

Ministry of Justice

Covid-19 Stakeholder Update / 06.04.20

This is the Ministry of Justice's regular stakeholder communications update service. This is intended to signpost the latest Covid-19 guidance and central government updates.

We encourage organisations to share these updates with your wider networks to ensure a wide circulation of important communications. For monitoring and evaluation purposes, we'd gratefully receive information on who you are sharing this with.

We would also find it helpful to know about your own communications plans and any intel that will help inform our communications moving forwards. Please do get in touch at samantha.abrahams@justice.gov.uk or thomas.cracknell@justice.gov.uk.

Please find today's update below.

- We have robust and flexible plans to ensure we can continue to deliver key services across the justice system.
- A network of priority courts will remain open during the coronavirus pandemic to make sure the justice system continues to operate effectively.
- Selected lower-risk offenders, within weeks of their release dates, and pregnant women in custody who do not pose a high risk of harm to the public will be temporarily released from prison. This is to protect the NHS from the coronavirus risk in prisons, protect our officers and save lives.

HMPPS

Updated Q&A for friends and families of prisoners: The Q&A on GOV.UK has been updated with answers to new FAQs on prisoners temporarily released from jail, facilities in prisons and the mental health of prisoners. The document will continue to be regularly updated: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-qa-for-friends-and-family-of-prisoners>

Prisons and probation services have implemented significant changes to comply with the Government's social distancing rules and to protect staff and service users. The service has been working closely with public health experts, as well as criminal justice partners, to ensure that robust contingency plans are in place and immediate action can be taken wherever cases are identified. The following page will continue to be updated when new advice is available: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons>

As of 17:00 on Sunday 5 April:

- 107 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19 across 38 prisons.
- 19 prison staff have tested positive for COVID-19 across 12 prisons.
- 4 Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) staff have tested positive for COVID-19.

Further updates with the latest figures may be released later this evening to the media and will be included here the following day for information, so please do bear with us if they are superseded during the day.

HMCTS

NEW: HMCTS will publish its monthly stakeholder bulletin today. It will include non-COVID-19 information which has been published over the last month but will also signpost readers to pre-published COVID-19 GOV.UK pages: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-reform-programme-monthly-bulletin>

During this unprecedented public health emergency, we are adjusting practices and taking steps to minimise the risk to the judiciary, court staff and users. Any changes to individual hearings will be communicated directly to those affected in the usual way, by email and/or phone. The following page will continue to be updated when new advice is available: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-courts-and-tribunals-planning-and-preparation>

HMCTS maintain a daily operational summary service on courts and tribunals from Monday to Friday during the Coronavirus outbreak. HMCTS aim to update this page daily by 9am: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-daily-operational-summary-on-courts-and-tribunals-during-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Victims and witnesses

Victim and witness support services: The Ministry of Justice has compiled information on accessing victim and witness support services during Covid-19. An overview of specialist helplines is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-victim-and-witness-services>. Further information is available at: <https://www.victimandwitnessinformation.org.uk/>

We would appreciate your help in making clear that victims services are still operating. Please support our social media content here:

- [Twitter](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

Latest general guidance

- The new Business Support campaign for Covid-19: <https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/>
- Guidance on protecting vulnerable people from Covid-19: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>
- Guidance for businesses: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>
- Home isolation / 'stay at home' guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>
- Guidance on social distancing: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>

Please continue to refer to [GOV.UK/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/government/coronavirus) for the latest information on the situation in the UK and the Government's response. For information about the illness and symptoms visit [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

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