**COVID-19 – Searching of Area and Cells**

This guide has been produced to assist staff in making effective security decisions when searching of areas.

Every establishment has in place a local searching strategy (LSS) which is approved by the Prison Group Director. The LSS must not be aspirational, but based upon a realistic appreciation of what is necessary and what is possible. Governors may want to consider introducing an interim local searching strategy during the COVID-19 outbreak. Any interim changes made by Governors do not need to be approved by the Prison Group Director but must be recorded within a decision log.

* Any programme of routine area searching should consider the resources available, any risk to members of staff of COVID-19 and justification recorded if routine searching is not taking place.
* The LSS (or interim local searching strategy) should set out the strategy for searching cells. Governors should consider the risks to staff and whether or which PPE is considered as carrying out any cell search.
* All prisons are expected to continue intelligence-led searching, as appropriate and in line with their LSS. This should consider risks to staff of COVID-19 and whether or which PPE is required.