Physical Distancing & Control Measures to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

Unlocking Potential - Transforming Lives.

Policy Number:

Physical Distancing & Control Measures to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

Directorate Owners:

Strategy & Stakeholder Engagement

Policy Scope:

< The Pandemic Plan is a live document which must be adhered to by all SPS prisons for the duration of the 4 phases of the Scottish government Route Map

Links to Other Policies:

SPS Pandemic Plan

Approved by:

National Coronavirus Response Group

COVID Strategic Oversight Group

Effective date:

10th June 2020

Review Date:

The policy will be reviewed in line with expert advice and National Guidance

Policy Content

1.0   Purpose

1.1   The purpose of this Guidance is to help Managers, Staff and Partners understand the reasonable measures they must take to ensure they maintain a physical distance of 2 metres apart in the work place.

2.0   Introduction

2.1   In terms of the science which is known at this time and the control measures taken by Government to manage the pandemic, maintaining a distance of 2 metres between persons who are not in the same household is an important aspect of the measures we must all take to minimise the risks of the spread of COVID 19. It is something we must aim to do in all aspects of our daily lives including the work place.

2.2   The guidance is intended to assist people in understanding what reasonable measures we should take   and what to do if it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres in certain circumstances.
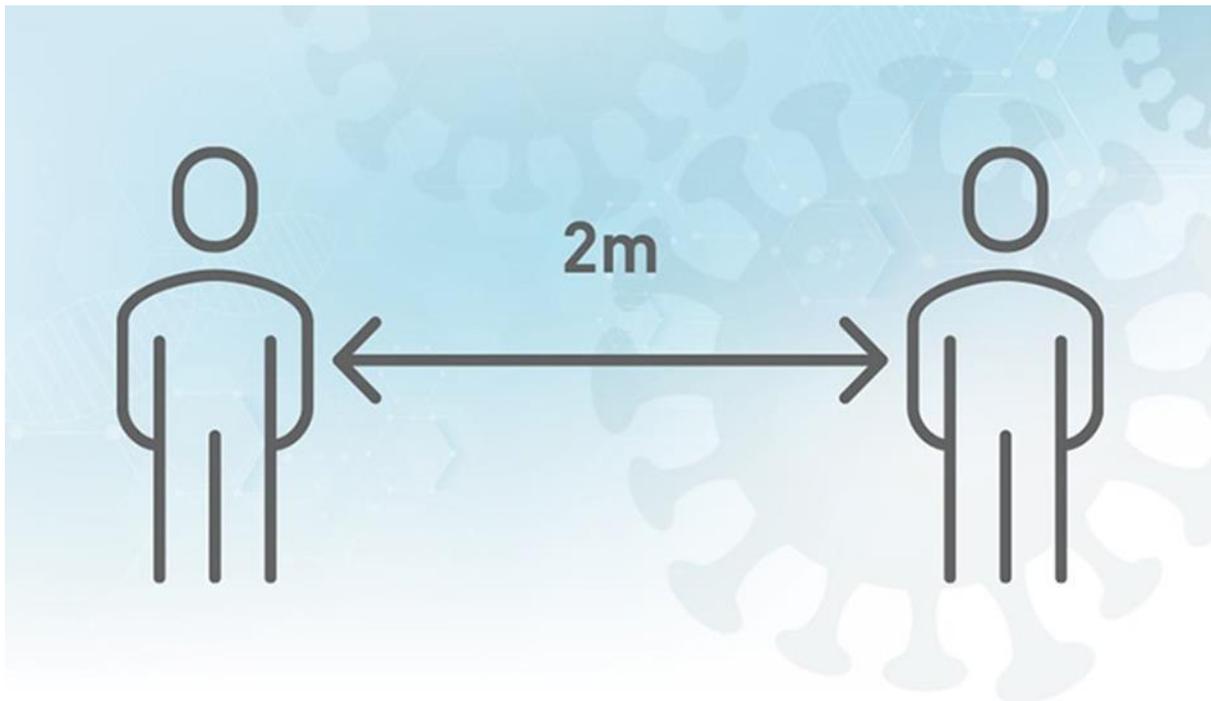
3.0   Background

3.1   COVID-19 spreads mainly amongst people who are in close contact (within about 2 metres) for a prolonged period of 15 minutes or more. Spread happens when an

infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air then land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19.

3.2   It may be possible that a person can become infected by COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. COVID-19 can live for hours or days on a surface, depending on factors such as sunlight, humidity, and the type of surface. Physical distancing helps limit opportunities to come in contact with contaminated surfaces and infected people outside the home.

3.3   Experience across the world to date has shown that although the risk of severe illness may be different for everyone, anyone can get and spread COVID-19. Everyone therefore has a role to play in slowing the spread and protecting themselves, their family, and their community. Regular and thorough hand washing and physical distancing are essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

4.0	Risk Assessment & Safe System of Work

4.1   Risk assessments across all operations within the prison and other SPS workplaces must be reviewed and updated to determine whether physical distancing of 2 metres can be ordinarily maintained. The Manager responsible for the area is responsible for carrying out the risk assessment but best practice is that the assessment should be carried out in partnership with the local Health & Safety Co-ordinator. Consultation with staff and their representatives is paramount and is consistent with section 2(6) of the HSWA, Safety Committees and Safety Representatives Regulations 1977 and Regulation 10 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999.

4.2   As part of the risk assessment the manager must decide on the following:

*   Step 1: Identify hazards, i.e. anything that may cause harm.

*   Step 2: Decide who may be harmed, and how.

*   Step 3: Assess the risks and take action.

*   Step 4: Make a record of the findings.

*   Step 5: Review the risk assessment

5.0	Control the Risks

5.1   The Manager must decide if the task must take place in this area? If the task were to take place in an alternative area, could physical distancing be maintained?

An example of this may be the dispensing of medications in an area where physical distancing cannot be maintained. Is there another location where medications can be dispensed safely and physical distancing can be maintained?

Do all the medications have to dispensed at the same time? Can this be staggered?

5.2   The Manager should put the controls they have identified in place. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 the Manager is not expected to eliminate all risks but they need to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm.

5.3   If after the controls are in place physical distancing cannot be maintained, then PPE must be worn in line with the guidance in Appendices E and H of the SPS Pandemic Plan.

5.4   The Manager must review and monitor the control measures put in place to ensure they are effective, and there are no changes in the workplace which could lead to new risks.

6.0 Reasonable Measures

6.1.   When determining what reasonable measures need to be implemented, the following must be given considerations:

- Cost – is the cost of the measure proportionate to the number of people whose risk is reduced by the measure?

- The nature of the work – are the measures practical, or would they so undermine the delivery of the service, they would be counterproductive?

- Can measures be put in place without compromising the health and safety of others? If measures would increase the health and safety risk, for example in the case of operating machinery, these would not be reasonable measures.

Examples of Reasonable Measures:
- Reducing the number of people given access to outside exercise at one time
- Staggering the start time of work parities to reduce the number of people on the "route"
- Increasing the frequency of cleaning in high traffic areas

Examples of measures which may not be proportionate:
- Increasing the number of pool cars
- Structural changes to buildings/facilities
- Wearing PPE at all times

7.0 Guidance for Physical Distancing within the Scottish Prison Service

7.1   Guidance for physical distancing in all areas

1.   Notices reminding staff, prisoners, partners and visitors of physical distancing must be displayed in all areas

2.   Notices reminding staff of good hand hygiene must be displayed in all areas

3.   Signage on the floor indicating 2 metres must be displayed in high traffic areas.

4.   Robust cleaning schedules must be in place for all areas

5.   Disinfectant wipes must be available in all areas including key and radio vends.

6.   Hand sanitisers must be available where there is no access to hand washing facilities.

7.   Notices must be displayed beside all elevators instructing "Only One Person to a Lift at a Time"

8.   Electric fans should be removed from all areas and   must   not   be used. These greatly increase the risk of spread of COVID-19.

9.   At this time, whilst there is no definitive evidence to suggest that the use of air conditioning increases the risk of spread of COVID-19, where possible, air conditioning should not be used in rooms with openable windows or in large open plan type spaces. Where the use of air conditioning units is requested, this shall be agreed with the local H&S co-ordinator in conjunction with local estates to ensure that alternatives have been explored, suitable control measures are in place and that the system installed is appropriate for use and that maintenance of the air conditioning unit is in place.

7.2   Communal Areas and Prison Routine

1.   For areas where there is regular pedestrian traffic, use floor signage to help people maintain physical distancing.

2.   Place floor signage in front of any desks where there is an interaction with the public. The signage should show the 2 metre distance.

3.   Reduce the number of chairs and tables in normal visit and agent visit areas. Reconfigure the seating to try and avoid face-to-face contact.

4.   At this time prisoner's property is only allowed to be delivered by post. If, as part of the relaxation of restrictions, prisoner's property can be

dropped off, consideration should be given to making this by appointment only to prevent queuing.

5. Stagger staff meal break times to reduce pressure on break rooms and remove seating to reduce capacity.

6. Where possible create a safe area, outside the establishment, for breaks.

7. Consider creating additional space for staff breaks by using other parts of the workplace that have been freed up by remote working.

8. Encourage staff to bring packed meals into work to avoid unnecessary access / egress and minimising contact in shops.

9. Where possible, stagger starting and finishing times. While Operational staff may be unable to stagger start times, non-operational staff should not be starting or finishing work at the same time as operational colleagues.

7.3   Residential Areas

1. Minimise both staff and prisoner movement to and from Residential areas.

2. Ensure there are sufficient posters in place advising staff and those in custody to maintain physical distancing.

3. Where possible only one staff member should be assigned to the main desk. Other staff should be actively discouraged from congregating at the main desk.

4. Where possible only one member of staff should be responsible for answering the main telephone to avoid cross contamination. Where this is not possible, the phone must be cleaned thoroughly between uses using the wipes provided.

5. Stagger the times for outside exercise and recreation to ensure there are reduced numbers of people out of cell at any one time.

6. Ensure there are sufficient stocks of PPE available to those staff who may have to carry out searching of prisoners, cell searches or to deal with prisoners who have tested positive or who are symptomatic. Staff should adhere to the PPE guidance set out in Appendix E and H of the SPS Pandemic Plan.

7. Staff must limit the number of people who are allowed out of cell at meal service times and the administration of medication. Consideration must be given to areas of the hall that are restricted for space and would not allow for physical distancing.

8. Ensure prisoners are adhering to physical distancing while out of cell and challenge those who do not adhere to the 2 metre distance.

9. Those who continue to breach physical distancing may be placed on a disciplinary report for risking the Health & Safety of others.

10. There may be a requirement to introduce one way systems within the residential area or temporarily during certain activities such as administration of medication, triage or canteen.

11. Where possible doors into the residential areas may become entry only or exit only doors to prevent close contact in doorways.

7.4 Administration Areas, SPS College, Central Stores and HQ

1. Where staff can continue to effectively fulfil their role remotely, they should continue to work from home.

2. Review layouts and processes to allow people to work further apart from each other.

3. Stagger work times to reduce the number of staff in the office at any one time.

4. Where an area requires to be continually staffed, devise a rota that allows staff to work from home on certain days and work in the office on others.

5. Remove desks, chairs and computers from the area to reduce the capacity.

6. Where possible, assign staff a work station and do not allow hot desks.

7. If hot desks cannot be avoided, there must be a robust cleaning schedule in place which ensures all touch areas are cleaned. This must include the desk surface, keyboard, computer mouse, telephone and chair arms. Staff are responsible for cleaning their desk at the beginning and end of the day.

8. A clean desk policy must be in place in all areas to allow for effective cleaning of work stations at the beginning and end of each day.

9. Use floor tape or paint to mark areas to help staff maintain a 2 metre distance.

10. Where space is limited in an office environment, Perspex screens may be used if identified as part of the risk assessment.

7.5   Meetings, Meeting Rooms and Training Rooms

The following steps must be taken to reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain physical distancing in meetings:

1.   Have signs outside meeting rooms and offices with maximum numbers at any one time. A risk assessment must be completed to determine the maximum number allowed in the meeting room.

   Remove or stack all spare chairs from the meeting room to match the risk assessment with seating capacity

2.   Use remote working tools where possible to avoid in-person meetings.

3.   Where possible even those in the same building should join the meeting virtually from individual office space(s).

4.   Only when absolutely necessary should participants attend meetings in the same room. All participants must maintain the 2 metre physical distance rule throughout.

5.   All meetings should, where possible be paperless. Where papers are required the participant should print their own papers.

6.   Participants should not share pens, documents, note pads etc.

7.   Provide hand sanitisers and wipes in all meeting areas.

8.   All coffee machines must be cleaned regularly and used coffee cups disposed of immediately after meetings.

9.   Cleaning schedule in place for all meeting rooms

8.0   Personal Responsibility

8.1   Everyone has a legal responsibility for their own health and safety and the health & safety of others. Staff and those in custody have a responsibility to adhere to control measures which reduce the spread of COVID-19.

8.2   Staff must continue to wash their hands regularly and ensure their work area is kept clean.

8.3   **The requirement to maintain physical distance in the workplace is a Health & Safety rule and is therefore, not optional**. Failure to maintain a 2 metre distance from colleagues, people in custody or partner agencies puts the health and safety of others at risk.

•   If you are unable to maintain a 2 metre distance from other staff or prisoners, you must carry out a risk assessment and wear the appropriate PPE in line with the Pandemic Plan.

- If you observe prisoners or other staff breaching the 2 metre distance, it is your responsibility to challenge this behaviour. Those not adhering to physical distance are putting your health and that of your colleagues and family at risk.

- If a prisoner or member of staff comes within 2 metres of you, it is your responsibility to advise them that they must move back and observe physical distancing.

- You should avoid sharing a car with anyone who is not from your household. Where you have to car share, you should have only one passenger and they should travel in the back of the car.

- If any member of SPS staff or partner agency staff working in prisons, feels that they should be wearing PPE out with the tasks detailed in Appendices E & H, they should make a personal risk assessment of the task they are required to carry out and inform their manager of the PPE they would be required to wear.

9.0   Emergency Situation

9.1   In addition to the above there may also be additional emergency situations.

9.2   In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe.

9.3   People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

9.4   Where staff have been in close contact with someone, for a prolonged period and they were not wearing PPE, they should complete an Accident at work "Near Miss" form.

9.5   Where a member of staff is required to leave work because they were in prolonged contact with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 must complete an Accident at Work form.

10.0   Moving Forward - Respond and Recovery

10.1   This guidance is a central tenet in controlling the pandemic as outlined in the Scottish Government guidance Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making - Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis - gov.scot. Chapter six outlines the considerations we need to develop as we move into the 4 phases of the Recovery Route map Coronavirus (COVID-19) Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making - Phase 1 update - gov.scot including the key principal of physical distancing and how our plans in whatever phase we find ourselves needs to remain

responsive to the possibility of a cycle of lifting and re-imposing restrictions if necessary.

10.2 **Going forward everything we do in our estate i.e. expanding regimes or bringing partner agencies back on site needs to be reflective of this approach and put in to practice in a manner and pace which is commensurate with our own position at that point in time; resource availability and infection reporting will shape a large part of that thinking.**

10.3 Therefore, the safety of our **essentia**l frontline staff is and remains an absolute priority. We recognise that all staff need absolute clarity on what PPE they should wear and in what setting or scenario and we will work continuously to ensure our guidance is in line with the latest science as the next few months unfold.

Further Information:

The SPS recognises that from time to time employees may have questions or concerns relating to self-harm. In certain situations employees' rights and obligations regarding self-harm may change. In these circumstances the SPS will abide by any statutory obligations.

The SPS wishes to encourage open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. Employees are encouraged to seek clarification on any issues with the appropriate Line Manager in the first instance.

Sustainability

Improving our environmental performance and doing things in a more sustainable way should be seen as integral to our core business practices.

In line with the SPS Sustainable Policy and to demonstrate compliance with the Scottish Government's commitment to improving environmental and sustainable development performance, please be mindful if printing this document – keeping paper usage to a minimum (print only version), printing on both sides, and recycling.

Equality Statement

The SPS is an equal opportunities employer where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We are fully committed to equality, diversity and human rights and to ensuring our culture, working environment, policies, processes and practices are free from bias. This policy applies to all employees regardless of protected characteristics, and, subject to any eligibility criteria, length of service, grade, working pattern or operational status.

Inclusive Communications

It is our ambition to ensure that SPS documents are readable, accessible and engaging for staff.

In formatting this document, good practice principles around engagement and inclusive communications have been adhered to.

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact Human Resources.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner where applicable to reflect changing business and legislative requirements.

SPS policies take into account current legislation, rules, regulations and best practice guidance from a range of professional and public bodies, including the following:

UK Civil Service Management Code	UK Legislation	EU Legislation	ACAS	CIPD Best Practice