**Notice for Prisoners**

Last week you were told about the Government’s new plans to help manage the new COVID variant, Omicron, and what this means for you in prison.

Since we heard these new plans, called Plan B, we have been working hard to decide what other steps we need to take to manage the risk from this new variant and keep you and the staff in this prison safe.

It has already been said that there are no plans to stop social visits right now. I know how important they are, especially at this time of year. However we will have to make some changes to help to reduce the risk of Omicron for you, your visitors and my staff.

From [X DATE] your visitors will need to take a Lateral Flow test before their visit and bring the evidence of a negative result such as a photo of the negative test taken on the day of the visit or a text or email from the NHS if they registered the result online. Children aged 11 and under do not need to take a test.

You and your visitors will still be able to have physical contact during your visit, but you will all need to wear a face covering.

I would also encourage you to also take a test before your visit to help to reduce the risks to everyone, especially if your visitor is vulnerable.

If your visitor cannot take a test for medical reasons we will need them to bring some written evidence explaining why this is.

This is a vital part of keeping this prison and everyone in it safe from the virus, so I am afraid if your visitor cannot show that they have a negative test result then the prison staff won’t be able to let them come in for their visit. I hope we will not have to do this because it isn’t nice for you, your visitor or the member of staff.

The testing rules in the community have also changed. Anyone who has had contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 now has to take a Lateral Flow test every day for 7 days and limit close contact with other people outside their household, especially in crowded or enclosed spaces and with anyone who is vulnerable.

As prisons are high risk places and our visits area is often busy we are asking any visitors who have had contact with someone with COVID-19 to postpone their visit until they have completed their 7 days of testing.

I want to reassure you that if your visit does have to be postponed because of contact with a positive case or because of a positive test, it will be re-booked and it won’t have an impact on your visits allocation.

I recognise that these extra precautions may be difficult for some, especially during the festive period when seeing your family and significant others is so important. This is why we want to make visits as safe as possible, so that we can reduce the chances of people becoming unwell.

If you are feeling worried about any of this, please speak to your key worker, a Listener or any staff member that you trust.

You can also continue to get updates on Prison Radio, Way Out TV and the in-cell laptops for those of you who have it.

Thank you for your continued patience and co-operation.