



HM Prison & Probation Service

Notice to Residents – 25th September 2020

You will have heard about the levels of people infected with COVID-19 in the community going up. On Tuesday the Prime Minister told everyone he is bringing in some stricter rules for people in the community to try and slow down this spike in cases.

I have been very proud of everyone's efforts in prisons to help to contain the virus and I do not underestimate the impact that these 6 months has had on you all. I acknowledge how hard and frustrating it has been to not have visits with your loved ones, not be able to access many distractions out of your cell and the toll this will have taken on many of you. Thank you for working with us to help contain the virus. With rising levels in the community, it is therefore really important that we keep going with our efforts to control the virus and avoid outbreaks in custody where we can, and where that's not possible, to contain them effectively.

We continue to work to keep you safe, but also give you access to the fullest regime possible. Most prisons have now started social visits again, with certain changes brought in to keep you and your families and friends as safe as possible. You will also have seen that some of the restrictions to your regime are starting to lift. There are no plans for this to change at the moment. **We will continue to deliver as much activity as it is safe to do, but there will be differences in different prisons, based on the situation locally.**

We must all play our part to prevent the virus from spreading. Please continue to follow the simple rules of regular hand washing and keeping your distance from others where possible. It is the best way to keep us all safe.

I know many of you will be worried about your loved ones in the community and I recognise the importance to you of being able to stay in touch. There will therefore be no change at the current time to the provision of video calls and the weekly £5 credit to your pinphone. If your prison is one of the few that doesn't yet have video calls, then we will continue to work hard to introduce the facility as soon as we can.

We also now have social visits running in almost all prisons, but differently to how things were before the pandemic. We cannot run as many visits as we used to because of the need to socially distance and to do more frequent deep cleans. I know that these restrictions can make visits harder, but we're taking advice all the time about the things we need to do to keep people safe.

Your governing governor will be making decisions for your prison, working with health experts to decide how the risk is managed in the prison you are in and will keep you updated of any changes to your regime. You can hear information on the national picture in my weekly interviews with National Prison Radio and I will also continue to write to you on developments.

Thank you again for your patience and co-operation.

PHIL COPPLE
Director General of Prisons