

Ministry of Justice

COVID-19 Stakeholder Update / 06.05.20

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 stakeholder.intel@justice.gov.uk.

- 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.
- The latest modelling by Public Health England and [HMPPS](#) indicates that jails are limiting deaths and the transmission of COVID-19 within the estate, through the use of 'compartmentalisation' measures.
- 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. Additionally, works have begun to deliver 500 temporary, single occupancy units at seven jails. This will help to limit the spread of COVID-19, protecting staff, prisoners and the NHS.

HMCTS

NEW: HMCTS has published a blog outlining how courts are working to support victims of stalking during the COVID-19 crisis. It reflects on the work done earlier this year, in collaboration with the Home Office, to support the introduction of Stalking Protection Orders and how those orders continue to be granted by courts to protect victims of stalking during lockdown. Read the full blog here: <https://insidehmcts.blog.gov.uk/2020/05/06/stalking-protection-orders-collaborating-with-the-home-office/>

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>

HMPPS

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 TUESDAY 5 MAY:

- 386 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19 across 74 prisons;
- 433 prison staff have tested positive for COVID-19 across 67 prisons;
- 15 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.

Judiciary

NEW: Research commissioned by the President of the Family Division into remote hearings in the family justice system has been published. The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory gathered evidence through a consultation and found that there are some clear advantages to remote hearings, as well as challenges to be addressed. The President of the Family Division welcomed the report, saying that it will play a vital role in shaping best practice. Read the full statement and research here: <https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/president-of-the-family-division-welcomes-nuffield-report-into-effectiveness-of-remote-hearings-during-covid-19/>

Latest general guidance

- Guidance for those involved in managing COVID-19 deaths: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-those-involved-in-managing-covid-19-deaths>
- Guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>
- The 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>
- 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/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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