

Ministry of Justice

COVID-19 Stakeholder Update / 21.05.20

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The Ministry of Justice COVID-19 Stakeholder Update signposts the latest COVID-19 news and guidance from government. To help us ensure our communications continue to meet your needs, we would be grateful if you could answer **five quick questions** and share your views. Responses are anonymous. **The survey can be found here.**

- We have robust and flexible plans to ensure we can continue to deliver key services across the justice system.
- **Independent public health monitoring** suggests the steps we have taken are successfully limiting deaths and the transmission of coronavirus in prisons. Those measures include restricted regimes and social distancing within prisons, the early release of low-risk offenders approaching their release date, creating more space with 500 temporary cells and the re-opening of a formerly closed prison at Medway.
- Our priority is to make sure we can keep everyone in courts safe. Some courts have now, with approval from Public Health England and Public Health Wales, begun the resumption of jury trials with new juries having been sworn in at Cardiff Crown Court, The Old Bailey, Manchester Minshull Street and Bristol Crown Court.

NEW: Virtual Hidden Harms Summit held in response to unique challenges victims have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister today held a virtual Hidden Harms Summit with key representatives from government, law enforcement, victims' charities, front line practitioners and the private sector to drive action to tackle domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and modern slavery. Included in the measures announced today is a new codeword scheme for domestic abuse victims. Read the full press release here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-announced-ahead-of-hidden-harms-summit>

The Lord Chancellor has written a blog to mark the Hidden Harms Summit. You can read the blog here: <https://medium.com/@MoJGovUK/we-owe-it-to-victims-and-survivors-to-ensure-no-one-suffers-alone-95007997103b>

HMCTS

NEW: HMCTS has published an assessment tool to properly assess and manage the risks associated with COVID-19 at particular properties. The tool for local managers, designed in collaboration with local partners and stakeholders, includes guidance on providing appropriate assurance relating to the cleanliness and social distancing rules: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-courts-and-tribunals-planning-and-preparation#assessing-and-managing-coronavirus-risk>.

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 WEDNESDAY 20 MAY:

- 434 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19 across 75 prisons;
- 563 prison staff have tested positive for COVID-19 across 74 prisons;
- 24 Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) staff have tested positive for COVID-19.

These are interim figures as reported by prisons and PECS providers and are subject to revision as more information becomes available.

Latest general guidance

- All UK Government Coronavirus guidance and support: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Staying alert and safe (social distancing): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>
- The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>
- Find out how to make your workplace COVID-secure: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
- Getting financial help and keeping your business safe: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

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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