



**The Professional Trades Union for Prison,  
Correctional & Secure Psychiatric Workers**

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## **POA Circular 052/2020**

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

Dear Colleagues

### **JUSTICE COMMITTEE SCRUTINISES VIRUS IMPACT ON PRISONS, LEGAL SYSTEM**

Please find enclosed Press Release from the Justice Select Committee for your information in relation to the impact of COVID-19.

Yours Sincerely

**STEVE GILLAN**  
General Secretary

Yours Sincerely

**MARK FAIRHURST**  
National Chair

**ENCLOSURE**

# Justice Committee

## Select Committee Press Release

3 April 2020

For immediate release:

### Justice Committee scrutinises virus impact on prisons, legal system

The effects of coronavirus on the prison, probation, courts and legal systems will be examined by the House of Commons' Justice Select Committee during a session that will take evidence from the Lord Chancellor, Robert Buckland on Tuesday 7 April 2020 at 2.30 pm.

Owing to current restrictions on Parliamentary capacity, partly caused by the virus, the meeting will be held online and in private.

A press release will be issued after the session, and a note summarising the hearing will be published as soon as possible.

Justice Committee Chair Sir Robert Neill said: "At a time when Parliament is not able to perform many of its usual scrutiny functions, Select Committees have to play a major role in holding the Government to account for the actions it is taking to tackle the coronavirus outbreak.

"We pay tribute to the many prison officers, probation officers and other staff in those sectors who are working flat-out to ensure the security of the public and the safety and well-being of those in their care. Court staff across England and Wales are also performing heroically to maintain access to justice as far as is possible in the current constrained circumstances.

"We are aware of staff concerns for their own health and safety, particularly around testing for the virus among staff, prisoners and those released on licence, and we are keen to hear the Lord Chancellor update us on the factual position across the prisons and probation landscape to help get accurate information out to the public.

"We are also concerned about reports of increasing domestic abuse as families and individuals find themselves confined more to their homes.

"In addition, the Committee must monitor the condition of the justice system more widely, as court cases and hearings are postponed, lawyers and other staff face an uncertain financial situation, and new digital means of delivering justice for all are rapidly deployed."

#### Witness:

Rt Hon. Robert Buckland QC MP, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice

#### FURTHER INFORMATION:

Committee Membership is as follows:

Robert Neill (*Conservative, Bromley and Chislehurst*) (Chair); Rob Butler (*Conservative, Aylesbury*); James Daly (*Conservative, Bury North*); Miss Sarah Dines (*Conservative, Derbyshire Dales*); Maria Eagle (*Labour, Garston and Halewood*); John Howell (*Conservative, Henley*); Kenny MacAskill (*Scottish National Party, East Lothian*); Dr Kieran Mullan (*Conservative, Crewe and Nantwich*); Ellie Reeves (*Labour, Lewisham West and Penge*); Ms Marie Rimmer (*Labour, St Helens South and Whiston*); Andy Slaughter (*Labour, Hammersmith*)

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