

Ministry of Justice

COVID-19 Stakeholder Update / 15.05.20

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.

The stakeholder update will not be issued at weekends, other than to communicate major announcements.

- 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 are now in a position, with approval from Public Health England and Public Health Wales, to take some first steps towards the [resumption of jury trials](#).

HMPPS

NEW: Family video calls will be introduced at prisons and young offender institutions across England and Wales. Following a successful trial at HMP Berwyn, HMPPS is installing the technology at 10 prisons and young offender institutions (YOIs) across England and Wales, with a wider rollout in the coming weeks, to maintain vital family contact for prisoners and young offenders during the coronavirus pandemic. Read the full announcement here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/secure-video-calls-to-help-prisoners-maintain-family-ties>

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 THURSDAY 14 MAY:

- 405 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19 across 74 prisons;
- 528 prison staff have tested positive for COVID-19 across 71 prisons;
- 19 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 has published guidance pages to support users on downloading Skype for Business and Cloud Video Platform to join court hearings. The guidance shows how to download the platforms in your browser and on Android and iOS: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-download-skype-for-business-to-join-a-court-hearing> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-join-a-cloud-video-platform-cvp-hearing>

HMCTS is maintaining a weekly operational update which will be published on GOV.UK this evening. An email will go to subscribers each Sunday evening with a reminder. On Monday morning a link to the weekly update will be published on Twitter. HMCTS will only email again if there are any urgent or significant changes during the week. Subscribe here: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHMCTS/subscriber/new?qsp=UKHMCTS_1

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>

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)