**Changes to SIPPS authorisation – 21/01/21**

Good Evening,

You will be aware that on 21 December, in order to support prison staffing over the winter period, we received approval from HMT for a new Special Incentive Payment Plus Scheme (SIPPS) for use in sites with Covid-related chronic or acute staffing pressures which impact the safety and/or stability of an establishment over the winter.

The scheme has to date been exclusively authorised by the Operational Stability Panel (OSP) on review of a local business case agreed by the Executive Director (ED) or exceptionally in the case of an operational emergency out of hours by National Gold to authorise the use of the 72-hour scheme.

POMC has now approved that the use of SIPPS to support individual sites experiencing critical operational pressure for up to two weeks (emergency 72 hours or 14 days) can be signed off by the relevant Executive Director (ED) directly rather than via OSP. The ED must be confident that the establishment can manage through the SIPPS scheme locally or that their PGD can manage the situation within their group. All SIPPS approvals must be reported back to OSP within 24 hours of approval to ensure effective central oversight, and that the scheme continues to be used as envisaged. Assessment and decision making by EDs must be logged in the attached approval template (**Annex A**) which must be shared with OSP on completion for monitoring purposes.

Any extension of SIPPS beyond a 14 day period will still need to be approved by OSP and cannot be authorised by an ED.  An ED approved business case would be required at OSP for any extension. Any multiple short-term sign-offs of SIPPS will be monitored to establish whether a longer approval via OSP is more appropriate.

Where there may also be a requirement of national Detached Duty, or where the PGD or ED thinks it would be helpful to involve the OSP, or the OSP requests a meeting, OSP will be convened. This will include additional emergency unplanned meetings, and telephone advice from OSP will also be available.

For advice and support please contact michelle.riley-flinders@justice.gov.uk

