

Secure video calls to help prisoners maintain family ties

- HMP Berwyn and HMYOI Wetherby among first 10 to benefit
- All calls recorded and restricted to 4 callers

Secure video calls will be introduced to prisons and young offender institutions (YOIs) across England and Wales to maintain vital family contact for prisoners and young offenders during the coronavirus pandemic.

Following a successful trial at HMP Berwyn, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is installing the technology at 10 institutions with a wider rollout in the coming weeks.

The measure is part of wider action to preserve family ties after social visits in prisons and YOIs were suspended, to comply with the government's guidance on controlling the spread of coronavirus and protecting life.

The new technology builds on the [2017 Lord Farmer review](#) which found that close bonds between prisoners and family members can significantly reduce their risk of reoffending.

Safeguards are in place to prevent misuse with all participants vetted in advance and calls monitored by prison staff. The calls will be time-limited and restrictions have been built into the software to ensure safe use.

Prisons and Probation Minister Lucy Frazer QC MP, said:

Prisoners have seen drastic changes to their daily routines to protect local health services and save lives.

A part of that has been the loss of social visits – something we know plays a huge role in prisoners' wellbeing and rehabilitation.

It is therefore right that we take proportionate steps to keep them in touch with their families by other means during the current pandemic.

Nick Leader, Governor of HMP Berwyn, which is one of the first jails to benefit from the use family video calls, said:

The introduction of video calls has shown that even in times of adversity it is possible to develop new and innovative ways of supporting those in our care.

This technology will support resettlement planning and is a positive step to improve relations with staff and reduce the strain

introduced by some of the current, but necessary, restrictions.

The introduction of video calls reflects the government's recognition of the importance of maintaining family ties, particularly at women's prisons, young offender institutions and jails without in-cell telephones. In March, ministers acted quickly to introduce [900 secure phone handsets](#) which have been rolled out across the prison estate.

The first institutions to begin video calls are: HMPs Berwyn, Bronzefield, Downview, Eastwood Park, Garth, High Down, Hull, Wayland, Werrington and Wetherby. In line with recommendations from the Lord Farmer review, work was already underway to explore the use of video calls, and we are assessing their potential wider use in future.

Video calls will be provided through secure laptops in a designated room in each institution. Time-limited calls will be made either by prisoners making a call request to their designated contact or by families who can request a time slot through a mobile app or directly with the establishment.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the government has already taken unprecedented action, including the [temporary release of risk-assessed prisoners](#) within two months of their release date and the [installation of hundreds of temporary accommodation units](#) across the estate.

[Modelling from Public Health England](#) suggests the measures are showing early signs of effectiveness, with a reduction in the rate of infection in prisons.

[Civil news: mandatory telephone gateway phased out](#)

Clients can now choose a greater number of providers to help with education, discrimination and debt issues under changes introduced on 15 May 2020.

This will allow people requiring help and support with education, discrimination and debt cases to contact face-to-face providers directly.

It means we need to make contractual and operational changes to the way we work to bring us in line with the new civil legal aid rules.

The new rules have been introduced through changes to the Civil Legal Aid Procedure Regulations. These regulations also make a number of other changes to civil legal aid procedures.

Mandatory telephone gateway removed

It is no longer mandatory for people to use the telephone gateway to access services in the education, discrimination and debt categories of law. This requirement has been removed from legislation.

We began the phased removal of the gateway in September 2019 when new face-to-face contracts were introduced for education and discrimination work. However, clients still had to apply for legal aid via the gateway.

These further changes mean clients in all three categories of law will now have a choice of accessing advice directly from a face-to-face provider or by the telephone gateway.

Changes to contracts and systems

A number of changes have been made to Legal Aid Agency systems, contracts, forms and guidance to reflect the removal of the gateway.

This includes changes to:

- Lord Chancellor's guidance
- CW1 application form
- Guidance on the CLA Service
- Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme guidance

The new CW1 application form is now available on GOV.UK. Previous versions of this form will continue to be accepted in the coming weeks so that providers have time to adjust. But we would prefer you to use the new version where possible.

We will also be writing to all face-to-face housing and debt providers to increase the allocation of debt matter starts they hold. It is changing from 4 new matter starts to 10 new matter starts.

Mediation application form changes

This change means people making use of mediation services can now sign the application form remotely and send it back to the mediator.

This is instead of having to sign the form in the mediator's presence. The new rules mirror current provisions for legal help applications. Revisions have been made to the family mediation specification to reflect this change.

Mediators should be aware of the contingency guidance the LAA has in place as part of our response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This guidance contains information on the approach we are currently taking to all applications for legal aid, including applications for mediation under the new rules. This includes, for example, guidance on the use of digital signatures and remote attendance during the pandemic.

The contingency guidance can be found here:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Legal Aid Agency contingency response](#)

Domestic violence evidence requirements

Changes have been made to the evidence requirements that need to be satisfied in order to qualify for legal aid as a victim of domestic abuse.

Revisions have been made to our guidance on evidence requirements as a result.

Backdating of means waiver for inquests

A discretion has been introduced allowing us to backdate legal help in inquest cases. This can be done in circumstances where we decide that the usual means thresholds should be waived.

We will be updating the exceptional case funding provider information pack for inquests to give you further information about this discretion.

Further information

[Legal aid guidance](#) – resources include [Lord Chancellor's guidance \(under section 4 of LASPO\)](#)

[Controlled work application forms](#)

[Standard Civil Contracts 2018](#)

[Standard Civil Contract \(Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme\) 2013](#)

[Housing Possession Court Duty Schemes](#)

[HM Coastguard asks everyone to take extra care](#)

Boating, swimming and other sea-based activities are now allowed once again in England under the new Government guidelines, but, now more than ever people need to respect the coastline.

In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales the lockdown remains and people

should continue to follow the guidance to stay home.

Swimming in the sea is now allowed as daily exercise in England along with paddle boarding, surfing, windsurfing, rowing, kayaking and canoeing. Sailing and owners of private boats may also go out onto the water.

But while people are allowed to go out on and in the water, they need to make sure they are safe and protected. Those with private boats and yachts should carry out all the usual safety checks and make sure they have a way to contact HM Coastguard if they get into difficulty, as should everyone visiting the coast and beaches.

In addition, the Government guidelines around social distancing should continue to be observed by everyone in the UK.

Claire Hughes, director of HM Coastguard said: 'In England, now more than ever, people need to respect the sea and the coast. Whether you're local or not, whatever your ability or experience in your chosen sport or leisure activity, the sea can still catch you out and be unmerciful when it does.'

'The majority of beaches will not be lifeguarded. If you get into trouble call 999 and ask for the Coastguard and we will come to your aid. But coronavirus hasn't gone away and we all need to follow the rules. Remember your choices might put people, including yourself and frontline responders, at risk. Take extra care in these extraordinary times.'

In England #StayAlert In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, nothing has changed. Give the coast a miss. #StayHomeSaveLives

For the latest advice and guidance on accessing green spaces please see [here](#).

Foreign flagged ships detained in the UK during April 2020

During April, there were zero new detentions of foreign flagged vessels in a UK port.

1. In response to one of the recommendations of Lord Donaldson's inquiry into the prevention of pollution from merchant shipping, and in compliance with the EU Directive on Port State Control (2009/16/EC as amended), the Maritime and Coastguard agency (MCA) publishes details of the foreign flagged vessels detained in UK ports each month.
2. The UK is part of a regional agreement on port state control known as the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (Paris MOU)

and information on all ships that are inspected is held centrally in an electronic database known as THETIS. This allows the ships with a high risk rating and poor detention records to be targeted for future inspection.

3. Inspections of foreign flagged ships in UK ports are undertaken by surveyors from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. When a ship is found to be not in compliance with applicable convention requirements, a deficiency may be raised. If any of their deficiencies are so serious, they have to be rectified before departure, then the ship will be detained.
4. All deficiencies should be rectified before departure.
5. When applicable, the list includes those passenger craft prevented from operating under the provisions of the EU Directive on a system of inspections for the safe operation of Ro-Ro passenger ships and high-speed passenger craft in regular service and amending directive 2009/16/EC and repealing Council Directive 1999/35/EC (Directive EU 2017/2110).

Notes on the list of detentions:

- Full details of the ship: The accompanying detention list shows ship's International Maritime Organization (IMO) number which is unchanging throughout the ship's life and uniquely identifies it. It also shows the ship's name and flag state at the time of its inspection.
- Company: The company shown in the vessel's Safety Management Certificate (SMC) or if there is no SMC, then the party otherwise believed to be responsible for the safety of the ship at the time of inspection.
- Classification society: The list shows the classification society responsible for classing the ship only.
- Recognised organisation: Responsible for conducting the statutory surveys: and issuing statutory certificates on behalf of the flag state.
- White (WL), grey (GL) and black lists (BL) are issued by the Paris MoU on 01 July each year and shows the performance of flag state.
- Deficiencies: The deficiencies listed are the ones which were detainable. Further details of other deficiencies can be provided on request.

SHIPS DETAINED IN APRIL 2020

DETENTIONS CARRIED OVER FROM PREVIOUS MONTHS

Vessel Name: LIVA GRETA

GT: 851

IMO: 8801072

Flag: Lativa (white list)

Company: Liepajas Trading & Shipping Agency Ltd

Classification society: RINA

Recognised organisation: RINA

Recognised organisation for ISM Doc: RMRS

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: RMRS

Date and place of detention: 11th January 2020 at Birkenhead

Summary: Nine deficiencies with two grounds for detention

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
11113 – Launching arrangements for rescue boats	Inoperative	Yes
15150 – ISM	Not as required	Yes

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2020

Vessel Name: KUZMA MININ

GT: 16257

IMO: 7721263

Flag: Russian Federation (Grey list)

Company: Murmansk Shipping Co

Classification society: RMRS

Recognised organisation: RMRS

Recognised organisation for ISM Doc: RMRS

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: RMRS

Date and place of detention: 18th December 2018 at Falmouth

Summary: Thirteen deficiencies with six grounds for detention

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
01220 – Seafarers' employment agreement (SEA)	Expired	Yes
18314 – Provisions quantity	Insufficient	Yes
01139 – Maritime Labour Certificate	Expired	Yes

01101 – Cargo Ship Safety Equipment (including exemption)	Survey out of window	Yes
10104 – Gyro compass	Inoperative	Yes
01104 – Cargo Ship Safety Radio 9 (including exemption)	Survey out of window	Yes

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2020

Vessel Name: POSEIDON

GT: 1412

IMO: 7363217

Flag: Iceland (White list)

Company: Neptune EHF

Classification society: NA

Recognised organisation: NA

Recognised organisation for ISM Doc: DNV-GL

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: DNV-GL

Date and place of detention: 19th July 2018 at Hull

Summary: Ten deficiencies with two grounds for detention

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
02106 – Hull damage impairing seaworthiness	Holed	Yes
07113 – Fire Pumps	Insufficient Pressure	Yes

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2020

Vessel Name: TECOIL POLARIS

GT: 1814

IMO No: 8883290

Flag: Russian Federation (Grey list)

Company: Tecoil Shipping Ltd

Classification society: RMRS

Recognised organisation: RMRS

Recognised organisation for ISM DOC: RMRS

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: RMRS

Date and place of detention: 6th June 2018 at Immingham

Summary: Twenty-seven deficiencies with eight grounds for detentions

Defective item	Nature of defect	Ground for Detention
10105 – Magnetic compass	Inoperative	Yes
10104 – Gyro compass	Inoperative	Yes
11129 – Operational readiness of lifesaving appliances	Not as required	Yes
10127 – Voyage or passage plan	Not as required	Yes
15150 – ISM	Not as required	Yes
11104 – Rescue boats	Not properly maintained	Yes
11101 – Lifeboats	Not ready for use	Yes
01117 – International Oil Pollution Prevention (IOPP)	Invalid	Yes

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2020

Vessel Name: CIEN PORCIENTO (General Cargo)

GT: 106.

IMO No: 8944446.

Flag: Unregistered.

Company: Open Window Inc.

Classification society: Unclassed.

Recognised organisation: Not applicable.

Recognised organisation for ISM DOC: Not applicable.

Recognised organisation for ISM SMC: Not applicable

Date and place of detention: 4 March 2010, Lowestoft

Summary: Thirty deficiencies including seven grounds for detention

This vessel was still detained on 30th April 2020

Notes to Editors • The MCA is a partner in the Sea Vision UK campaign to raise awareness and understanding of the sea and maritime activities. Sea Vision promotes the importance and economic value of the sector and works to highlight the exciting range of activities and career opportunities available to young people within the UK growing maritime sector.

• Follow us on Twitter: @MCA_media

For further information please contact Maritime and Coastguard Agency Press Office, on: +44 (0) 2380 329 401 Press releases and further information about the agency is available [here](#).

Diplomats for Equality support the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT) 2020

We, the Diplomatic Missions of Albania, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uruguay, as well as the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the EU Delegation to the International Organisations in Vienna, UN GLOBE Vienna and the Vienna School of International Studies, welcome the 17th May as the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, as a celebration of diversity and inclusion around the world.

In many countries, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) people continue to suffer bullying, discrimination and violence, often with deadly consequences. In 70 countries, there are laws that criminalise private, consensual sexual relations between adults of the same sex. We remain alarmed at these severely retrograde and inhumane measures. It is our belief that nobody should be discriminated against for who they are or who they love. More tolerant and inclusive societies benefit everyone.

We are committed to promoting and protecting the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people. They must be accorded the same dignity, respect and rights as all other citizens. We will continue to work through our Embassies and through International Organisations, including, where relevant, the UN, European Institutions, the OSCE, the Organization of American States (OAS), Mercosur (Reunion de Altas Autoridades sobre Derechos Humanos) and the Commonwealth, to promote tolerance and non-discrimination against LGBTI people and to address discriminatory laws, including those that criminalise homosexuality.

We also wish to pay homage to the courageous advocacy efforts carried out by human rights defenders, activists, journalists, media workers and civil society organisations to raise awareness about the issues affecting LGBTI persons and the violations of their human rights that they may face,

including in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak.

For more information, follow our social media accounts on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)