**25.02.2022 Regime Progression to Stage 1 in Prisons**

**Purpose**

Due to the continued reduction in community prevalence, reduced disease severity and protections provided by vaccination against COVID-19, Ministers have agreed that the timing is right to **open the Stage 1 Gateway for all sites as of today, 25.02.22.** This decision is relevant to all prisons in England and Wales, including the youth secure estate.

The opening of the progression gateway is an important step in our recovery and reflects the significant reduction in risk we are now seeing.

**Action**

Governors should now consider their readiness for Stage 1 and those in a position for progression should follow the process below.

**Testing**

At present, mandatory daily testing remains in place for all establishments, however work is being completed with UKHSA on the short and medium – term approach to testing, and further details will be shared next week. Testing will remain an important control for managing infection and risk limitation, but we recognise it must be proportionate to the level of risk as that changes.

**Progression mechanics**

Stage 1 removes the routine requirement and expectation for social distancing, and SOP mandation for face masks in all but [specific instances](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/04/15/safe-operating-procedures-sop-using-ppe/).

Sites are now able to move out of outbreak status more promptly following recently published [UKHSA advice.](https://justiceuk-my.sharepoint.com/personal/maria_harcourt1_justice_gov_uk/Documents/GOLD%20briefings/DIGEST%202022.02.04/Gold%20Briefing%20%20Updates%20to%20Outbreak%20Management%20and%20Mass%20Testing%20Guidance%20%2804.02.22%29.docx)

Details of the progression mechanics are provided in the embedded document below. As of now, all establishments RAG rated **AMBER** at the national [heatmap](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/2020/09/28/heat-map-for-reverse-cohorting-requirements-to-review-regime/) panel will be able to apply for progression. As before, Stage 1 approval is signed off by the Prison Group Director (PGD), with Executive Director (ED) oversight. ED offices will notify Gold of regime stage changes.

Progression is possible directly from Stage 3 to Stage 1. Sites progressing to Stage 1 for the first time must complete a full progression process, including consultation with stakeholders and Trade Unions. Those that have previously agreed Stage 1 plans, if they remain unchanged, should still engage with Trade Unions but fuller consultation will not be required. It is essential that in all cases that risk assessments and local operating procedures are appropriate to manage any risks.

Sites wishing to progress and eligible to do so will fall into one of the following categories and should follow the relevant guidance:

* Sites wishing to progress directly from Stage 3 to [Stage 1](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/stage-1/)
* Sites wishing to progress from Stage 2 to [Stage 1](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/stage-1/)
* Sites wishing to progress from Stage 3 to [Stage 2](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/stage-2/)

Establishments, when assessing which Stage they wish to progress to, should be mindful not to conflate and confuse COVID controls with the management of wider regime constraints. It is understood that there may still be need for regime regression if there is a requirement for additional controls to be added to manage an outbreak risk. The regression of regimes for staffing shortfalls should not be undertaken with the Regime Management Plan (RMP) utilised instead.

**Trade Union Consultation**

As part of their progression to Stage 1 prisons and local health partners, Trade Union officials and other stakeholders should either work collaboratively to develop a local ‘Stage 1 day 1’ regime model around the new level of controls, and a Regime Summary agreed with PGD, *or* to ensure their previous regime model for Stage 1 remains up to date and remains agreed by local Trade Unions. Sites who have previously moved to Stage 1 need only to review their previous Regime Model, new sites will need to complete a [Regime Model summary.](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Ckpe75c%5COneDrive%20-%20Ministry%20of%20Justice%5CGOLD%20briefings%5CSTAGE%201%20PREP%5CStage%201%20summary%20Template.docx)

**Regime Mitigations**

Prisons should moreover expect and start to prepare for the removal of regime mitigations as a fuller, purposeful and beneficial regime returns. As sites progress through the National Framework, they should be planning their approach for winding these back. All central funding for regime mitigations will come to an end 31 March, therefore sites should aim to withdraw all mitigations before this deadline. Next week we will be providing further detail and information on this approach including supplementary comms materials and details of the planned extension process for those sites who require mitigations past the 31 March deadline.

**RMP and Progression**

Prisons must either review an existing or complete a new RMP as part of their progression to Stage 1. Once reviewed, the RMP must be robust, completed and in place, used to support delivery of Stage 1. They should be bolstered by engagement logs, and prisons should consider that training may need to be completed for RMP processes. There will be further comms in the near future on the role of RMP and the support being offered nationally/regionally involving TUs to utilise Regime Management Planning correctly and as much as possible. With direct trade union involvement, An RMP support package is being assembled to ease this process of development and implementation. This is in line with the expectation that the RMP will be increasingly significant in relation to regime and resource management and safety, with the challenge being more resource-focussed as COVID controls ebb and we consider our next steps.

Details of the Process and considerations that must be taken as part of your progression decision, and a Stage 1 Regime Summary template are included below. Full guidance on Stage 1 can be found [here](https://pogp.hmppsintranet.org.uk/stage-1/).

If you have any queries, please discuss with your PGD, or contact COVID19Ops&Guidance1@justice.gov.uk

 