

## Letter to Families 31 March 2022 – HMP Deerbolt

As you will know, from Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April regular COVID testing of people in the wider community will come to an end and you will no longer be able to access testing kits for free. This is part of the Government's plans to move forward from the pandemic and start to live with COVID.

As a result of this change, from 1<sup>st</sup> April you will no longer be required to take a COVID test before coming to see your loved one for a visit.

However, if there is an outbreak in this prison, or we receive advice from health experts about a change in risk of infection we may have to bring testing before visits back again for a short time to protect you, staff and your loved one. If this does happen we will make sure you are told as early as possible, and test kits will be offered at the prison.

As the number of COVID infections in the community are still quite high, we have to keep the other measures we have in place to keep everyone safe during visits such as social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing. It is no longer a requirement to test but we would still please encourage you to take a test, if you can access one, before you come to the prison to help us to minimise the risk of COVID-19 coming into the prison.

We still need to protect the health of your loved one, and everyone else living and working here. So if you or anyone else coming on the visit with you takes a test and it gives a positive result, we will not be able to let you come in for a visit.

if you are showing symptoms or have recently been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID we also ask that you do not come to the prison until these subside. This is to protect your loved ones in prison.

The symptoms are available via GOV.UK: [COVID-19: people with COVID-19 and their contacts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/covid-19/people-with-covid-19-and-their-contacts)

If a visit does need to be cancelled for any of these reasons then we would encourage you to think about other ways to stay in touch like secure social video calls, letters and telephone calls until you can come and have a visit again. Any visits that can't take place will be re-booked at the earliest opportunity.

[Staying in touch with someone in prison: Letters, video and telephone calls - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/staying-in-touch-with-someone-in-prison)

We are currently considering our longer term plans for testing our staff and people in prison as a result of the move away from routine testing in the community and still intend to use testing in prisons to protect the most vulnerable.

Thank you for your continued patience and co-operation.