**Addendum to Gold Briefing from 05.01.21**

**The purpose of this briefing is to provide further explanation and expansion on elements of the Gold Briefing issued on 05 January that have subsequently been queried. The detail below is additional to the text in the Gold Briefing and should be read in conjunction with the original document. Please be aware that information contained in this document may correct or change lines from the original briefing on a small number of topics. Where conflict occurs between the original briefing and this document, this document should be taken as the current position.**

**Governance arrangements -** Establishments wishing to deliver any enhancement to their original ERMP that comes under the four regime priority areas above can do so with PGD approval following local engagement including with trade unions.  However, any changes or proposals to enhance regime in other areas, not covered by ERMP and regime above must be referred to Gold. This includes, that if a Governor feels that exceptional circumstances warrant their prison operating at Regime Stage 3 despite being located in a Tier 4 area.  This request for review must be approved by the PGD and Executive Director before submission to the Gold regime panel.  This should be immediately highlighted if there is a case to do this to prevent any unnecessary regime changes to Stage 4 and back again.  These would be very exceptional, but prisons would need to demonstrate a sustained low level of infection, high level of control and be supported by community data in the immediate local community (available to Gold).

**Safety** – The HMPPS Safety team have provided additional guidance into the facilitation of wellbeing checks during this period of restricted regimes.



**Escorts –** Unlike in the March 2020 lockdown, facilitation of all routine hospital escorts may continue where an individual’s appointment is still going ahead. The current community picture and NHS pressures means that many routine appointments are being delayed. Establishments are asked to ensure that appointments are still going ahead before facilitation. Such escorts must be carried out in accordance with all relevant COVID-19 and security risk assessments and procedures.

**Funeral Escorts–** Current guidance available at <https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/except/2020/04/15/funeral-escorts/> covering thefacilitation of escorts to funerals remains valid. Community restrictions on funerals have remained similar as prior to lockdown and therefore we are able to continue facilitating escorts to funerals in line with the available guidance.

**Visits to dying relatives –** Due to current community guidelines, visits to dying relatives by prisoners can only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Establishments should revert to the use of IPads to facilitate remote visits in these circumstances.

**Shielding of staff-** The latest guidance in England and Wales states that clinically extremely vulnerable staff should work from home; if they cannot work from home then they should not attend work and should be on paid special leave.

Staff in the clinically vulnerable groups and those who live with people who are clinically extremely vulnerable should work from home wherever possible.  If they are unable to work from home, their risk assessment should be updated to ensure that appropriate health and safety measures are in place.

Establishments are asked to refer to existing shielding guidance for clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable staff.

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**Third sector and contracted partners (including NPS colleagues based in prisons)** –Establishments are reminded that we are not limiting the access of third sector and contracted partners to HMPPS sites and are encouraged to continue partnership working to ensure delivery of services in COVID-19 safe manner that support the delivery of essential work notably wellbeing and safety activity. Any decisions to prevent access to a site can be made on a localised basis by either the establishment or third-sector/contracted partner. Affected parties must be informed of any such decisions. In this event, establishments are advised to liaise with third sector and contracted partners in order to explore options for continuing work and service provision remotely.

Governors and Directors are encouraged to ensure that contracted partners based in the prison are given access to any HMPPS policies, procedures and risk assessments affecting their work location and task. However though HMPPS risk assessments and policies relating to Health and Safety during COVID should be made available to providers and contracted staff; any contracted member of staff working in the prison is doing so as an extension to their own employer’s workplace and therefore will additionally be bound by the risk assessments, policies and procedures provided for their role by their own employer. Under H&S legislation any member of staff working on behalf of a contracted partner is working in the prison at their employer’s risk and therefore the employer’s documentation and assessments hold primacy in relation to those staff, though providers should be encouraged to ensure that their assessments and procedures are made in consultation with the prison and where possible echo the requirements of equivalent HMPPS documents. Contracted partners are treated as HMPPS staff in the case of PPE and must be given equitable access to FRSMs while working in areas where they are required by the prison.

**Cross Site Working and TTG staff**- We have to accept a degree of cross site working is needed to maintain essential services and the delivery of TTG resettlement services to prisoners is business critical as part of this. As part of the new National Restrictions we are continuing to ask all staff and partners to try to minimise cross site working to essential visits only and engineer time gaps in between visits to different sites wherever possible, conscious that this may not be possible as work has to be delivered.  We aren’t trying to interrupt work or ban colleagues, we just ask colleagues to be alert to the aspiration and work with us to minimise cross site working to the essential journeys.  We understand that where prisons are managing a significant outbreak they will be trying to restrict contact as much as possible and there may be exceptional circumstances where access to more than one site is denied for a short time.  In these circumstances, where possible, CRCs will put in place temporary arrangements to provide the TTG service remotely in the impacted prisons.

In addition to adhering to the agreed safe systems of work, where is it available, TTG Teams can also be included in the prison testing programme as a way to provide some additional assurance to Governors.

**Vaccinations**- Establishments are asked to be aware that additional communications will be issued by COVID-19 Gold on the topic of vaccinations for prisoners today.

**Staff Training**- As per Gold briefing from 05.01.21, in consultation with local trade union officials, Governors can by exception deliver refresher training sessions in adherence with published SOPs and risk assessments where resources allow and suspension will lead to significant numbers of staff being unable to safely perform operational duties

This means that we haven’t extended the period in which staff are considered to be “in ticket” (as we did in March) in regard to Use of force basic refresher and ask establishments to manage the level of staff being in ticket by delivering Use of Force sessions where necessary and safely possible.

In regard to C&R advanced, we are not currently in a position to run advanced refreshers at the national centres and advanced trained staff can be given 24 months accreditation on the basis that they had **at least completed the basic refresher.**

**Mandatory Drug Testing:** Establishments will not be expected to run Mandatory Drug Testing whilst under Stage 4 regimes. However, Open Prisons who use them as an essential risk assessment tool may wish to continue delivery. At the discretion of the Governor, establishments may carry out mandatory and/or voluntary drug testing including on-suspicion testing and at-risk testing for those at work. It is vital that prisons conduct a comprehensive local risk assessment to determine whether conditions, including the extent of any ongoing existing COVID-19 infections, permit testing to be carried out in a safe manner. The risk assessment must ensure that social distancing and PPE requirements can consistently be met in relation to the type and frequency of testing proposed.

**YCS Specific Guidance:**

**Compassionate circumstances** – Despite the current restrictions on face-to-face social visits in the estate and the focus on remote options, face-to-face social visits are able to be facilitated in YCS establishments in cases of compassionate circumstances. Compassionate circumstances should be understood as circumstances where a remote visit would not be appropriate. Governors are able to make localised risk decisions on this basis.

For further information on our COVID-19 response please see the operational guidance platform (accessible via: <https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/except/> ) and direct any queries to: COVID19.Regimes&OpsGuidance@justice.gov.uk.

**Kind Regards,**

**COVID-19 Gold Command**