Covid-19 Response in Prisons

Description

The Custodial Institutions Agency (the DJI) has formed a core team ‘coronavirus’. This team amongst others consists of the members of the (already existing) ‘outbreak team’ and a medical advisor from the Dutch Institute for Forensic Psychiatry (NIFP) who has ‘infectious diseases’ in her portfolio. The Director of the NIFP is the chairman of the team. He is the portfolio manager ‘Care’ of the DJI.

The members of the core team are in daily contact with each other and with other organisations. These include the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, and the Municipal Health Services. They discuss the state of affairs and, where necessary, organise preparations, also adapting them to the special situation of the DJI.

Every week on Monday morning the progress is presented to the Coordination Meeting Care of the DJI (in which are represented the division Prison Administration/Immigration Detention and the division Forensic Care/Correctional Institutions for Juvenile Offenders as well as the portfolio manager Care). This Coordination Meeting functions as a steering committee.

Sheets with information for healthcare professionals and for employees working in the reception/entry section have been developed.

On the basis of, amongst others, the core team, new measures have been taken that became effective the 14th of March. Parliament had been informed about these measures by the Minister for Legal Protection on the 13th of March. Also the people held in custodial institutions and visitors are informed about these measures, that will last until at least the 31st of March.
The DJI understands very well that these measures can lead to disappointment for the people that are held in custodial institutions as well as their visitors, but we have to take these measures to limit the impact of the corona virus within our organisation.

The measures:

**Visits**

Visits to people held in custodial institutions are suspended. To be able to continue these contacts as much as possible, wider possibilities are offered to keep in contact by phone and, where possible, through Skype. Only visits related to the judicial procedures that are necessary can take place. For instance visits of lawyers (that cannot take place with the help of for instance digital tools). Juveniles in Correctional Institutions for Juvenile Offenders still can receive visits from their parents or legal guardians.

**Transports**

Judicial/court procedures have to be guaranteed as much as possible. Where possible it is facilitated that sessions in court can be participated in through a visual connection, unless there are reasons not to do so. In this case, we will search for adequate solutions with our partners in the judicial chain.

**Leaves**

Leaves of people that are held in custodial institutions are suspended.
New entries

In all custodial institutions new entries will be limited to prevent infections with the virus. In the given period institutions will not summon for 'zelfmelders' to serve their sentence. ‘Zelfmelders’ are people that have been convicted for crimes with a relatively short sentence (less than 3 months). In general they can await their judgement in freedom and can be summoned later to serve their sentence.

Point of Contact

Joost de Looff
Advisor Analysis
Custodial Institutions Agency, The Netherlands
j.d.looff@dji.minjus.nl
(+31) 646846306

Additional Covid-19 resources are available at: http://bit.ly/2U0oKLG
If you would like to send us information about Covid-19, please fill in this form: http://bit.ly/2WnqiRH