**Referrals for Offending Behaviour Programmes (OBPs)**

We are writing to provide an update on what is happening with OBPs in prisons. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that we have needed to make lots of changes to the way that we live and work in order to protect ourselves, and each other. Pausing the delivery of OBPs was one of the measures we had to take. We have now re-started programmes in some prisons, making sure to think about the health and safety of everybody involved.

We also know that the pause in OBP delivery has created a lot of uncertainty and worry. We will continue to deliver as much as we can where it is safe to, but there will be differences in different prisons, based on the local situation.

Before the pandemic most of our OBPs were delivered face to face in large groups but now we can’t deliver in this way. We’ve now got new ways to deliver most programmes in smaller groups or one to one. Sometimes we can do some telephone or video contact but not the whole programme. This means we can re-start OBP delivery but it also means the number of places we can provide is much lower than we would like. We are keeping what we can do under regular review.

Which programmes prisons deliver will vary because of a range of things – what staff are available and what they are trained in, what room facilities there are, as well as the general prison regime and the safety guidance around the pandemic. It’s possible that after we re-start we might have to pause again, depending on local circumstances. All our delivery plans will be kept under review as we see how the pandemic progresses as the safety and welfare of both staff and residents remains the priority.

We are continually reviewing lists of referrals to make sure programme places are offered in as fair a way as possible. We are prioritising places based on risk and release/end of tariff date. We know the impact the reduction in programme spaces can have and we are talking to the Parole Board and Probation colleagues about how we manage this.

At the moment we can generally only offer programme spaces to people who are already at the site where the programme is running, but we are also finding those cases where residents need to transfer and looking at ways to help do this.

We know that this is a frustrating and uncertain time. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

If you have any questions and are in an OBP delivery site please contact your local programmes Treatment Manager or, if you are not at a site that runs OBPs or the OBP you might be referred for, you can ask your keyworker or Offender Manager.

HMPPS Psychology Services Group and Interventions Services