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| To: Governors |

**PURCHASE OF NON- ASSURED DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES / RESOURCES**

Following the introduction of restricted regimes due to COVID 19, there has been a marked increase in enquiries for the purchase of non-assured and/or non- approved hardware and software for use by prisoners “in cell” or within prisons. New processes to manage all requests for such purchases have now been temporarily introduced to ensure that HMPPS Digital colleagues are sighted on all proposals, are able to advise on suitability and ensure affordability.

We are committed to improving our use of technology across the prison estate. Ambitious programmes of work are currently underway centrally to enhance our core systems and overall digital infrastructure. Whilst we remain sympathetic and welcome local innovation around new digital services, a key focus of our work is to “join up” consistently all the collected data we hold to ensure we deliver the most effective outcomes to those in our care at all times.

Colleagues within HMPPS Digital have raised some legitimate concerns about potential technology purchases being made locally, which are:

* Affordability. All spend on digital and technology services must include the cost of the initial hardware/software as well as the costs for labour (if needed), staff (all central project resource is directed at in-cell telephony activity currently), support services (if anything breaks) and live services costs (particularly around the number of years committed to in any contract with the supplier). **There is no additional central funding to support this activity for the next two years (pre-spending review) in either the in-cell phone project, HMPPS centrally or from HMPPS Digital services.**
* Opportunities to strategically join up digital services across the estate will be lost if prisons follow individual approaches. This is the case, for example, with biometrics, where we have silo systems in individual prisons when there would be considerable value in a joined-up system.
* Presentational difficulties for HMPPS. If individual prisons locally agree to fund all the costs (project staff, live service and support costs, etc.) it raises the question of how that is affordable within current budgets, and makes the organisational line we have taken on our overall funding position look more difficult to defend.

I have now agreed that all requests for all local digital and technology spend (which includes the adoption of any ‘free’ offers that could lead to costs later) must be temporarily made to HMPPS Digital. This will enable you to briefly tell the HMPPS Digital team about new proposals for any new digital initiatives so that they can provide professional advice and quickly help you turn ideas into action.

Details of all proposals must be submitted to HMPPS Digital via their On-line form available on the intranet or at http://nomsintranet.org.uk/hmpps-demand-form/. HMPPS Digital colleagues will review all requests for new services weekly and contact you to as soon as possible with their advice and feedback.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



**PHIL COPPLE**