



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

# COVID-19 Operational Guidance – Exceptional Regime & Service Delivery

Version 1.0

19 March 2020

- ∞ Where reference is made to SILVER throughout the document, please consider this in the above context of Regional SILVER for PSPs and Provider Silver for PMPs.

There should be two outputs from the Regime Management Meeting:

### **Output 1: ERMP**

All prisons must produce a temporary ERMP for agreement with Regional SILVER (informed by PGDs where possible) by the commissioned date. The ERMP will outline plans for delivery of four essential regime priorities during the COVID-19 period. ERMP will only cover the period during which the establishment cannot reach their MSL. The staffing position will be monitored daily through the COVID-19 command structure and expected return from BRONZE to SILVER and a SILVER return to GOLD. The strategy will be to return establishments to their pre-existing RMP as soon as possible and only utilise ERMP or specific alternative practices as determined by the emerging operational situation.

ERMP need not be as comprehensive as an existing RMP but must contain a plan for each of the four regime priority areas. Safe operating procedures for reduced staffing in all prisoner facing areas will form part of the existing RMP and should be considered when making ERMP plans for each area. Dynamic, risk based decisions which sit outside of standard processes may be required for managing establishments during COVID-19 and every such decision should be recorded and communicated appropriately.

### **Output 2: Defensible decision log**

As we are entering an unprecedented period of operational pressure, it is also recommended that establishment Governors (BRONZE) open a defensible decision log and keep this open for the duration of the COVID-19 situation. Establishment BRONZE commanders will be required to demonstrate the elements of regime they have committed to deliver locally but also to justify potentially complex decisions not to operate or prioritise other elements. This is particularly pertinent to the provision of services such as social visits where we must strive to maintain delivery as long as possible, albeit potentially in a reduced or changed form. This may be to the detriment of other areas of delivery and such decisions must be documented and justified. The national defensible decision log template previously provided by NIMU can be utilised for this purpose.

#### **[ EMBED Package ]**

HMPPS is committed to giving Operational Managers within the command structure the space to make informed tactical decisions at a local level within this context but that we have clear visibility around decisions being taken with the right level of escalation based on the issue or risk being managed. In turn this will allow us to best provide as much support and resource as we can nationally to deliver this.

### **Operating assumptions**

In all cases, where resource sits at MSL or above, wherever possible, normal regime operations should be followed. However adjustments to the mass movement of prisoners, full unlock and exercise for instance should be considered in advance of needing to activate ERMP. At the stage where establishments are unable to meet the MSL, ERMP procedures must be triggered. It is assumed for the purposes of this planning that ERMP will be triggered when:

- ∞ The establishment has insufficient staff to meet their local MSL.
- ∞ The establishment is expecting staffing to be at these levels for a protracted period.