



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

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POA Circular 021/2020

11th March 2020

Dear Colleagues

Action	Information
England/Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Scotland	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Northern Ireland	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Special Hospitals	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Private Sector	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
IRC	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

CORONAVIRUS AND POA CONFERENCE

The POA National Executive Committee have received telephone calls from various branch officials requesting guidance on whether the POA Conference will be going ahead or not. The National Executive Committee discussed this issue at its meeting today 11th March 2020. We are preparing for the Conference as is normal practise at this time of year and at this moment in time the Conference is scheduled to take place as per Circulars that have already been promulgated.

The Executive recognise that the Coronavirus is unprecedented and as the days and weeks go by the situation could get worse and the Annual Conference may well be postponed. This depends on a variety of issues. If the Chief Medical Officer and Government alter advice due to the virus spreading then ultimately that decision could indeed be made for us if restrictions are put in place that stops public meetings or indeed Contingency plans or Operational Emergencies are called in the Prison Service.

At the moment there are no restrictions in place, and we need to follow NHS guidelines and advice.

A very constructive meeting took place with the Director General Phil Copple, Richard Vince, Alison Clarke and Francis Stuart. Although the contents of that meeting will remain confidential between the parties it is clear that formal meetings will be taking place in the coming days if Contingency plans need to be enacted.

As you would expect Senior HMPPS Officials for England and Wales will be liaising closely with Government Officials and the Chief Medical Officer. I am sure in Scotland and Northern Ireland they will have contingency plans and indeed those Senior Managers will be liaising with the Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Assembly and I intend to liaise with the Scottish National Committee and the Northern Ireland Area Committee so that I am fully apprised of the situation in that respect.

Where we have recognition rights in the Private Sector in Prisons in England and Wales, we will be liaising with Senior Managers of those companies also along with immigration centres and the Secure Hospitals.

The National Chairman and I have sent a joint letter to the Secretary of State Mr Robert Buckland QC outlining our intent to assist in making sure our Prisons and the Criminal Justice System is safe for all staff and prisoners in our care. The Executive recognise that it is in everyone's interest for Government, Employers and the POA to work in a construtive manner. This is an opportunity for all concerned to work together in these unprecedented times as no-one has a crystal ball as to what will occur in the future.

The POA will continue to update you as and when information becomes available and if it is necessary to postpone conference then branch officials and the membership will be updated as speedily as possible once information becomes available.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Gillan', followed by a small dot.

STEVE GILLAN
General Secretary