

COVID-19

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE IN CUSTODY – 1 MAY 2020

EARLY RELEASE

We wrote to you last week to advise that the Cabinet Secretary for Justice had announced plans to allow a number of short-term prisoners nearing the end of their time in custody to be released early, under measures designed to help tackle the coronavirus outbreak.

The early release scheme was due to begin on 30 April and last for 28 days, however there has been a short delay to the start date. This is because final legal checks are being made to ensure that the scheme will operate effectively. The Scottish Government has advised that the Regulations should come into force early next week.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

The only thing that has changed is the date from which those in custody will be eligible for the scheme.

- The scheme will still be limited to those sentenced to 18 months or less; and who, on a specified date (previously 30/04/2020, now likely to be a date early next week), have 90 days or less left to serve.
- The release of prisoners will be subject to a number of exclusions to ensure public protection.
- At present, there are between 300 and 450 prisoners who may be considered for early release across the prison estate. This does not mean that those prisoners will be automatically released; they will be considered for release.
- There is no application process so you do not need to do anything at this time. The SPS will identify those who may be eligible and, following consideration of information held by the SPS, the Governor may make a decision to release an individual.
- An individual will not be released where the Governor makes a determination that, if released, that individual would pose an immediate risk of harm to an identified person.

We will provide you with further information in the coming days. If you have any questions, please speak to a member of staff.