**Gold Briefing – Resettlement Overnight Release (ROR): Testing Requirements and Protective Isolation Update (26.11.21)**

**Purpose**

Guidance for the delivery of domestic ROTL (Resettlement Overnight Release and Resettlement Day Release) during COVID-19 has to date been provided via EDM 27. Now that greater numbers of establishments are progressing and the number of domestic ROTL placements is increasing, it is now time for us to revise our guidance around the facilitation of domestic ROTL, specifically Resettlement Overnight Release (ROR)

The purpose of this briefing is to set out these changes and what they mean for establishments facilitating ROR.

**Testing for ROR**

From 09.12.21, it will be a requirement that prisoners who are granted ROR licences will be required to agree to take part in post-ROTL testing, as set out in the ROTL testing guidance. Medical exemptions will apply to this requirement, and any prisoner who has a medical reason why they are unable to take a test will not be required to do so. This requirement is being introduced to minimise risk of incursion of infection through returning prisoners from stays in the community. It will continue to be required that prisoners are also encouraged to take part in testing prior to going on ROR.

This update does not impact on RDR or workplace ROTL licences. The testing guidance for these options remains unchanged at this time.

The following condition should be added to all ROR licences issued from 09.12.21:

*By signing this licence, you have agreed to be tested for Covid-19 on your return (unless you are medically exempt from testing).*

It should be explained to the prisoner that the purpose of this requirement is to continue to manage the risk of COVID-19 within the prison population and to protect them and those around them. ROR involves them staying overnight in an address outside of the prison and therefore reasonably increases the risk of close contact and thus incursion of the virus back into the establishment. Testing is an effective measure to control that risk. This applies to both vaccinated and non-vaccinated people as whilst effective at reducing risk, the vaccination does not eliminate the risk of being able to transmit the virus.

If they are not prepared to agree to this, then the ROR cannot take place. If they fail to submit to testing on return this must be recorded on IRS as a temporary release failure and suspension of ROTL or other disciplinary action will be considered in line with the ROTL policy framework. The refusal will be taken into account in decisions on future ROR while the requirement to test on return from ROR is in place.  The staff member carrying out the review must document the outcome and the reasons why future ROTL should or should not be approved.

Prisoners should be encouraged to take part in testing before they go out on licence to protect those that they come into contact with during the licence period, but this remains voluntary.

**Self-Isolation on ROR**

Now that we are seeing increasing numbers of ROR licenses granted and the numbers of fully vaccinated prisoners within our population is increasing, it is now appropriate for us to revise the guidance around self-isolation on ROR.

The following condition should therefore be added to all ROR licenses issued from 09.12.21:

*If you* ***develop COVID-19 symptoms*** *(a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; a loss/ change of smell or taste) you must isolate* ***immediately*** *at your licence address and arrange for a PCR test via https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test. Notify the prison that you have arranged the PCR test as soon as possible and when you get the result. You must isolate at your licence address whilst you await the result but you must return to the prison by your return date and time above, even if the result has yet to arrive.*

*If you test* ***positive*** *you must notify the prison immediately and return to prison that day if practicable and in any event within 24 hours in order to self-isolate.  Once you have returned, you must notify Test & Trace and the establishment Health Resilience Lead of the names of each other person living at the address where you spent this ROR.*

*If you test* ***negative****, you can continue your ROTL and return to your prison as per the licence conditions. You must notify the establishment of this result*

*If a member of the household at your licence address tests positive or you are told to self-isolate by the NHS Covid-19 App or by Test & Trace (and you are not fully vaccinated - which means that 14 days have passed since your final dose of the vaccine), you must notify the prison immediately and return that day if practicable, or in any event within 24 hours in order to self-isolate.*

*If you are* ***fully vaccinated*** *and are in England, then you are not required to isolate and can continue your ROTL period but must test on return to the establishment as required by the licence.*

*If you are* ***fully vaccinated*** *and are in Wales, then you must self-isolate until you have received a negative PCR test result. If the contact is not a household contact, then you must take a PCR test but are not required to isolate.*

*When travelling back to the prison following a positive test result or instruction to self-isolate, you should wear a face covering. Where possible, you should utilise your own transport or ask a family/friend to assist you with returning to the prison. If this is not possible, you can work with your prison to find a safe method of transport back (the prison arranging a prison vehicle and driver to pick you up, or use of a taxi). However, you must return to the prison.*

Establishments should include a conversation to plan safe routes back to the prison in the event of a positive test with prisoners as part of the risk assessment process. SOP 8 – Use of Vehicles and the cleaning and decontamination of vehicles should be utilised where taxis or prison vehicles are be used as an option - [Safe Operating Procedures (SOP) – Prisons Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery (hmppsintranet.org.uk)](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/04/15/safe-operating-procedures-sop-using-ppe/))

Once a prisoner has returned to the establishment following a positive test/close contact, they should be self-isolated in line with the guidance provided in the HMPPS Cohorting and Compartmentalisation guidance and the UKHSA guidance for preventing outbreaks in secure settings.

Where a prisoner is already released on ROR at the time this instruction is issued, and they contact the prison to say they have symptoms, they should be told to arrange a PCR test immediately and notify you of the result as soon as they get it. If they have tested positive or have been told to self-isolate, they must be told to return to the prison that day if practicable and in any event within 24 hours, and to travel in a COVID secure manner.

**Supporting Guidance**

Prisons should follow the link below and access the testing guidance for ROTL which is included as part of the Prisoner Testing Manual. This guidance includes information on the timeframes that testing must occur within and information about the use of self-testing where suitable.

<https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/04/28/staff-testing-in-england/>

Please direct any questions to [COVID19.RegimesOpsGuidance1@justice.gov.uk](mailto:COVID19.RegimesOpsGuidance1@justice.gov.uk)