

No changes to existing Covid delivery levels

Extensive discussions between the Probation trade unions and senior leaders from HMPPS, NPS and the CRCs took place yesterday. These constructive discussions have resulted in the following position statement which explains that the agreed current levels of delivery across Unpaid Work, Accredited Programmes, Polygraph Testing and Oral Fluid Drug Testing (OFDT) both in the Community and in Approved Premises, should remain as per the current delivery agreements (as of w/c 18-01.21). Equally, the advice to NPS staff in Prisons and Courts is to remain the same at this time.

Future reviews

It has also been agreed to hold weekly reviews going forwards. This will allow for any movement in delivery levels, when this becomes appropriate, and also allow for planning and mobilisation time when or if services are resumed.

There is a shared view that services should be re-introduced incrementally, only where this is appropriate to do so. This may be the breadth or scope of a service, level of service or on a regional basis. All are to be considered. The following have been agreed as possible suggestions of how incremental delivery might be best achieved:

- **Unpaid Work** - to initially increase the number of placements in the current areas of delivery e.g. vaccination centres / food banks where feasible in line with social distancing requirements. The re-introduction of outdoor group projects should also be considered in advance of any indoor placements.
- **Accredited Programmes** - the joint recovery group will further investigate the possibility of virtual group delivery. Re-introduction of face to face delivery will be discussed with HMPPS and Public Health England Advisors, given that this is indoor activity and requires a number of people in a confined space for a number of hours. However, re-introduction in very large spaces, e.g. church halls etc. could be considered in small group sizes as the first step for re-introduction.
- **Polygraph Testing** – to be re-introduced with restrictions to include no overnight stays for testers, and testers to only visit one site in a given period. To inform this, we are working with HMPPS Public Health England advisors to determine how frequently this is appropriate, i.e. daily / weekly. Service Users will not be asked to travel outside of their local area for testing, e.g. we would not expect somebody living in Swansea to travel to Cardiff. Initially, testing will only be introduced for cases where it is essential for public protection. It is not planned to re-introduce testing in Approved Premises before 5th February, when the national AP team will review alongside HMPPS and PHE advisors.
- **Oral Fluid Drug Testing** – consideration is being given to the possibility of re-introducing this service in APs on suspicion testing, i.e. a risk-based need. Re-introduction in the community to be with pilot sites only, and to target the highest risk cases.