

Ministry of Justice

Covid-19 Stakeholder Update / 17.04.20

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 stakeholder.intel@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. Additionally, works have begun to deliver 500 temporary, single occupancy units at seven jails. This will increase space in prisons and limit the spread of Coronavirus helping protect staff, prisoners and the NHS.

NEW: Government to extend testing for Coronavirus to more frontline workers. Symptomatic staff working in a greater number of professions will now be able to access coronavirus testing. Frontline workers now eligible for testing will include prisons, probation, judiciary and HMCTS staff. Read the full press notice here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-extend-testing-for-coronavirus-to-more-frontline-workers>

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 Thursday 16 APRIL:

- 255 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19 across 62 prisons.
- 138 prison staff have tested positive for COVID-19 across 49 prisons.
- 7 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

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>

Judiciary

Note on listing in Magistrates' Courts. Information relating to listing cases in Magistrates' Courts can be found on the judiciary's website: <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Note-on-Listing-Magistrates-SPJ-DSPJ-14.04.20-FINAL.pdf>

Sentencing Council

NEW: The Sentencing Council is consulting on revised sentencing guidelines for seven assault offences, including common assault and attempted murder, and a new guideline for assault on emergency workers. The Council is proposing changes to the way in which the seriousness of assault offences is assessed. Further details can be found here: <https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/sentencing-council-consultation-sentencing-guidelines-for-assault-and-attempted-murder/>

Office of the Public Guardian

Making and registering an LPA during the coronavirus outbreak. Making an LPA is an important decision that needs careful consideration – it also needs to be signed and witnessed by several people. Read our guidance on making an LPA during the coronavirus outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-and-registering-an-lpa-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

Short-term options for health, welfare and financial decisions. An LPA takes time to register – there are other ways people can make certain decisions in the short term that are quicker to put in place. Read our guidance on short-term options for health, welfare and financial decisions: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/short-term-options-for-health-welfare-and-financial-decisions>

Being a deputy or attorney during the coronavirus outbreak. During the coronavirus outbreak, the role and responsibilities as a deputy or attorney remain the same. Read our guidance on being a deputy or attorney during the coronavirus outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/being-a-deputy-or-attorney-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

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>
- 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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