



# Public Health England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

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Dear Anne

Thank you for your further letter of 27 July on COVID-19 guidance for the children and young people's secure estate (CYPSE).

I note your concerns that the absence of CYPSE specific guidance has contributed to quite restrictive regimes in some under 18 establishments, particularly in young offender institutions, reflecting practice in the adult estate. We are clearly supportive of ensuring that the needs of this vulnerable group of young people are specifically considered when providing advice for the development of guidance.

Public Health England (PHE) worked closely with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) throughout the pandemic to develop guidance focusing on the core elements of infection prevention and control in custodial settings, which are common to all ages. As this advice is not age dependent we published a single guidance document setting out measures to manage COVID-19 across all prisons and places of detention. You can find this guidance at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-prisons-and-other-prescribed-places-of-detention-guidance>.

All our guidance emphasises the importance of:

- minimal contact with those who are unwell
- good hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning regimes
- where necessary, wearing appropriate personal protective equipment
- reduced close contact between individuals and the need to maintain a social distance of 2 metres wherever possible

I am confident that the advice on effective infection prevention and control measures in all prisons and places of detention remains relevant to the CYPSE. It is possible that any problems that have arisen have been more to do with how the advice was operationalised in these settings.

The decision to produce bespoke guidance for children in youth custody would be for the responsible Government Departments with an MoJ lead. PHE alongside NHSEI health and justice team will continue to provide advice to the relevant Department/s.

PHE has contributed to bespoke guidance for secure training centres (STCs) and secure children's homes (SCHs) as requested by the NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) CYP health and justice teams. We are currently advising on the inclusion of appropriate measures for recovery planning.

This advice and these measures are then implemented by our partners through their commissioned services. The discussions for recovery planning have included the importance of young people centred services for mental and physical health and wellbeing

The guidance for STCs and SCHs has not been published on GOV.UK, it has been widely disseminated to those working in the under 18s secure estate and is currently shaping practice in these settings. PHE has also worked in close partnership with the responsible commissioners, from NHSE&I and the Youth Custody Service (YCS), to present unified messages and a shared vision to staff and young people resident in these settings.

Modifying regimes in secure settings (including the CYPSE) to support the adoption of these infection control measures and implementation of population management arrangements has been very successful. It has helped limit the impact of outbreaks for people detained in these settings, the staff and their families. Despite this success, I take extremely seriously any suggestion that the measures adopted have had a detrimental impact on the children's overall wellbeing.

We are keen to review lessons learnt, working with partners in NHSE&I and the YCS. This would be a further opportunity to consider the issues you have raised and discuss new and emerging approaches which maintain both infection control and measures to support wellbeing learning from other sectors and settings.

I will ask our national health and justice team to meet and discuss these issues with NHSE&I and the YCS and encourage the responsible commissioners to consider reviewing lessons learnt in their areas.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

**Personal Data**

Duncan Selbie  
Chief Executive

cc Professor Viv Bennett, Chief Nurse and Director Maternity and Early Years, PHE  
Dr Éamonn O'Moore, National Lead for Health & Justice, PHE