**The last 12 months**

Restricting regimes was the only way to reduce the number of people who caught coronavirus. Viruses spread much faster in prisons than in the community because it is a closed environment, much like hospitals or care homes. Almost all of you will have experienced an outbreak in your prison and many of you will have sadly experienced a death in your prison. Working with health to prevent as many deaths as possible during this time had to be our main priority.

Last year, we created the National Framework for Prison Recovery which set out how we would recover from COVID. Many prisons will have eased restrictions at some point last year and unfortunately had to restrict activities because COVID rates went up again. We are continuing with the plans we set out last year but we have more time to learn about the impact COVID has had on you and on the. Staff. We have used this to set some priorities and all the recovery work in your prison will be based on this.

**Our next steps**

HMPPS has created four priorities for recovery in prisons and these are:

1. Prisoner wellbeing – we want to focus on supporting your physical and mental wellbeing and of course increase your time out of your cells. We want this time to be meaningful and constructive for you.
2. Sentence progression – increasing activity to allow you to progress in your sentence and prepare for release is really important.
3. Staff confidence, capability and wellbeing – this has also been a year of unprecedented strain for staff and we want to support them so they can work with you on the first two priorities.
4. Building the pathway to reform – we don’t just want to go back to how prisons were run before COVID. We want to use the good work from before COVID and what we have learnt during COVID to build back better and then focus on longer term reform.

We will be guided by the recovery roadmap for the community but we will need to tailor our approach for our own environment. Your prison will also have to respond based on any outbreaks locally as well and this means that some prisons will be able to make changes quicker than others.

**Living with coronavirus**

Coronavirus has not gone from our lives and we must continue to do all we can to prevent the spread of infection.

We will still need to reduce the contact you have with other people so you will need to follow all the social distancing rules in place in your prison.

Please take a test if you are asked to and if you are offered the vaccination, please have it. Our vaccination programme is following the community and so people are being vaccinated by age or if they have a condition which might put them at a higher risk if they catch coronavirus.

Testing will continue to run even as more people get vaccinated because the vaccine protects people from getting seriously ill from the virus but may not prevent transmission.

Testing, social distancing and vaccinations reduce our risk significantly and you can reduce the remaining risk by wearing a face covering when you are asked, washing your hands and coughing into a tissue.