

Ministry of Justice

COVID-19 Stakeholder Update / 18.05.20

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.
- [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](#).

NEW: Everyone in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms can now get a test. The government has today announced that anyone with symptoms of coronavirus is now eligible to book a test, ahead of the rollout of the test and trace service. The extension in testing eligibility is possible thanks to increased testing capacity across the country as the government expands this towards 200,000 tests a day. Read the full press notice here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/everyone-in-the-united-kingdom-with-symptoms-now-eligible-for-coronavirus-tests>

HMCTS

NEW: HMCTS has published guidance on assessing and managing the coronavirus risk in its buildings. This includes an organisational risk assessment that will enable HMCTS to identify, mitigate and take action on risk wherever necessary. This will guide local assessments of all HMCTS buildings. Read in full here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-courts-and-tribunals-planning-and-preparation#assessing-and-managing-coronavirus-risk>

NEW: HMCTS has issued a checklist on what has been put in place for, and what is expected of, those attending jury trials. New juries have today been sworn in at Cardiff Crown Court, The Old Bailey, Manchester Minshull Street and Bristol Crown Court. HMCTS worked with Public Health England and Public Health Wales to set out its commitments and expectations to keep everyone safe. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-courts-and-tribunals-planning-and-preparation#jury-trials>

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

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 SUNDAY 17 MAY:

- 411 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19 across 74 prisons;
- 540 prison staff have tested positive for COVID-19 across 71 prisons;
- 23 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.

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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