**COVID-19 Guidance:**

**OBP Delivery in Prisons during COVID-19 (Stages 1, 2 &3).**

**Introduction**

On the 19 July 2021 UK COVID-19 Step 4 was implemented. This saw the last remaining community restrictions lifted such as social distancing and face coverings. Prisons however remain a high risk setting. As such, reducing the various measures in place will occur commensurate to the COVID-19 threat at each site. Although step 4 removed the legal requirement for many previous restrictions, both vaccination and COVID-19 testing remain key in providing COVID security for this future passage.

The gateway for Stage 1 in prisons was opened in August. This is the concluding element of the HMPPS COVID-19 National framework and the point where Prisons are able to reduce measures to the lowest point, whilst safely delivering services in an uncertain COVID-19 landscape.

This document provides guidance on the application of COVID-19 controls for OBP delivery at Stage 1 and during Stage 2&3.

This guidance is to be adopted in line with the HMPPS COVID-19 notifications on restrictions and opening activities. These may change and as such Prisons will activate/de-activate this service in line with the HMPPS notifications and their own agreed level outcomes.

**Stage 1 – Context and OBP Delivery**

For Prisons, Stage 1 is defined as “a state where prisons are delivering a meaningful, decent and full regime delivering core business with COVID controls set by the stage 1 SOP and taking the first steps towards the future regime reform vision”.

A high level single Stage 1 SOP has been published to facilitate all elements of delivery in Prisons. This SOP is available via: [Stage 1 – Prisons Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery (hmppsintranet.org.uk)](https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/ersd-guidance/stage-1/) . Please see 23. SOP – Stage 1.

The SOP has been developed to facilitate Prison transition to an end in COVID-19, it therefore provides a mechanism for Prisons in an uncertain COVID-19 landscape. Three core elements are detailed, each providing Prisons with the flexibility to react and ability to provide as much as possible during periods of sustained low rate COVID-19 stability. These elements are:

1. **‘Baseline’ Prevention –** Requirement for Stage 1 regimes, a fundamental first layer of defence against incursion. Low COVID threat during Stage 1.
2. **Increase in Measures: Surveillance and Detection –** Measures that should be employed but levels may vary depending on local circumstances. ModerateCOVID threat during Stage 1.
3. **Response Interventions –** To be employed because of outbreak status or change in RAG rating / Local circumstances/COVID threat. HighCOVID threat during Stage 1.

The Stage 1 SOP provides guidance for Prisons in assessing the relevant COVID-19 risk situation and the application of Baseline – Response measures relevant (via local community infection rates, regional growth rates, variant prevalence and local hospital COVID patient data). For example, Baseline measures would be the minimum COVID-19 controls during periods of low and decreasing levels of COVID-19 infection rates. Both Increase and Response measures will require the step up of local COVID-19 Prison COVID-19 Controls. This step up may be specific to a particular area within a prison, or as part of a wider Prison intervention.

During Stage 1, OBP delivery may plan for as full a delivery of service as possible (with minimal COVID-19 controls in place). There may however be potential disruption to delivery in the event local COVID-19 interventions impact directly within OBP. This will depend on the particular COVID-19 threat a prison faces and the specific prison responses to defend against this threat.

The below Table provides a summary of the OBP application of COVID-19 Controls during Stage 1. As noted, this summary is for baseline controls (prisons may increase measures in the event of a need locally). A further Table is provided outlining the current available controls and applications during Stages 2 & 3.

**Operational COVID-19 Guidance for OBP during Stage 1**

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| **Guidance Aspect** | **Description and OBP application of Baseline measure** |
| Environment | Standard OBP intervention accommodation. Where larger size rooms have been utilised these should be continued wherever possible. Where the environment provides physical distancing opportunity these should still be exploited where ever this is possible. |
| Social Distancing | Social Distancing is not required. Where the physical layout allows people to move with distance to others, it is still recommended people in prisons do so whilst COVID-19 is in circulation in the community. |
| Class size | Standard OBP size of groups as close as possible (dependant on resourcing of staff and participants).  |
| Staff Testing | OBP staff will have local access to LFD self-testing, onsite asymptomatic LFD testing and PCR testing (these may differ in arrangements at each site). HMPPS National arrangements are contained within: [Staff and Prisoner Testing – Prisons Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery (hmppsintranet.org.uk)](https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/ersd-guidance/2020/04/28/staff-testing-in-england/) |
| COVID-19 Self Isolation - Staff | Staff contacted via the NHS app following a positive contact may return to work undertaking the various DCT/RMT testing routes (but not if a member of their household is COVID-19 positive during the DCT arrangement, this applies to double vaccinated staff undertaking RMT). Not all prisons currently may have DCT/RMT testing facility available. Full details of the current return to work routes are contained within the previous link (please see self-isolation documents for staff and prisoners) |
| Resident Testing - OBP | Routine and specific COVID-19 risk lead testing is available for prisoners. OBP programme managers are advised to locally request prisoner self-testing availability for prisoners attending OBP mixed groups. This will be via the local prison testing co-ordinator and may be available for use as part of the local availability and capacity. The rationale for local capacity to utilise prisoner LFD self-testing capacity should be assessed to retain the programme during the current COVID-19 threat (via the programme/treatment manager and the local testing coordinator). In the event of a local outbreak, prisons will also have availability for mass testing (via OCTs). |
| Face Coverings (non PPE) - Prisoners | Prisoners are advised to wear face coverings where they may come into contact with people they may normally not meet, such as busy indoor corridors. They are recommended during movements to the OBP room. There is no requirement for face coverings to be worn during the OBP, however, if prisoners wish to voluntarily wear a face covering during the programme they will be allowed to do so. |
| FRSM use - Staff | Staff are advised to wear a surgical mask where they may come into contact with people they may normally not. They are recommended during movements to the OBP room. There is no requirement for a surgical mask to be worn during the OBP, however, if staff wish to voluntarily wear a mask during the programme they will be allowed to do so.Treatment managers should review elements within the OBP where staff may be required to interact with prisoners over a sustained and close proximity. In these instances, staff will wear a surgical mask. Prisons may request assessments to be completed to identify the relevant tasks for this.Prisons may also adjust their local face mask strategies to account for COVID-19 risks (current or emerging). This may require adjustments during OBPs. |
| Cohorting and Regime Groups  | Prisons will still function the operation of PIU & RCU facilities. Where prisoners on OBP come from multiple areas in the prison, LFD self-testing is highly recommended in the event of local COVID-19 increase or response measures (please see previous guidance on resident testing).  |
| COVID-19 Symptoms | Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms must self-isolate and take a PCR test. It remains good practice to always check with prisoners each day. COVID-19 symptoms are on: [Main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/main-symptoms/) |
| Contact Trace – Local OBP Arrangements | In the event a resident or staff member from the OBP becomes unwell or tests positive for COVID-19, the local prison HRL (Health Resilience Lead), must be contacted as soon as possible. OBP facilitators should familiarise themselves with who the local prison contact is. Details of the HMPPS Contact Trace arrangements are available in: [Contact Tracing – Prisons Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery (hmppsintranet.org.uk)](https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/ersd-guidance/2020/06/12/contact-tracing/) |
| At Risk and Vulnerable persons | There are no further requirements needed during OBP for CEV staff/prisoners who have been double vaccinated. Where CEV staff/prisoners have not been double vaccinated, it is recommended they should wear a surgical mask and or socially distance from others during the programme.Prisons will inform staff and prisoners of any further measures in the event of local increased or response COVID-19 measures. |
| COVID-19 Workplace Risk Assessment | New or revised COVID-19 workplace risk assessments are no longer required. COVID-19 considerations will be included within the normal BAU department H&S risk assessments and SSOW. Previous COVID risk assessments and LOPs should be attached/embedded to the BAU documents. |
| Hygiene Arrangements | Hand washing should be utilised prior to each session/when breaking and on departure where ever this is possible. Where hand washing sessions are not immediately available, supervised hand sanitisation will take place using the Prison COVID-19 supplies. Please be reminded, the solution must not be freely available to prisoners unsupervised (it contains a minimum of 60% ethanol)  |
| Cleaning | If the OBP accommodation is not being used by anyone other than the particular group, there will not be a requirement for the daily schedule of COVID-19 sanitisation and cleaning arrangements. It must however be cleaned as per normal BAU cleaning standard and schedules. The cleaning schedule must include cleaning at least daily.In the event a member of staff/resident becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive, the accommodation should be COVID-19 decontaminated prior to re-use. |
| Ventilation | If the accommodation has mechanical ventilation (building internal extract fans/environmental systems/air conditioning), these should be operated. Natural ventilation may also be achieved via opening external windows and doors (where possible). It may be necessary to consider additional clothing during autumn and winter periods to achieve ventilation needs. |
| Records | For the purposes of potential test and trace, daily attendance records of staff and prisoners must be retained. These records must be retained for a minimum of 21 days. |

**Operational COVID-19 Guidance for OBP during Stages 2 & 3 (with 1 m+ application)**

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| **Guidance Aspect** | **Description and OBP application during Stage 2 & 3 (completion of EDM and RRMP)** |
| 1 metre +Social Distancing | 1m+ may be permitted if the following additional measures are adopted.* Staff wear FRSM (Surgical Mask) during the programme
* Prisoners wear FRSM during the programme
* All Prisoners are voluntarily taking part in local prisoner LFD self-testing (via local capacity).
* All Staff facilitating in OBPs are voluntarily part of the local prison testing arrangements.

Social Distancing maybe permitted at 1m+ in circumstances applied in the 1m+ box above. Where this is not able to be achieved 2 metres social distancing will be applied. |
| Environment | Standard OBP intervention accommodation. Where larger size rooms have been utilised these should be continued.Programme/treatment managers will have already considered spatial dimensions during the initial COVID-19 risk assessment and EDM process. This would have provided distances of 2 metres between people and the effective distancing for those to move around in the room. Where possible, some rooms may provide additional capacity using 2 metres. This can be utilised to provide more capacity during OBPs if required (up to standard group sizes).Application of 1m+ spatial dimensions will require a further review and reconfiguration of the OBP accommodation. The same overriding principles apply as previously undertaken, however the distance changing to 1 metre between people and ensuring movements between people.Signs, ventilation and directional movement indicators should still be in place |
| Class size | As per EDM Level 2 & 3 descriptor levels. 1-1s/ Socially distanced sized groups at 2 metres or Larger grouped sizes applied at 1m+. Not yet at full BAU standard size groups unless the accommodation provides the spatial capacity (resourcing permitting). |
| Staff Testing | OBP staff will have local access to LFD self-testing, onsite asymptomatic LFD testing and PCR testing (these may differ in arrangements at each site). HMPPS National arrangements are contained within: [Staff and Prisoner Testing – Prisons Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery (hmppsintranet.org.uk)](https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/ersd-guidance/2020/04/28/staff-testing-in-england/) |
| COVID-19 Self Isolation - Staff | Staff contacted via the NHS app following a positive contact may return to work undertaking the various DCT/RMT testing routes (but not if a member of their household is COVID-19 positive during the DCT arrangement, this applies to double vaccinated staff undertaking RMT). Not all prisons currently may have DCT/RMT testing facility available. Full details of the current return to work routes are contained within the previous link (please see self-isolation documents for staff and prisoners) |
| Resident Testing - OBP | Routine and specific COVID-19 risk lead testing is available for prisoners. OBP programme managers are advised to locally request prisoner self-testing availability for prisoners attending OBP mixed groups. This will be via the local prison testing co-ordinator and may be available for use as part of the local availability and capacity. The rationale for local capacity to utilise prisoner LFD self-testing capacity should be assessed to retain the programme during the current COVID-19 threat (via the programme/treatment manager and the local testing coordinator). In the event of a local outbreak, prisons will also have availability for mass testing (via OCTs). |
| Face Coverings/FRSM - Prisoners | Prisoners are requested to wear face coverings during movements within the prison. Local prison face masks strategies vary on application, treatment managers must check whether face coverings are required locally to be worn during classroom environments at each prison. Prisoners will wear a FRSM in the room during a 1m+ course. |
| FRSM use - Staff | Staff are required to wear face masks during any close contact work. Local prison face masks strategies vary on application, treatment managers must check whether face masks are required locally to be worn during classroom environments at each prison. Staff will wear a FRSM in the room during a 1m+ course. |
| Cohorting and Regime Groups  | Prisons will still function the operation of PIU & RCU facilities. Where prisoners on OBP come from multiple areas in the prison, LFD self-testing is highly recommended in the event of local COVID-19 increase or response measures (please see previous guidance on resident testing). |
| COVID-19 Symptoms | Staff and prisoners with COVID-19 symptoms must self-isolate and take a PCR test. It remains good practice to always check with prisoners each day. COVID-19 symptoms are on: [Main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/main-symptoms/) |
| Contact Trace – Local OBP Arrangements | In the event a resident or staff member from the OBP becomes unwell or tests positive for COVID-19, the local prison HRL ( Health Resilience Lead), must be contacted as soon as possible. OBP facilitators should familiarise themselves with whom the local prison contact is. Details of the HMPPS Contact Trace arrangements are available in: [Contact Tracing – Prisons Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery (hmppsintranet.org.uk)](https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/ersd-guidance/2020/06/12/contact-tracing/) |
| At Risk and Vulnerable persons | OBPs will require to be designed to achieve the necessary protective measures for staff and prisoners whom are within the CEV groups.Full details are included within: [Staff – Family Shielding & Vulnerable Staff – Prisons Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery (hmppsintranet.org.uk)](https://hmppsintranet.org.uk/ersd-guidance/2020/04/15/staff-family-shielding/)These measures do change, as such programme managers are requested to ensure relevant individual risk assessments are in place with any necessary additional precaution measures for the OBP. |
| COVID-19 Workplace Risk Assessment | COVID-19 Workplace risk assessments remain in place and should be reviewed to ensure any significant changes to the accommodation or working arrangements are included. This in particular will need to be undertaken where OBPs move from a 2 m social distancing application to 1 m+. |
| Hygiene Arrangements | Hand washing should be utilised prior to each session/when breaking and on departure where ever this is possible. Where hand washing sessions are not immediately available, supervised hand sanitisation will take place using the Prison COVID-19 supplies. Please be reminded, the solution must not be freely available to prisoners unsupervised (it contains a minimum of 60% ethanol).Shared equipment such as pens etc should not take place. Either provide people with individual equipment or carry out cleaning using prison disinfectants prior to re-use by other people  |
| Cleaning | If the OBP accommodation is not being used by anyone other than the particular group, there will not be a requirement for the daily schedule of COVID-19 sanitisation and cleaning arrangements. It must however be cleaned as per normal BAU cleaning standard and schedules. The cleaning schedule must include cleaning at least daily.In the event a member of staff/resident becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive, the accommodation should be COVID-19 decontaminated prior to re-use. |
| Ventilation | If the accommodation has mechanical ventilation (building internal extract fans/environmental systems/air conditioning), these should be operated. Natural ventilation may also be achieved via opening external windows and doors (where possible). It may be necessary to consider additional clothing during autumn and winter periods to achieve ventilation needs.Where ventilation is not available in any form, use of face coverings/masks may be considered in mitigation.  |
| Records | For the purposes of potential test and trace, daily attendance records of staff and prisoners must be retained. These records must be retained for a minimum of 21 days. |

**Further Information and Documents**

How to don and doff a surgical mask:



**NHS – COVID Symptoms and what to do:**

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/

**Annex**

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**Wearing a face covering**

A cloth face covering should cover your mouth and nose while allowing you to breathe comfortably. It can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before putting it on and after taking it off. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth at all times and store used face coverings in a plastic bag until you have an opportunity to wash them.

Do not touch the front of the face covering, or the part of the face covering that has been in contact with your mouth and nose. Once removed, make sure you clean any surfaces the face covering has touched.

You should wash a face covering regularly. It can go in with other laundry, using your normal detergent.

When wearing a face covering, take care to tuck away any loose ends.

