

Press Release
Important Notice - Suspension of All Family Visits
(Professional visits remain unaffected):

- All physical family visits to prisons will cease with effect from close of business Friday 27th March 2020.
- All future visits to prisons will be conducted using video calls.
- Any physical family visit that has been booked to take place on or after Saturday 28th March 2020 has now been cancelled.
- Arrangements are currently being made for the introduction of visits by video link/camera phone early next week
- Information on the new arrangements will be published on the Irish Prison Service website www.irishprisons.ie as soon as possible.

The Irish Prison Service has announced that all physical family visits to prisons will cease with effect from close of business today, Friday 27th March 2020. Arrangements are being made to introduce visit by video link/video camera phone. This change does not impact professional visits.

The Irish Prison Service has made every effort to continue to run normal family visits for as long as possible. However in the best interest of the health and safety of prison staff, prisoners and their families, from close of business on Friday 27th March normal physical visits will no longer be possible and will be replaced from Monday 30th March with electronic visits via internet platforms i.e. video link and video/camera phones.

The Irish Prison Service are currently implementing the technology necessary to provide this new process. In addition to assisting the Irish Prison Service in its efforts to prevent the potential introduction of Covid-19 into a prison setting, these electronic visits will also negate the need for visitors to gather in the visitor centres at each prison. This is in line with the recommendations announced this week by the Taoiseach regarding the need to people to desist from gathering in groups of more than 4 people. That announcement also recommended that individuals should only undertake essential travel at this time, by providing electronic visits the Irish Prison Service are able to facilitate vital contact between prisoners and their families while protecting them from the need to travel.

Detailed information on the new visit process will be published on the Irish Prison Service website www.irishprisons.ie as soon as possible.

The sheer volume of people entering and exiting our prisons on a daily basis mean effective infection control and vigilance is absolutely essential. Our prisons are home or the place of work of over 7,000 people on a daily basis. The Irish Prison Service has taken a number of necessary measures aimed at preventing the spread of Covid-19 to our prisons including the restriction of visits to prisoners. On the 24th March the Irish Prison Service advised that in consideration of Public Health advice, restrictions on visits would limit prisoners to one 15 minute visit per week with a maximum of two adults, no persons under 18 years of age were permitted into the prison as part of these restrictions.

Further restrictions came into effect on Wednesday 25 March, 2020 when all visits to prisoners were restricted to one adult per visit. This has been done to protect the welfare of all who work, live and visit prisons on a daily basis.

For further information contact pressoffice@irishprisns.ie or tel 087 6674284

Press Officer
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