and check in, Ferrer said.

She likewise pointed out that Formentera's sole Mobile Covid-19 Unit [UVAC] is meant to be tasked exclusively with home calls for patients with symptoms who present possible Covid-19 cases, and that the unit should also be assessing which cases warrant hospitalisation and ensuring proper monitoring of family members in order to control possible sources of infection.

The president pointed out that "Formentera has just one hospital and, should cases surge suddenly, we run the risk of seeing services overloaded and those in need of urgent care —both Covid-19 patients and individuals with unrelated care needs— neglected". "It's important we understand that a portion of Formentera's healthcare workers come from Eivissa, and the infection risks inherent to travel mean that, whether workers are local or taking the ferry from Eivissa, keeping them safe is paramount to our hospital's ability to continue functioning without becoming an infection source".

Ferrer highlighted the following requests in her letter:

1. Closer monitoring of minor cases
Better and stricter control measures can be developed for essential staff whilst maintaining current protocol in which individuals presenting minor cases carry out confinement and self-isolation and are monitored via telephone, and hospital care is reserved for serious cases. Improvements can also be made to the way we monitoring of minor cases, strengthening our footing as we confront the situation today and enabling proper care for affected individuals.

2. Testing for the island's emergency responders
A mechanism can be created without change to current protocol so that, similar to healthcare workers, emergency corps members with possible contagion exposure can be tested quickly and easily and continue performing their work safely.

3. More powerful Mobile Covid-19 Unit
The Formentera UVAC, created to treat homebound patients who have tested positive for Covid-19 or present symptoms consistent with it, should expand patient support so proper review of virus development can be ensured, increasing ease of mind for homebound individuals with symptoms and their families and preventing further spread.

4. Closer monitoring of recent arrivals
Individuals having arrived on the island from other locations should be subject to closer monitoring to make sure they respect measures in place and self-isolate as required.

5. More information from 061 emergency response and UVAC
Between the Consell de Formentera and local 061 emergency responders, more robust collaboration is needed around calls concerning possible Covid-19 cases. Key for the UVAC, meanwhile, is a closer monitoring of each case, particularly individuals who have tested positive, to keep the Consell informed while still respecting the confidentiality of sensitive information.

"We are asking for these measures because early detection, both in individuals close to confirmed positives and in suspected infections, can stem further spread of the virus and will help avoid overloading and endangering hospital services", she said, offering a willing hand for "whatever the Govern balear might need as we tackle Covid-19."

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Department of Communications
Consell de Formentera