



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

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TO: ALL POLITICAL EDITORS, HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENTS
AND INDUSTRIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENTS

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

POA PRAISE ‘SENSIBLE’ DECISION TO LOCK DOWN PRISONS

The POA today praised the decision of the Secretary of State for Justice and the Director of Public Sector Prisons for their decision to place Prisons in England and Wales on immediate ‘lock down.’

This means that restrictions inside our prisons include;

- Prisoners generally locked up, and allowed access to showers, phones (where no in-cell telephony) and exercise, but with application of social distancing principles.
- Essential workers (e.g. kitchen, laundry, cleaners) will be unlocked to attend work.
- Staff to be briefed on arrival for duty, and prisoner communications (via notes under the door) put in place.
- No social visits - prisoners will be advised, and arrangements for them to inform any visitors.
- Prisoners due at Court will be discharged to attend unless the Courts Service advise us otherwise.
- In the open estate, the only ROTL allowed will be for prisoners to attend a work placement which has key worker status.

Commenting on this decision National Chair Mark Fairhurst stated:

‘I will publicly support any Government or party leader who places the best interests of POA members at the forefront of their concerns. I am pleased that over the past few weeks the POA have worked constructively and in partnership with Her Majesty’s Government and HMPPS to put measures in place that protect all those who inhabit or work in our prisons. We will continue to contribute to ensuring our Prisons maintain stability and avoid as much as possible the spread of this virus. I would like to place on record my thanks to all who have taken the concerns of frontline staff seriously. These unprecedented times prove the worth of trade unions as a strong advocate for working people. Our brave frontline staff deserve the respect of all.’



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General Secretary Steve Gillan added:

‘The POA recognise that Prison staff are key workers, but the Prime Minister statement is a game changer. It was always envisaged that regimes would be kept as normal as possible, but that position has now altered and the POA will continue to work with Government and Employer to keep our members and prisoners as safe as possible. These restrictions will bring their own challenges operationally, but the Director General Phil Copple has made the correct decision.’

Ends

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