

Danish Prison and Probation Service - Response to COVID-19

General preventive measures

Danish Prison and Probation Service is continuously kept updated with the latest enforcement notices from the Danish government and the Danish health authorities by which we tailor our efforts to reduce the risk of the virus spreading in prisons, as well as society.

Contingency plans for all institutions are in place and are frequently updated to keep staff informed about how guidelines and directions from the health authorities are to be handled locally.

Electronic monitoring

As of 12th March 2020, the Danish Prison and Probation Service do not receive new electronically monitored prisoners.

Prisoners

As of 12th March 2020, Danish prisons do not receive new prisoners who come in to serve from liberty, i.e. offenders awaiting placement in prison.

All prisoner's leave permissions have been recalled and will only be granted leave under urgent circumstances.

All prison visits are suspended with the exception of visits from legal representatives.

Other visits, such as visits from religious units or close relatives, are advised to take place by phone.

Following the Danish government's demand to not be gathered more than 10 people outside, the prison staff is striving towards having a maximum of 10 prisoners gathering as well.

All indoor fitness facilities have been closed.

Most activities are currently closed down to minimise risks of the virus spreading. Activities are locally carried out in minor groups etc. in regard of the general situation.

The Danish Prison and Probation Service has introduced compensating measures concerning extended access to make phone calls and will supply prisons with video game consoles for prisoners to borrow.

The Danish prison's prevention strategy is based on a precautionary principle leading to isolation of prisoners with even minor symptoms. As of 25th March 2020, less than 20 prisoners are isolated due to symptoms associated with COVID-19.

Regarding coronavirus tests, Danish Prison and Probation Service are following recommendations and requirements from the Danish health authorities.

Staff

Prison staff is encouraged to avoid physical contact with each other and with prisoners.

To the extent possible, non-critical workers (e.g. in administration) are working from home.

To secure order and safety in prisons and detentions, The Danish Prison and Probation Service has prepared plans of action for possible future scenarios containing different action levels to be implemented if necessary. The plans of action describe measures to be initiated in case of a large number of confirmed cases amongst prisoners is revealed or in case prison and detention staff is reduced significantly due to illness caused by COVID-19.

Reopening plans (added 21st April)

On 17th April the Danish parliament agreed to gradually start reopening Denmark after the lockdown. As a part of this agreement, The Danish Prison and Probation Service will gradually start receiving new prisoners who come in to serve from liberty, i.e. offenders awaiting placement in prison. This process will be strictly monitored to comply with guidelines from the health authorities.

Reopening plans continued (added 11th May)

Visits

On the 18th May a limited reopening of visits will be introduced. Prisoners with underaged children will be granted one visit of up to two children and one accompanying adult pr. 14 days. Prisoners in the age between 15-17 years will be granted one visit of up to two close relations pr. 14 days. The visits will be held in line with health guidelines and requirements regarding physical surroundings and cleaning.

The Danish Prison and Probation Service is continuously assessing when to further open up visits in prisons.