

BIROn - Birkbeck Institutional Research Online

Heard, Catherine and Padfield, N. (2022) England and Wales. In: Dunkel, F. and Harrendorf, S. and van Zyl Smit, D. (eds.) *The Impact of Covid-19 on Prison Conditions and Penal Policy*. Routledge Frontiers of Criminal Justice 1. London, UK and New York, U.S.: Routledge, pp. 169-180. ISBN 9780367769727.

Downloaded from: <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/48547/>

Usage Guidelines:

Please refer to usage guidelines at <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/policies.html>

or alternatively

contact lib-eprints@bbk.ac.uk.

England and Wales

Catherine Heard and Nicola Padfield

Abstract

The prison population rate of England and Wales doubled between 1994 and 2010, remaining fairly stable after 2010. The prison estate remains blighted by poor material conditions and high levels of violence and self-harm. After years of under-investment and inadequate staffing, about half of the country’s prisons are overcrowded. Experts had feared that COVID-19 would take a heavy toll in prisons. By dint of highly restrictive regimes imposed across the estate over several months, the toll in lives and confirmed cases has been less heavy than was feared. This came at the cost of greatly reduced family and social contact, and even less access to education, work and rehabilitation programmes than before COVID-19 struck. Over the first ten months of the pandemic, the total prison population declined. This was due to the national lockdown and court closures, rather than the implementation of much-needed policies to reduce prisoner numbers.

1. Introduction – general situation of the prison system

By comparison with our Western European neighbours, the prison population rate in England and Wales has been very high for some years.¹ The small decrease in the size of the prison population in 2020 (see Table below) reflects more the fact that courts closed, than any significant change in early release provisions: we have seen a decrease on the supply side, not the exit side.

Table: Prison population total England & Wales, January 2020 to January 2021

Date	Prison population
31 January 2020	83,329
28 February 2020	83,868
27 March 2020	83,189
24 April 2020	81,124
29 May 2020	80,032
26 June 2020	79,453
31 July 2020	79,643
28 August 2020	79,433
25 September 2020	79,263
30 October 2020	79,083
27 November 2020	78,832
18 December 2020	78,700
29 January 2021	78,065

All figures taken from the Ministry of Justice Prison Population Statistics weekly data at the latest date each month <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prison-population-statistics>

First, a brief comment on the prison population of England and Wales. This quadrupled in size between 1900 and 2019, going from just over 17,400 to around 82,900. It doubled

¹ In England & Wales the rate of prisoners per 100,000 of the population was 130 at the end of January 2021.

between 1994 and 2010. Since 2010, it has remained relatively stable. The number of women in prison has not increased as sharply as that of men: in 2019, 4% of the total prison population was female, down from 17% in 1900. In terms of ethnicity, in 2019, 27% of the prison population identified as belonging to an ethnic minority, compared with 13% of the general population. There is also a large number of foreign nationals – at the end of March 2020, there were just over 9,000 (from 163 different countries) in the prison population.²

As well as size, another characteristic of the English prison system is the poor material conditions of many prisons. In May 2020, 49% of prisons were overcrowded.³ There has been under-investment for many years, especially given the increasing prison population. Many prisons are very old. Even before the lockdown, many prisoners have been forced to share a small cell, often designed for only one person.⁴ Chronic under-investment has resulted not just in poor conditions, but also in low numbers of staff. Recently, as staff recruitment has started to increase, there has been concern about numbers of young and inexperienced staff. There has been regular criticism not only from NGOs (such as the Howard League for Penal Reform and the Prison Reform Trust) but also from ‘official’ inspectors and monitors (such as the National Audit Office (NAO), Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)). By way of example, the NAO (2020) identified leaking roofs, pest control problems, failed heating and plumbing systems, outdated electrical wiring, and broken cell windows. The Chief Inspector of Prisons has for many years identified high levels of violence and self-harm in prisons, and declining standards of safety. The poor and out-dated infrastructure blighting many prisons extends to under-provision of IT (information technology), telephones, computer terminals, and internet connectivity.

Corona infections and deaths of prisoners and prison staff members

It was therefore not surprising that at the outset of the crisis, there was real concern about how the virus would take off in prisons and there were fears of many deaths.⁵ The first case was identified in early March at HMP Manchester. By 12 May, 404 cases had been confirmed amongst prisoners, and 21 prisoners and 7 members of prison staff had died.⁶ Regular data have been published since then, showing that, by 31 August 2020:⁷

- There had been 44 deaths since the start of the pandemic among HMPPS service users where COVID-19 was the suspected cause, of whom 23 were prisoners and 21 were probation service users.

² See Offender Management Statistics. Data in this paragraph are from Sturge (2020).

³ Ministry of Justice, Population bulletin, monthly May 2020

⁴ See Prison Reform Trust (2019). HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2019); House of Commons’ Health and Social Care Committee (2018), cited in Brennan (2020).

⁵ At the end of April 2020 a reasonable ‘worst-case scenario’ prepared for the prison service by Public Health England suggested that 77,800 prisoners could become infected, 4,500 hospitalised and 2,700 die if no action was taken: see O’Moore (2020):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882622/covid-19-population-management-strategy-prisons.pdf

⁶ The death of Mr Edwin Hillier, a prisoner at HMP Littlehey, was the subject of an investigation and report by the independent Prisons and Probation Ombudsman which investigates complaints and deaths in custody. The report can be found here: <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/ppo-prod-storage-1g9rkhjkhjmgw/uploads/2021/01/F4175-20-Death-of-Mr-Edwin-Hillier-in-hospital-Littlehey-22-03-2020-NC-60-84.pdf>

⁷

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/919130/HMPPS_COVID19_AUG20_Pub_Doc.pdf

- 560 people in custody had tested positive for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, across 87 establishments, almost all of whom were adults.
- 315 prisoners had been released under COVID-19 temporary release schemes, 53 on compassionate grounds.

By 31st October 2020:⁸

- 55 prisoners, children in custody and probation service users had died having tested positive for COVID-19 or where a clinical assessment showed that COVID-19 was a contributory factor in their deaths. Of these, 32 were prisoners and 23 were probation service users. Five deaths of prisoners occurred in October 2020, the first deaths of service users since June 2020.
- Of the 55 deaths, 50 were suspected or confirmed to be caused by COVID-19, 28 were prisoners and 22 probation service users.
- 1,529 prisoners or children had tested positive for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, across 99 establishments, almost all of whom were adults. The number of new monthly confirmed cases had increased by 883 since September 2020. 45 establishments had prisoners or children testing positive in October 2020.

By 31st December 2020:⁹

- 99 prisoners, children in custody and probation service users had died having tested positive for COVID-19 or where there was a clinical assessment that COVID-19 was a contributory factor in their deaths. Of these, 71 were prisoners and 28 were probation service users.
- Of the 99 deaths, 77 were suspected or confirmed to be caused by COVID-19. 51 were prisoners and 26 probation service users.
- 6,007 prisoners or children had tested positive for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, across 116 establishments, almost all of whom were adults.
- The number of new confirmed cases increased by 2,357 since November 2020.
- 91 establishments had prisoners or children testing positive in December 2020.

Data on staff to 31 October was published in November 2020:¹⁰

- 21 HMPPS staff had died having tested positive for COVID-19 or where there was a clinical assessment that COVID-19 was a contributory factor in their deaths. Four deaths of staff occurred in October 2020, the first deaths of staff since May 2020.
- 3,189 HMPPS staff had tested positive for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. The number of new confirmed cases increased by 1,722 since 30 September 2020.
- 1,007 staff were absent due to COVID-19 sickness on 30 October 2020.

8

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/935053/HMPPS_COVID19_Oct20_Pub_Final.pdf

9

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/952359/HMPPS_COVID19_DEC20_Pub_Doc.pdf

10

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936326/hmpps-workforce-stats-commentary-covid-staff-sept-2020.pdf

2. Prison and penal policy concerning the execution of prison sentences during the Corona crisis

Prison sentences continue to be served immediately, with no formal expansion of community sentences. However, judges and magistrates were advised by the Court of Appeal in *R v Manning* [2020] EWCA Crim 592 that in the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic, it was appropriate to take account of the conditions in which prisoners were being held in fixing sentences. *Manning* was a prosecution appeal against an allegedly unduly lenient sentence (an Attorney General's reference to the Court of Appeal) where the Court of Appeal's decision not to increase the sentence was informed by the pandemic. Following this, in *R v Jones* [2020] EWCA Crim 764, the Court of Appeal held that in the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic, it was appropriate to take account of the custodial conditions under which an offender was to be held when considering his appeal against sentence. A sentence of eight months' imprisonment was quashed and replaced with a sentence of six months. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to know at this time the number of people who have received community sentences who would in 'normal' circumstances have received custodial sentences, or the extent to which sentence lengths may have decreased in the pandemic.

A number of schemes were introduced at the beginning of the pandemic to allow for the release of prisoners, but they have not been used very much. A new End of Custody Temporary Release (ECTR) scheme providing for the early release of some low-risk prisoners who were within two months of their normal release date was introduced, but very few were released under this scheme, and it was ended on 27 August 2020.

Existing rules allow the Secretary of State for Justice (the Minister of Justice) to release prisoners in exceptional compassionate circumstances.¹¹ Compassionate release under these rules is rare because it is a permanent release, normally given to those who are terminally ill and close to death. The Government decided that it was inappropriate in the context of COVID and that, instead, prisoners should have to apply for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) by way of Special Purpose Licence (SPL), whereby release on compassionate grounds for vulnerability reasons is only for the duration of the pandemic. Under ROTL, prisoners can be returned to prison once the justification for temporary compassionate release ends, if they are still serving the custodial element of their sentence at that point. This scheme has been restricted to:

- Pregnant women
- Prisoners with their babies in custody
- Those defined by National Health Service guidelines as 'extremely vulnerable' to COVID-19.

There have been only 66 releases under this scheme, despite the Minister stating in March that there were about 1,800 prisoners who would have been classified as particularly vulnerable if they were in the community.¹² The ordinary ROTL rules, whereby prisoners work outside prison or might be allowed to attend e.g. a family member's funeral, have been very seriously

¹¹ Under s. 248 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 in respect of fixed term prisoners, and s.30 of the Crime (Sentences) Act 1997 for indeterminate sentenced prisoners. The policy and guidance on the application of those powers is contained, respectively, in Prison Service Order (PSO) 6000 for determinate sentence prisoners and in PSO 4700 for indeterminate sentence prisoners.

¹² Justice Committee, Oral Evidence, *The Work of the Lord Chancellor*, HC 225, 24 March 2020.

curtailed. At the end of March 2020, it was announced that all ROTL had been suspended – except in cases of prisoners working as ‘key workers’ or temporary release on compassionate grounds. As a result of these operational changes, there were only 12,643 incidences of ROTL during the quarter ending June 2020, which represents an 88% decrease compared to the same quarter in 2019. More than 80% of the ROTL incidences in the latest quarter were for ‘Work Related’ reasons.

The Government says it has been working in three other areas to try to create more space in the prison estate: to expedite hearings of remand prisoners (the detention in prison of those awaiting trial), to accelerate the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) process (a standard release scheme which allows fixed term prisoners serving less than four years up to 135 days early release on an electronic ‘tag’) and to expand the prison estate.¹³ Let us look briefly at each of these. First, the pre-existing problems relating to remands have been greatly exacerbated by delays in court hearings. The Government responded to the backlog of cases awaiting trial by extending custody time limits (the maximum period someone can be held pre-trial) from 6 to 8 months. The most recent figures show that the remand population has **increased** by 28% over the past year (to 12,274) and by the end of June was at the highest level for around six years.¹⁴ Secondly, concerning release on HDC, the number of early releases has not increased. 2,825 offenders were released on HDC during the latest quarter for which the statistics are available – this represents a fall of 13% compared to the same quarter in 2019.¹⁵ This fall in the number released on HDC reflects the reduction in the size of the pool of offenders eligible for HDC (also 13% lower than the same period in 2019). In relation to expanding the prison estate, over 300 ‘temporary cells’ were delivered to prisons, and a secure training centre for children (which had recently been closed because of a damning inspection report) re-opened as a prison for adults.

Non-compliance with lockdown restrictions result in Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), which are issued by the police.¹⁶ Between 27 March and 19 November, 24,933 FPNs were issued (of which 14,738 were handed out in the first 7 weeks). These now start at £200 (for a first notice), rising to £6,400 (for a sixth and subsequent FPN).¹⁷ Large parties can be shut down by the police – with fines on organisers of up to £10,000. Fewer than 1,000 FPNs have been issued for breaches of international quarantine rules and of face covering regulations.¹⁸ We have found no information on the enforcement of the regulations within prisons.

3. Restrictions on contacts with the outside world

There have been huge restrictions on visits, prison leaves and transfers. On 23 March 2020 a new instruction stopped all prison visits, all education, training and employment activities (except for essential work like cleaning), all access to gyms, religious association and general association. Limits were placed on numbers of people unlocked or in exercise yards at any

¹³ See, for example, the Secretary of State’s letter published at <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Letters/2020.11.11%20Robert%20Buckland%20to%20PRT%20and%20HL.pdf>

¹⁴ See Offender Management Statistics Quarterly: April to June 2020 (published 29 October 2020: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2020/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2020>)

¹⁵ See footnote 12.

¹⁶ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020, which came into force on 26 March 2020.

¹⁷ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020, which came into force on 24 September 2020.

¹⁸ Face coverings have been required on public transport since June and in shops since July.

one time, and social distancing of 2 metres for staff and prisoners was to be enforced wherever possible. Intra-prison movement of prisoners was strongly discouraged; and for areas with especially vulnerable prisoners, avoiding staff cross-deployment was advised where possible. Another order on 31 March introduced the policy of ‘compartmentalisation’, reducing more stringently transfers within and between prisons. New cohorting strategies came in, which included establishing:

- Protective Isolation Units (PIUs): to accommodate known or probable COVID-19 cases, “ideally” in single-cell accommodation;
- Shielding Units (SUs): to protect the most vulnerable, with enhanced levels of bio-security including dedicated staff;
- Reverse Cohorting Units (RCUs): to accommodate new receptions or transfers in for a period of 14 days to detect any emergent infectious cases before prisoners entered the general population.

On 2 June, the Ministry of Justice published a national framework for prison regimes and services, which was seen as a ‘conditional roadmap’ for the easing of restrictions.¹⁹ Some prisons resumed visits in July, and by mid-August, many prisons were offering limited visits for family and friends. As of 20 September, only one prison, Leicester, was still closed for all social visits.²⁰ However, in November, all visits stopped again. Since December, individual prisons have made their own decisions as to whether to allow visits.

The significant reduction in the transfer of prisoners between prisons has also made it difficult for prisoners to progress.²¹ We should also note the hugely important impact of the stopping of prisoner transfers between courts and prisons. Whilst some court hearings continued by video link or even by telephone, jury trials were suspended on 23 March, and the resulting increase in the backlog of cases has been dramatic.²² There has also been substantial disruption to the work of the Parole Board, which decides whether indeterminate or recalled prisoners should be released. Oral hearings were for a time stopped completely, and remain severely curtailed. Many cases have been heard by video or telephone links, and others have been deferred.

4. Restrictions inside prisons

During the pandemic, many prisoners have been spending 23 hours a day in their cells. The Chief Inspector of Prisons wrote in April: “The vast majority [of prisoners] were locked up for nearly the whole day with usually no more than half an hour out of their cells. We found some examples of even greater restrictions. In one prison, a small number of symptomatic prisoners had been isolated in their cells without any opportunity to come out for a shower or exercise for up to 14 days.”²³ This has clearly continued, as we see in later reports. For example, a recent report on HMP Pentonville (a large London prison) reports that in October,

¹⁹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/889689/prison-s-national-framework.pdf

²⁰ <https://insidetime.org/three-prisons-still-closed-for-social-visits/>

²¹ In the English system prisoners often move prisons frequently: perhaps because of the availability of courses or as they progress through the security classifications.

²² As at 5 August, the combined backlog of outstanding cases in the magistrates and Crown courts stood at over half a million.

<https://houseofcommons.shorthandstories.com/justice-coronavirus-impact-on-probation-prisons-courts-legal-professions/index.html>

²³ HM Inspectorate of Prisons, Report on short scrutiny visits to Local Prisons (April 2020) p 7

time out of cell for many prisoners was restricted to about 45 minutes a day, showers and outdoor exercise were offered to these prisoners on alternate days except Saturdays which meant that they were not able to shower and go outside each day, evening meals were served from 3.30 pm and many prisoners were reporting victimisation by staff. Work and education provision became minimal, as those who provided work or education withdrew from prisons.

5. Compensatory measures

On 24 March the Ministry of Justice announced: “Secure phone handsets will be given to prisoners at 55 jails. This will enable the approved use of 900 locked SIM card handsets, allowing risk-assessed prisoners to speak to a small number of pre-authorised contacts. The phones will not have internet access.”²⁴ On 11 May the Justice Secretary confirmed these had been rolled out and that on 3 April the cost of calls was reduced across the prison estate.

Guidance issued by the Ministry of Justice on 27 May, updated on 10 July, stated that “secure video calls” were available to prisoners in 27 prisons, with more prisons being added. The guidance explained that video calls would last 30 minutes and each prisoner could have up to 4 visitors on the call. Secure video calls were free of charge during the pandemic and would be provided through the Purple Visits app.²⁵ In evidence to the Justice Committee on 8 June the Prisons Minister said Purple Visits would be available in all 12 women’s prisons by the end of June, but an Inside Time report of 13 July noted two prisons still did not have the facility.²⁶ A Government update on 6 November stated: “Prisoners will still be able to see friends and family via secure video calls, with this game-changing technology now in place at over 100 jails. Staff are also helping offenders to keep in touch through phone calls, with more than 1,200 mobile handsets distributed as well as extra phone credit.”²⁷ Prisoners can also continue using the Prison Voicemail service and the Email a Prisoner service, which were in place before the pandemic.

It is difficult to know how effective these measures have been. As the PRT stated, “With up to 40,000 prisoners given very little time out of cell, the demand for 900 mobile phones spread over 55 prisons was certain to overwhelm the supply. The additional phone time these provided could never offset the profound impact of cutting off family contact.”²⁸ There has been grave concern about the impact of the lockdown on prisoners’ mental health. The further loss of liberty and the damage caused by “the extremes of lockdown” were identified in the two 2020 reports of the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody. The extreme challenge of prolonged isolation may be particularly harmful for young offenders.

6. Legal basis for restrictions and relaxations of the prison regime

In England and Wales, the Secretary of State (Minister of Justice) has wide powers under the Prison Act 1952 to make rules for the running of prisons. It was therefore easy for new rules to be introduced. There is no formal judicial involvement in the execution of sentences.

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prison-visits-cancelled>

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visit-a-prisoner-using-a-video-call>

²⁶ <https://insidetime.org/women-still-waiting-for-video-visits/>

²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-preparedness-in-prisons>

²⁸ The Prison Reform Trust & The Prison Policy Network (2020a), p. 6

On 12 March 2020 the first guidance was provided online.²⁹ The penal system was put in “command mode”, and an “exceptional delivery model” was imposed. These first changes were implemented without changing the Prison Rules. There have since been the Prison and Young Offender Institution (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Rules 2020 (SI 2020 No 400), which came into force on 6 April; and the Prison and Young Offender Institution (Coronavirus) (Amendment) (No.2) Rules 2020, which came into force on 15 May 2020. These Rules grant the Secretary of State a discretion to release prisoners temporarily “for the purpose of preventing, protecting against, delaying or otherwise controlling the incidence or transmission of coronavirus”.

Whilst the UK grants wide powers to the prison and executive authorities, it also has a complex network of bodies which seek to monitor and hold prisons to account. One of the most important, in England and Wales, is Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP). On 17 March 2020, the Chief Inspector of Prisons announced that all of the scheduled inspection work involving visits to prisons or other places of detention had been suspended up to the end of May 2020. This affected inspections, independent reviews of progress and visits as part of thematic inspection work. From April to July 2020, they carried out short scrutiny visits, which involved a small team of inspectors visiting prisons for just one day, focussing on core issues only. These short scrutiny visits were replaced in August 2020 by scrutiny visits.

The Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) and Independent Monitoring Boards (IMBs) continued to carry out their work – but often remotely. New ways of working included telephone updates, email and virtual visits.³⁰

7. Coming back to normal?

It is very difficult to predict what the ‘new normal’ will be in prisons, and indeed when it will arrive. There could be beneficial outcomes – more access to the internet, more audio-visual contacts, more in-cell telephones, for example. One time Chief Inspector of Prisons and former Chairman of the Parole Board, Nick Hardwick (2020) provides a positive account of what went right in the pandemic and explores the lessons to be learnt. First, he points out (writing in early November) that the lockdown should be tightened if the epidemic is continuing to spread. The prison service is very good in a crisis. Lockdowns save lives. The primary duty of the state is to keep prisoners safe.

Hardwick’s second lesson to be learnt is that quality of time in and out of cell is more important than its quantity. The absence, or slow pace, of purposeful activity has been a key issue in English prisons for decades. One of the big unknowns as yet is the impact of the lockdown on prisoner mental health. Despite the fear of negative effects, there is some evidence that self-harm rates and assaults may have reduced. Why? Hewson et al (2020) discuss the possible explanations for a fall in the number of cases of self-harm. Perhaps any downturn in recorded cases is due to failures of staff to recognise the problems. But more likely may be an increase in prisoners’ sense of safety and security. Fewer conflicts with other prisoners on the wings, reduced drug use, more pro-active staff support, and fewer feelings of injustice could all have played a part. And prisoners at the greatest risk of suicide and self-harm, and those with serious mental health problems, may be more alienated from

²⁹ The website’s content changes regularly. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons>

³⁰ The national IMB Annual Report 2019/20 contains references to the impacts of COVID restrictions.

external support networks and therefore less likely to suffer from the absence of visits. The pandemic could teach us lessons on giving prisoners more individual attention and support.

Hardwick's third lesson is that we should maintain prison population reductions. The prison population of England and Wales is notoriously high, and has risen extraordinarily fast in recent decades. The small decrease during the pandemic has been due largely to court closures, and Hardwick is not alone in worrying about the likely surge in admissions to prison as the backlog of court cases is reduced. He argues that the need to find a mechanism to limit the growth in the prison population is "simply unavoidable".

Hardwick's fourth and final lesson involves recognising that a centrally imposed 'circuit-breaker' of restrictive measures in prisons proved important in reducing infections and allowing time for longer-term measures to be put in place. Hardwick suggests that the performance of the prison system compares favourably with that of other institutions in the UK and of other prisons internationally. But he is not naïve or complacent. It will not be easy to reduce the prison population or the amount of violence and self-harm which has been such a shocking part of our prison system in recent years. Will the authorities invest in more purposeful activities? What is needed is a vision for a 'new normal' which focuses on prisons as engine of change and social justice (for victims and offenders and society), and not simply as penal warehouses.

It is not clear when or if this 'new normal' will start to appear. We have so far had two periods of national lockdown for the country as a whole. Tight national restrictions were again imposed from 5 November until 2 December 2020. From 2 December, local restrictions according to 'tiers' have been re-introduced.³¹ Despite the hopes for widespread vaccination in the early months on 2021, it is difficult to predict with any confidence when we will return to 'normal'.

³¹ We repeat that we are discussing only England and Wales.

References

- Beard, J. (2020): *Coronavirus (prisons): England and Wales* (Briefing Paper, Number 8892, May 2020). House of Commons. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8892/>
- Brennan, P. K. (2020): 'Responses Taken to Mitigate COVID-19 in Prisons in England and Wales', *Victims & Offenders*, DOI: [10.1080/15564886.2020.1832027](https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2020.1832027)
- Brown, J. (2020): *Coronavirus: Enforcing restrictions* (House of Commons Library Briefing Paper No 9024, Dec 2020)
- Coker, R. (2020): *Expert report: Covid-19 and prisons in England and Wales*. Howard League for Penal Reform and the Prison Reform Trust (March 2020): http://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/portals/0/documents/COKER_Report_HL_PRT.pdf.
- Hardwick, N. (2020): *Prisons and Covid-19: what went right?* (Crest Advisory) <https://www.crestadvisory.com/post/prisons-and-covid-19-what-went-right>
- HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2019): *Annual report 2018–19*, London: HM Stationery Office
- Hewson, T., et al. (2020) 'The effects of COVID-19 on self-harm in UK prisons' *16 Brit J of Psych. Bulletin* 1–3 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7411440/>
- House of Commons' Health and Social Care Committee (2018): *Annex 1: Visit to Greenwich cluster* <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhealth/963/96302.htm>
- House of Commons' Justice Committee (2020): *Coronavirus (Covid-19): The impact on prisons*. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmjust/299/29902.htm>
- Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody (2020): *"Keep talking, stay safe": A rapid review of prisoners' experiences under Covid-19*.
- Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody (2020): *'Just one thing' Prison safety and Covid-19*.
- Independent Monitoring Boards (2020): *National Annual Report 2019-20* <https://www.imb.org.uk/report/10718/>
- National Audit Office (2020): *Improving the prison estate (Session 2019-20, HC 41)* <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Improving-the-prison-estate.pdf>
- O'Moore, E. (2020): *Briefing paper-interim assessment of impact of various population management strategies in prisons in response to COVID-19 pandemic in England (Ministry of Justice/Public Health England, HMPPS:* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882622/covid-19-population-management-strategy-prisons.pdf
- Prison Reform Trust & Prisoner Policy Network (2020): *How prisons are responding to Covid-19: Briefing 1, Families and Communications* <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/PressPolicy/News/Coronavirus>
- Prison Reform Trust & Prisoner Policy Network (2020): *How prisons are responding to Covid-19: Briefing 2, Regimes, reactions to the pandemic, and progression*. <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/PressPolicy/News/Coronavirus>
- Sturge, G. (2020): UK Prison Population Statistics (House of Commons Briefing Paper Number CBP- 04334, available at <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04334/>)