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**GOLD Briefing; Operational Guidance; Prison Workshops at Stage 3**

As you will now be aware, we are reverting prisons to a new baseline position of Stage 3, due to the exceptional level of COVID risk. We are reintroducing additional guidance in a small number of areas to support this change. This includes reintroducing the **prioritised approach to prison workshops**.

All prisons are required to review their workshops and to suspend activity in those workshops that are not covered by the priority workshop list attached. Due to the different risks and physical fabric in Open prisons, Cat D sites should review their current workshop provision and risk assessments but can maintain additional workshop activities beyond those listed provided they can operate with Stage 3 controls in place (restrictions on numbers, face masks, social distancing, hygiene protocols, testing etc) and an updated risk assessment has been produced.

**Prioritised workshops are defined as those that are business critical**– either because they serve the internal market and/or they fulfil an essential or priority contract. **These workshops are listed in Annex A (attached)**. The aim is to support essential activity and reduce risk and movements therefore we are reducing the number of workshops to support those that are priority. The high value nature of a contract can be considered but does not automatically mean a workshop should stay open.

To enable these workshops to remain open, prisons can locally adapt their working practices; timings, staffing supervision, FT/PT working etc to maintain essential services.

All workshops that stay open must have social distancing, face protection and reasonable limitations on mixing.  Establishments can reintroduce full time employment in critical workshops to ensure maximum productivity levels and minimise mixing between individuals and cohorts. We are engaging with Trade Unions around flexible temporary resourcing of workshops to meet the critical need (in line with the agreed processes). Prisons should also engage with TUs locally on this issue(this includes PCS union for workshops). Risk assessments should be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes.

**At Stage 3 prisons can “attend all” prisoners as a regime mitigation-**to mitigate for those who cannot work due to the restrictions (please see the separate Regime Mitigations briefing on this issue).**Prisons should therefore**“**attend all” prisoners who do not have opportunity to work but should ‘correctly attend’ those who have the ability to work via NOMIS**. For example, if prisoners are able to attend but refuse or choose not to, they should not be attended automatically as this disincentivizes actual attendance in priority activities. Prisoners should only be paid via the “attend all” function if they have not had opportunity to work.

Prisons are encouraged to find ways to keep these workshops open due to their business-critical nature. The IRCPE (PSPI) team is **available to support prisons to discuss specific staffing issues or temporary measures to keep a workshop operating.** Where an establishment does not have sufficient resource to open all of the Annex listed workshops, they should consult with **Jason Swettenham,** Head of IRCPE (PSPI) [Jason.swettenham@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Jason.swettenham@justice.gov.uk) to make the judgment call on what is required to remain open.

If an establishment outside the Open Estate wishes **to apply to keep a workshop open that is not on the list in Annex A , they must request permission to do so from COVID Gold.**Please email the Operational Guidance Team FMB at Covid19.Regimes@opsguidance1@justice.gov.uk and Chris Huckle (Christopher.Huckle1@justice.gov.uk). Examples of when this is justified may include a situation where a key contract is at risk from closure of a workshop and compartmentalisation can be maintained.

**Annex A:**

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**Further information (added 21/12/21)**

As highlighted in the Gold Briefing “Return to Stage 3 due to Omicron Risk”, in addition to the attached specific workshops list, there is a number of key general Workshops/Industries areas that should be prioritised for delivery. These include:

* **Catering-** this is at the core of ensuring we meet decency standards, promoting health and wellbeing. It is crucial to maintain uninterrupted provision of three nutritious meals each day as well as the operation of the breakfast packing workshops.
* **Retail**- The delivery of ‘canteen’ is critical in promotion of decency and the good order and discipline within establishments. The canteen provision has to continue each week and two external packing sites have been mobilised to support this.
* **Laundries**- Clean clothing and bedding are also critical to the safe and decent operation of prison regimes. With limited number of potential commercial avenues for the washing of sheets and blankets, and with an absence of commercial options for the washing of prison clothing, laundry workshops must remain a number one priority.
* **Waste managements and recycling of internal waste**- These must be maintained to help restrict the prevalence of vermin and other pests as well as to maintain the health and safety of staff and prisoners
* **Land based activities and horticulture-** Work carried out to support the continuation of livestock welfare standards should remain as a matter of course. The work which is carried out in polytunnels, greenhouses and especially outdoor should also continue as it would normally allow for following social distancing and other relevant guidelines. However, grounds maintenance tasks supporting security of the establishment and crop production should only occur with the agreement of the Governor and PGD, in consultation with the recognized trade union representative.

COVID-19 GOLD COMMAND

20/12/21