**Gold Brief 19 August 2021 - Update on Regime Mitigations**

Purpose

On 23 July, we updated you on our review of Covid-19 regime mitigations and the expectation that these would wind down in the coming weeks and months. Following our final review, the Prison Operational Management Committee (POMC) and HMPPS Leadership Team (HLT) have agreed to maintain the deadline of the end of September 2021.

The purpose of this briefing is to provide further information on the timescale for winding down the various regime mitigations, the process, where necessary, to extend or re-introduce them, and the planned communications around this.

Update on timescales

The expectation throughout has been that these regime mitigations are temporary and should be removed in line with regime progression through the National Framework. Given this continued progression it has been agreed that **all central funding of regime mitigations (bar exceptions mentioned) will come to an end on 30th September.** There will be a process, where required, for extending or re-introducing them (see below). Details on how these mitigations can be wound down and the deadlines associated can be found in the attached table (see Annex A).

Process for Extending or Reintroducing Mitigations

The expectation remains that regime mitigations should not be required where fuller regime is being delivered, particularly as some of these mitigations were introduced to mitigate against the loss of social visits, which are now live across the estate. However, as it was the case pre-Covid, Governors may choose to use their local budgets to tailor their regime to their local requirements such as for additional food items and/or pin credit. We ask that where Governors do extend or reintroduce any of the measures mentioned below using local arrangements, that this is discussed with PGDs.

In extreme circumstances, such as prolonged periods of increased restrictions and/or a suspension in social visits, where establishments will require the reintroduction of mitigations for a prolonged period of time, establishments can request support by raising a business case (as per staffing support). If endorsed by the PGD and Executive Director this case will go to ORSP to consider whether mitigations can be temporarily extended or re-introduced.

**We ask that you note this process and upcoming changes and consider your regime accordingly**, informing us if you anticipate a business case will be required to extend beyond September.

Communications of Changes

Given the nature of these changes, it is important that careful consideration is given to how this is communicated and handled with prisoners. The Communications team has prepared an engagement plan which will start engagement with prisoners, their families and key stakeholders to set out the details of our proposal and timescales. The team will share straightforward briefings across the estate, create visual grids allowing comparison of before, during and after the pandemic and use prison radio, in-cell technology and Wayout TV, where available, to reinforce messaging. The first batch of communications is due to go out **Tuesday August 24th**, therefore if there are particular messages or specific approaches your establishment plans to take, it is recommended that you prepare any localised comms and engage with prisoners in order to manage expectations in the lead up to the September deadline.

There will be some differences across the YCS and Women’s Estate, which have been called out in the table below. Dedicated messaging will be sent out to clarify the details of these differences.

Should you have any queries or concerns about this approach please contact COVID19.RegimesOpsGuidance1@justice.gov.uk

**Annex A Regime Mitigations Information Table**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mitigation** | **Timing for removal** | **Process for removal** | **Process for extension or reintroduction** | **Contact**  |
| Access to iPads | To be retained  | N/A | N/A | Long term an owner for the continued use of iPads needs to be found and will be confirmed in due course. Any queries in the meantime can be directed to COVID19.RegimesOpsGuidance1@justice.gov.uk |
| Secure Video Calls  | To be retained | N/A | N/A | videocalls@digital.justice.gov.uk |
| Supplementary food packs | Switch off by end of September | * Bidfood will automatically switch off packs at the end of September, with final orders arriving 1st October.
* Bidfood has already been notified of this change.
 | * **This will not** be reintroduced.
 | Governors and Catering Managers can contact Al Crisci RCM Technical al.crisci@justice.gov.uk |
| Limiting Use of Basic | Move to governor discretion post end of September | * Will not mandate the return to Basic but allow Governor discretion on when it is appropriate to reintroduce according to local circumstances, with an expectation that as regimes open up Governors should consider reintroducing the use of Basic.
* Will require clear communications to prisoners which will form part of our comms plan.
 | * Governors can use their discretion to revert to limiting the use of basic should circumstances require it (e.g. increased restrictions, outbreak declared)
 | Operational\_policy1@justice.gov.uk[Incentives Policy Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incentives-policy-framework) |
| Prisoner Pay (removal of payment)  | Switch off by end of September  | * To remove as prison regimes start to expand to prevent any debt-related issues
* Can be switched off prior to September at Governor’s discretion.
 | * Can be reintroduced at Governor discretion where circumstances require it
 | Operational\_policy1@justice.gov.uk |
| In cell TVs (removal of rental charge) | Switch off by end of September (i.e. rental charge to be reintroduced after deadline) | * To remove as prison regimes start to open to prevent any debt-related issues
* Rental charge can be gradually reintroduced prior to September deadline at Governor’s discretion
 | * Mitigation (removal of charge) can be reintroduced at Governor discretion where circumstances require it
 | Operational\_policy1@justice.gov.uk[Incentives Policy Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incentives-policy-framework) |
| Pin Credit | Switch off by end of September | * Gradual stepped reduction in small increments in the lead up to the deadline to allow for adjustment, agreed with BT.
	+ w/c 13 Sep – reduce to £3
	+ w/c 27 Sep (last payment) – reduce to £1.50
* Must be switched off nationally, not possible for establishments to switch off ahead of the deadline.
* YCS will retain this measure until establishments reach Stage 1 – separate communications to follow.
* The Women’s Estate is pursuing extending the use of this measure. Follow up comms to come in due course.

**Note BT has agreed to sustain the reduced call rates that were introduced when this mitigation began. This reduced rate will continue beyond the end of September.** | * Can be reintroduced at Governor discretion where circumstances require it
* Self-serve function on PIN System can be used to purchase PIN for all prisoners if reintroduction required.
* For specific prisoners or groups of prisoners – BT will require a list of prisoner details. This can be activated within 48hrs.
 | COVID19.RegimesOpsGuidance1@justice.gov.uk |
| Temporary Mobile Pin Phones for prisoners without in-cell telephony | Remain in temporary accommodation units until May 2022 (agreed with BT).Remaining prisons, to remove by end of September | * Expectation that establishments send back phones at end of September, unless an extension has been agreed. The central monitoring team will be in touch with direct instructions about the returns process.
* Can be switched off prior to September at Governor’s discretion
 | * Can be reintroduced at Governor discretion where circumstances require it.
* Phones can be sent back to establishments on request and ready for use within 5 working days.
 | mobilepinmonitoring@justice.gov.uk |