



Seirbhís Phríosúin
na hÉireann
Irish Prison Service

Information Note for Families on Midlands Prison Covid-19 Outbreak

Monday 2nd November 2020

To all those who have a family or friend currently imprisoned in the Midlands Prison.

As you will be aware, there has been a small outbreak of Covid-19 in the Midlands Prison. This news may be a cause for concern especially if you have a family member or friend currently imprisoned in the Midlands Prison. The Irish Prison Service would like to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to stop the spread of the virus within the prison.

I am sure you may have questions about the health and safety of your loved ones. We will try to answer some of those questions below.

How bad is this outbreak, are many prisoners affected?

As of today, 2nd November, we can confirm the number of prisoners who have tested positive for Covid-19 in the Midlands Prison remains at 5. This is a small number given that there are over 810 prisoner in the facility.

How will I know if my loved one has Covid-19?

If you have a family member who has been confirmed as positive for Covid-19, and you are registered as their next of kin, you will have been contacted. Our staff will continue to contact families if any further cases arise. There is no need to ring the prison to find out if someone has Covid-19, we will contact you.

Are there cases of Covid-19 all over the prison?

So far we have managed to keep the outbreak confined to one part of the prison. The prisoners accommodated in this area have been isolated and will not be allowed to mix with others accommodated in other parts of the prison.

Will prisoners be tested for the virus?

Yes, all prisoners in the Midlands Prison have been tested and the results have confirmed that there are currently no more prisoner cases other than the 5 that were confirmed on Friday. We will be testing all prisoners again later this week and our staff will continue to monitor everyone to make sure that everyone is well.

Will I still be able to have my video visit and phone calls?

Yes, Due to the restriction we have to make some changes to the prison regime but we realise how important family contact is. We are currently making a timetable and we will publish details of this on our website and twitter account. (www.irishprisons.ie @irishprisons)

Will prisoners still be able to access services such as drug counsellors or psychology?

Yes, we will ensure that people who need to access important service such as psychology and addiction counsellors can do so.

Can prisoners still go to school or work and training?

Our teachers are developing packs to support in-cell learning while the normal daily regime is restricted. In addition, prisoners involved in essential work and training activities will still be able to participate. We hope to return to a more normal regime after everyone has been tested for the second time.

Will they be locked in their cells all day with nothing to do?

As mentioned above our teachers will be developing some in-cell learning material that can be broadcast on the prison TV channel. We will be allowing people out of cells for exercise and showering and to access phone calls. We have also provided Netflix in cells and this will provide some entertainment in the evening.

What happens if they fall ill from Covid-19 and need to see a doctor or nurse?

As you probably know we have an excellent healthcare team on site in the Midlands Prison and if anyone needs medical support our staff will be available. We will be monitoring anyone who tested positive regularly and we assure you we will provide them with excellent care if they are unwell.

Do you have enough PPE and hand sanitizer to allow people to keep safe?

We have been preparing for Covid-19 since January and the Prison Service has purchased large stocks of PPE and hand sanitizer.

Where can I get more information on this outbreak?

We will continue to publish updates on this outbreak on our website www.irishprisons.ie and on our twitter page [@irishprisons](https://twitter.com/irishprisons)

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