

The Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

9 November 2020

Dear Lord Chancellor,

COVID-19 and prisons: the next phase

We wrote to you on 13 October on this subject and, whilst we understand the pressures on your department, we are disappointed not to have received a reply.

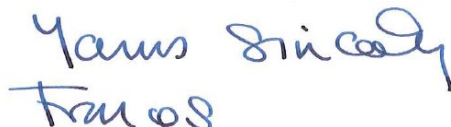
The statement on the MoJ website published on 6 November, and the message to stakeholders from Dr Jo Farrar briefly summarising the HMPPS response to the national lockdown in England are both helpful and show the attention that some of the issues we raised have clearly been receiving. We welcome the continuation of phone credit for prisoners, and the availability in most though not all prisons of video calling technology. We hope that the introduction of more testing and the wider use of PPE for both staff and prisoners will allow the day to day regime to be a little less oppressive than it was in the spring and much of the summer for most prisoners.

However, the other issues on which we sought a response are still of crucial importance to prisoners and their families. It would demonstrate a commitment to transparency, and we hope reassure those people, if you were now able to respond to our letter.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Dawson
Director
Prison Reform Trust



Frances Crook
Chief Executive
The Howard League for Penal Reform