

Reducing overcrowding

CJA Recommendation	RAG rating	Comments	Further action required
Pregnant women and new mothers to be temporarily released from prison.	Yellow	Of the 79 pregnant women and mothers with babies 14 have been released as of 14/04.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and timescale to release remaining women and children as matter of urgency. Funding for specialist charities and Women's Centres to support early releases and all women released at this time.
Other vulnerable cohorts of prisoners who should also be considered for managed early release, following a risk assessment process, including older people and those with underlying health conditions.	Red	<p>Shielding those at risk of the virus as well as installing temporary accommodation units within prisons to provide an additional 2,000 spaces.</p> <p>Reverse cohorts to keep those arriving at reception separate from the rest of the prison population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity on time frames for completion and description of how additional capacity will be staffed when working with reduced staff capacity. Details about number of prisoners needing to be shielded due to age or underlying health conditions and what this entails in practice. Plans to consider release of more vulnerable cohorts for risk assessed possible early release or compassionate release. Or explanation as to why this is not being planned for.
People on remand should be offered legal advice and review hearings due to 'change of circumstances'.	Yellow	Significant number of people on remand are awaiting sentence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity about numbers of people on remand that have had review hearings and number who have been released. Clarity about access to legal advice for people on remand.
People nearing the end of their sentences should be reviewed for Home Detention Curfew or Release on Temporary Licence with packages of support available for their release.	Yellow	<p>Sig. effort to increase supply of electronic tags and contracted with an additional supplier to meet demand.</p> <p>GPS tagging does not require a homebased unit to be fitted.</p> <p>As of 14/04, of the 4,000 people that are eligible for early release only 4 men have been released, but plans for this significantly increase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and timescale for when we can expect significant increase in releases. Early release protocol to be shared with voluntary sector organisations working with people leaving prison who cannot access HMPPS intranet. Details about emergency funding for charities providing services post-release.

Reducing churn and new entrants

<p>Reducing number of short sentences of less than six months for non-violent or non-sexual offences. A greater focus on suspended sentences, community sentences, tagging and out of court disposals.</p>		<p>New guidance from CPS advises prosecutors in E&W to consider alternatives to charging suspects in less serious criminal cases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on presumption against short sentences for non-violent and non-sexual offences.
<p>A presumption against recall for technical breaches to avoid unnecessary returns to custody where there is no additional risk to the public.</p>		<p>Recalls not mentioned in evidence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details on number of recalls for technical breaches since lockdown and plans for reducing number of recalls.
<p>Reducing those being remanded into custody reminding of the need for 'anxious scrutiny' of applications for custodial remand. Court bail pilots should be urgently expanded to other courts. Additional bail accommodation being sought, but no plan has yet been published.</p>		<p>Training bail officers in every court so people can be remanded in community where possible.</p> <p>Working with CPS and HMCTS to focus on remand cases. Conscious about the cases they are trying, but is a matter for the judiciary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details on numbers of people who have been bailed into the community and analysis of cases where people remanded into custody. • Detailed plan for increasing bail accommodation. • Guidance to Magistrates and District Judges reminding of need for anxious scrutiny.
<p>Restrict prison transfers.</p>		<p>Prison transfers continue but are limited to where there is a serious outbreak within an establishment such as HMP Wymott.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on numbers of transfers.

Victims' services

<p>Government should ensure victims' services, including domestic violence services; those working with children and young people in households with domestic abuse; and Women's Centres, are provided with emergency funding, so that they can adapt their services at this crucial time.</p>		<p>The Home Secretary announced an additional £2 million to support charities to further expand online and helpline services for those at risk of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Updated guidance has been published on applying for a domestic violence injunction as an unrepresented applicant during the coronavirus outbreak - stakeholder update 11/04.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome start, but more funding needed to respond to increased need. • Multi-agency approach to support people who are victims of domestic violence including children.
<p>Specialist and frontline charities working with those with protected characteristics need to have emergency funding made available to them immediately to adapt and expand their services to meet current need.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgent plans needed for funding grassroots, specialist DV and victim services for people with protected characteristics. • Currently PCCs being asked to recommend charities to receive funds, who they have commissioned. These small but vital charities often not commissioned by PCCs, but are effective at engaging different cohorts.
<p>Frontline victim workers also need adequate access to PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and testing.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans to provide PPE and tests to frontline victim service workers.

Technology

<p>We would like to see phones provided to all prisoners, with the capability to call out and in, as safer custody lines are inundated with calls from concerned families. This would also assist prisoners obtaining legal advice and access to helplines.</p>		<p>900 handsets to prisoners across 55 prisons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans to increase access to handsets across remainder of prisons. • Details on number of prisoners with access to in cell telephony or handsets. • Details on number of calls being received to Safer Custody Lines. • Phones to have capability to call in as well as call out. • Access to additional calls or phone credit and email a prisoner. • Plans to provide people on probation with mobile phones / internet access who need them.
<p>In-cell technology for e-learning and access to video conferencing should be rolled out quickly to help wellbeing, family ties and planning for release.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of prisoners with access to in-cell technology and plans to increase access. • Number of prisoners who have access to virtual family visits and plans to increase access, especially for them to contact children.
<p>The use of video conferencing should be used for all parole hearings, to avoid them being cancelled. Any already postponed hearings should be organised as soon as practicable.</p>		<p>Parole Board hearing being moved to virtual hearings.</p> <p>Victim personal statements are being read online (via Skype) to the parole panel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of postponed parole hearings and plans to manage backlog.

Resettlement and probation

<p>There needs to be a guarantee of accommodation and both financial and practical support for all prison leavers at this time. Providing prison leavers with simple smart phones and increased discharge grants.</p>		<p>Increased discharge grant to £80, DWP hotline dedicated to prison leavers to get help with Universal Credit and prisoners being given mobile phones on release.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis on time taken to access Universal Credit after release - plans to help ensure it can be applied for before release where possible. • Clarity on how figure of £80 arrived at. Discharge grant should reflect delays in accessing UC given record number of people applying. • Details about what else is being provided to all people leaving prison at this time to prepare them for covid19 world, such as a care package described by NACRO and safe accommodation.
<p>Those released from custody with a history of drug use are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing an opioid overdose. Opioid users could be given naloxone, bridging prescriptions, harm reduction materials and access to remote support services.</p>		<p>More than half (53%) of CRC service users we spoke to said that they had stopped receiving support services since the corona virus outbreak. Roughly 1 in 3 (35%) CRC service users we spoke to have stopped receiving support from mental health services. Roughly 1 in 5 (17%) have stopped receiving substance misuse services – Mark Johnson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of specific plans to support prison leavers with a history of drug use including access to bridging prescriptions, harm reduction materials, remote support services, mobile phones to access online help and advice, naloxone. • More police to be trained and given access to naloxone.
<p>Small grassroots charities and BAME-led organisations, should be able to access emergency funding to adapt their services to meet current needs.</p>		<p>Chancellor announcement to provide emergency funding for frontline charities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of funding for small, specialist and BAME-led organisations to support people coming out of prison at this time.
<p>They should also be provided with</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of PPE provided for key workers doing any face to face work.

sufficient PPE to enable some continuation of face to face work.			
More testing of prisoners and staff for COVID-19, including those leaving prison, would enable suitable support to be provided and reduce risks.		Over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend, 700 staff were tested for covid19, this does not include probation staff as they have significantly reduced face-to-face contact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on categories of staff for testing and numbers being tested, including access to testing for non-statutory key workers including those working for charities.
Families providing accommodation for prison leaver relatives would benefit from food vouchers and access to remote restorative practitioner services to address any potential conflict or tension.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on what support is being offered to families of people leaving prison who will be accommodating that individual, such as food vouchers and access to remote restorative services.
Funding should be provided to employ peer workers at all stages of the system, from prevention to prison leaving, to build trusting relationships and provide public health information and support.		Organisations such as User Voice said could access more individuals to offer peer support over the phone or online if they had contact details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the role people with lived experience of the criminal justice system could play in prevention and prison leaving support and plans to fund organisations employing people with lived experience to do this work.

Scrutiny and monitoring

<p>Full HM Inspections have been suspended, so other measures must be put into place to ensure some level of independent monitoring continues in custodial settings at this crucial time and are published publicly.</p>		<p>HMI Probation postponing inspections but will publish inspection findings from those that have already taken place. A summer thematic on the Covid 19 response is being considered.</p> <p>HMI Prisons will be carrying out short one day inspections.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater detail on alternative measures being put in place to provide some way of monitoring of probation services - for example ways people on probation can raise complaints or concerns regarding their supervision at this time, especially as no community scrutiny mechanism. Or engaging organisations such as User Voice to get feedback from people in probation.
<p>Independent Monitoring Boards should continue to monitor on-site where possible and remote monitoring should be facilitated, for example prisoners should be able to use in-cell telephony to contact the IMB from their cells regarding complaints and prisons should provide relevant data and information.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on ability of prisoners to raise complaints directly with IMB via phones. • Clarity on information prisons are providing to IMBs on issues such as testing rates and outcomes, segregation, hygiene, access to showers, phone calls, legal advice, in-cell distraction activities and exercise.
<p>Good practice identified by IMBs in prisons should be highlighted and shared.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on how good practice in responding to covid19 being identified by IMBS and others is being gathered and shared more widely with HMPPS and the sector.

Hidden Heroes

<p>We would like to encourage the JSC to support the #HiddenHeroes campaign being run by The Butler Trust to boost morale, thank and celebrate all staff and volunteers working in incredibly difficult and risky circumstances at this time.</p>		<p>Formal thanks and acknowledgement of #HiddenHeroes</p>	
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