

During the current nationwide situation it is imperative that all staff are kept up to date with changing advice and guidance that is being centrally published. As you are all aware, staff will become more anxious when they are not included in communication streams. When the Service is operating in a business as usual status Governors generally have large gatherings via full staff meetings and within operational boardrooms. Although the temptation is to continue with this mode of communications, Governors should consider, where possible alternative arrangements for communicating with your staff. There have been reports of large full staff meetings and operational boardrooms with standing room only in the last couple of days. Although as a Service we have been identified as essential key work, this does not mean that we should not consider the Governments advice on social distancing where possible. We are doing everything possible to source PPE from around the world to help protect our front line staff but unnecessarily exposing them at meetings counteracts some of these measures. Different ways in which communications can be cascaded should therefore be considered, for example:

- Holding operational meetings in larger areas such as visits or the chapel;
- Asking people to dial in, where possible;
- Holding smaller meetings and asking managers to cascade messages to smaller audiences;
- Briefing papers sent out to staff.

Managing prisons is extremely difficult at the moment but if we can do anything to help protect our staff and keep all our families safe we should. Doing so will ensure resources within prisons remain as high as possible and assist with the operational running during the difficult period we are going to encounter.

## Youth Custody Service (YCS)

The YCS will operate under the same temporary guiding principles as the rest of the adult estate when it comes to carrying out the Governments' instructions on social distancing, although it is important for children to continue to have social contact and therefore we are referring to "Physical distancing" instead. All non-essential activities and activities involving large groups of people or mass movement of children and young people have been ceased. Children and young people all have access to telephones in their rooms and have been provided with additional PIN credits free of charge.

Children and young people in custody are recognised as a particularly vulnerable group and additional safeguards should be considered where necessary. Human contact is especially important for children and young people, so this should be provided where possible and practicable.

The YCS must take steps to monitor, manage and mitigate the threat of significant numbers of staff and children and young people becoming infected with COVID 19 over a short period. This is so that safety and stability across the Children and Young People Secure Estate (CYPSE) can be maintained. Secure settings have a legal duty to safeguard the vulnerable children and young people held in their care. There is a high level of mental health disorder and neurodisability in this cohort of children and young people, and staff are required to pay particular attention to these needs to ensure there is no increase self-harm or suicide resulting from this extraordinary situation. It is also critical that our staff health and wellbeing are protected and supported.