



HM Prison & Probation Service

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Ms N Konstantinidis

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Dear Ms Konstantinidis,

Thank you for your email, dated 20 January and copied to numerous recipients, following my correspondence of 11 January and the email of acknowledgement you received from my department on 18 January, regarding your concerns over the treatment of Mr Julian Assange, currently remanded at HMP Belmarsh.

As I advised in my email of 11 January, as a responsible Government Agency, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is duty bound to comply with legislation within the Data Protection Laws in a way to protect the personal information of all those who live, work in and visit any of our establishments. It would therefore not be appropriate to offer comment on individual prisoners within HMPPS and, consequently, I am unable to provide you with a full response to the issues you have raised. I must be clear that I cannot disclose details of Mr Assange's individual care at HMP Belmarsh within the constraints of data protection legislation. However, I will endeavour to address your queries on prisoner clothing and how to arrange a video-link call with a prisoner.

HMP Belmarsh acts in accordance with Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 12/2011 Prisoners' Property in relation to clothing entitlements for remand prisoners. I would like to assure you that all prisoners, whether sentenced or held on remand, are entitled to clean and decent clothing. On the matter of the heating at HMP Belmarsh, I can confirm that the establishment recently experienced an issue relating to a boiler within the prison, following a similar issue which had occurred in December 2020. On both occasions, prisoners located within the affected house block were offered additional blankets and the heating was fixed promptly. PSI 12/2011 is published in full through the Government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-prisoner-property-psi-122011>.

It is not for me, nor the Secretary of State for Justice, to grant or withhold permission for a physical or video-link visit with any individual prisoner. Visits are authorised at an establishment level, in accordance with Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 15/2011 Management and Security at Visits and PSI 16/2011 Providing Visits and Services to Visitors. The correct process for a new prospective visitor to follow is to contact the prisoner directly, in writing, to request to meet with them. If the prisoner wishes to, they may then request that this individual's personal contact details are added to their record, at which point a visit may be arranged. I would like to assure

you that all prisons are required to actively encourage prisoners to maintain outside contact; supporting prisoners' relationships outside of prison is not only important for their wellbeing but also helps to prevent reoffending, reduce intergenerational crime and improve the safety of the custodial environment.

As you may be aware, in accordance with the national restrictions, prisons in England are currently closed to visitors to enable HMPPS to ensure the safe and secure functioning of our prisons, while implementing social distancing. Official and legal visits will continue as necessary but will take place remotely where possible, for example through the use of video-link technology and exceptional use of in-cell telephony.

Physical social visits are not permitted, except on exceptional compassionate grounds, however, the MoJ has explored a number of options for enhanced social contact, including the use of video link type technology to replace physical social visiting arrangements, a system known commercially as "Purple Visits". I can confirm that this system has been implemented at HMP Belmarsh and is available to residents for use. If you would like any further information on this initiative, it can be found by visiting their website: www.purplevisits.com.

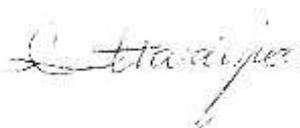
As you have also referenced a number of journalists who wish to interview Mr Assange, it may be helpful for me to highlight that the guidelines for when and how prisoners are allowed contact with journalists are set out in PSI 37/2020 Prisoners' Access to the Media, which is published in full through the Government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prisoners-access-to-the-media-psi-372010>.

PSI 15/2011 and PSI 16/2011 are available for you to view in full through the Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prison-service-instructions-phis#instructions-7>.

I am sorry that I am unable to comment specifically on Mr Assange but I hope this response will provide you with sufficient assurance regarding prisoners' access to proper clothing and useful information on the correct process to request a visit or Purple Visit with a prisoner.

Yours sincerely



D Harding
Business Manager to Executive Director