

# Ministry of Justice – COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Stakeholder Update

## 28/03/2020

### Weekend Service

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 would find it helpful to know about your own communications plans and any intel that will help inform our communications moving forwards. If you know an organisation which should be added to the list please do get in touch at [samantha.abrahams@justice.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.abrahams@justice.gov.uk) or [thomas.cracknell@justice.gov.uk](mailto:thomas.cracknell@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.
- Prisons are well prepared to take immediate action wherever cases or suspected cases are identified, including the isolation of individuals where necessary. We are issuing secure phone handsets to help offenders keep in contact with their families

### **HMPPS**

**Updated guidance is now available for friends and families of prisoners.** It provides information on prison visits, the changes to regimes and Parole Board hearings and trials. Friends and families of prisoners should continue to monitor the page as it will be updated with new information.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons>

*Prisons are well prepared to take immediate action wherever cases or suspected cases are identified, including the isolation of individuals where necessary. HMPPS has been working closely with Public Health England and NHS services, as well as criminal justice partners, to put robust contingency plans in place. The plans prioritise the safety of staff, prisoners, visitors and offenders under supervision in the community, whilst seeking to minimise disruption to normal services and ensure public protection. The following page will continue to be updated when new advice is available: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons>*

*Please note: we are unable to provide updated Covid-19 case information over the weekend. This information will continue to be communicated during weekday updates.*

### **HMCTS**

**NEW: HMCTS has updated guidance on gov.uk to advise court and tribunal users on use of telephone and video hearings to ensure the essential work of our courts and tribunals continues.**

Updated guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-telephone-and-video-hearings-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

**A network of priority courts will remain open during the coronavirus pandemic to make sure the justice system continues to operate effectively.** The work of courts and tribunals will be consolidated into fewer buildings, maintaining the safety of all in the courts and in line with public health advice. There will be 157 priority court and tribunal buildings open for essential face-to-face hearings. The full press notice is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/priority-courts-to-make-sure-justice-is-served>

*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: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-daily-operational-summary-on-courts-and-tribunals-during-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

### **Latest general guidance**

- The new Business Support campaign for Covid-19: <https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/>
- Major new measures to protect people at highest risk from Coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-new-measures-to-protect-people-at-highest-risk-from-coronavirus>
- Guidance for businesses: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>
- Home isolation / 'stay at home' guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>
- Social distancing / vulnerable people: <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)