**08.02.21 Access to regime for those in Isolation**

Dear Executive Directors, Prison Group Directors, Governors and Directors,

Please find attached updated guidance on access to a regime for COVID-19 cases– including those who have tested positive for COVID-19, are symptomatic and/or those identified as close contacts of someone who has tested positive.  This has followed trade union engagement.

This document focuses on the minimum regime expectations. The basic requirements outlined in the document  should be met as the default position as with any PSI requirement representing a base expectation. It is vital that ’those affected’ are not left for a full ten day isolation period with no access to regime. However, we recognise that sites are experiencing outbreaks where high numbers of confirmed cases occur over a very short period. In these circumstances, establishments may determine that the provision of some elements of regime introduces an untenable extra risk due to the scale and/or nature of the outbreak. This may also be impacted by significant staff absence. What is more, some prisons’  physical fabric, can likely cause additional issues in delivery of the regime.    Therefore, this document provides a way of managing those tensions, providing appropriate and safe regimes where governors/directors are asked to use their defensible decision log to explain the reasons behind the regime that is being offered where this does not meet the minimal requirements as described  below:

**Minimum regime standard:**

**The minimum expectation is that isolating prisoners will be provided with a minimum of one shower during their 10 day isolation period (achieving the PSI and prison rule requirement), together with opportunities to have time in the open air and reasonable contact with families and legal representatives during that period. There will be no expectation to facilitate this daily where this cannot be delivered safely.  This will be facilitated at the most safe points determined locally in consultation with local recognised trade union officials and consistent with OCT advice on outbreak management. As before COVID, all relevant decisions must be recorded in the local defensible decision log, including where PSI requirement for time in the open air cannot be met.**

Also, as heavier regime restrictions can have a significant impact on the mental and physical wellbeing of those affected, any wellbeing support  is of  particular importance and value. In particular in relation to this group of prisoners, establishments should continue to ensure they  enable in cell activities such as provision of books/ education or work materials/distraction packs, suggestions on in cell workouts(where appropriate/possible) etc.

Please see the most up to date Safe Operating Procedures and Cleaning Guidelines following the link below.

<https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/ersd-guidance/2020/04/15/safe-operating-procedures-sop-using-ppe/>

Please email any questions in relation to this guidance to COVID19.Regimes&OpsGuidance@justice.gov.uk

