

Further expansion of prison estate to protect NHS

Press release

A former Secure Training Centre will receive its first adult prisoners today as part of further work to temporarily expand the prison estate to protect the public and NHS during the Coronavirus pandemic.



- Recently closed youth custody site in Kent reopened to hold up to 70 adult prisoners
- Over 300 temporary cells now delivered to nine prisons
- Extra capacity is reducing risk of outbreak in prisons, helping to protect local hospitals

This follows the installation of the first of 500 temporary, single occupancy cells which began three weeks ago. Over 300 have now been delivered to nine prisons.

Across the estate, prisons are moving towards single-cell accommodation, as much as possible, to limit the spread of infection and the number of deaths. The strong measures the Prison Service is taking – creating extra cells, limiting prisoner movement, releasing some prisoners early, isolating those with symptoms and quarantining new arrivals – are successfully limiting the transmission of the virus.

The latest modelling by Public Health England and HM Prison and Probation Service predicts a drastic reduction in the spread rates of the infection, with each case being passed on to less than one person – meaning lives should be saved and the NHS is being protected from the impact of widespread local outbreaks.

The former Medway Secure Training Centre, which closed in March, will be temporarily reopened as an annex to nearby HMP Rochester, housing up to 70 category D adult prisoners. It will be staffed by existing prison staff from local prisons in Kent.

Temporary cells have now been installed to serve HMPs Highpoint, Hollesley Bay and North Sea Camp. Installation continues at HMPs Askham Grange, Coldingley, Hatfield, Lindholme, Littlehey, Moorland and Wymott with plans to deliver to further prisons across the estate as required.

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