



# **Irish Prison Service College Training During Covid 19**

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**EPTA Annual Conference 2020**

**29 September**

**John flavin, Irish Prison Service College**

[www.epta.info](http://www.epta.info)

# Agenda

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- Overview of Higher Certificate in Custodial Care (HCCC)
- Covid 19 – Irish Context
- Covid 19 – Irish Prison Service College Timeline (IPSC)
- IPSC Continuity Strategy
- Conclusion

# Higher Certificate in Custodial Care

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- All Recruit Prison Officers are obliged to undertake a Higher Education Programme –Higher Certificate of Arts in Custodial Care (HCCC)
- 2 years in duration / 4 semesters
- **Semester 1**
  - 12 weeks of training in The Irish Prison Service College by IPSC tutors
- **Semesters 2,3,4**
  - Delivered off site by WIT (5 days per semester off site at third level institution)
- Accreditation with Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) L6 QQI / L5 EFQ
- The programme is delivered in line with academic criteria regarding European Credit Transfer System - ECTS
- 120 Credits / Higher Certificate Credit Value. 25/30 hours contact time per credit.

# Covid 19 in Ireland Timeline

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- 27<sup>th</sup> January - National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) for COVID-19 formed
- 26<sup>th</sup> February - Six Nations rugby game between Ireland and Italy called off.
- 29<sup>th</sup> February - The first confirmed case in the Republic of Ireland was announced
- 3<sup>rd</sup> March – A second case was confirmed of a female in the east of the country who had been to Northern Italy
- 6<sup>th</sup> March - More than 60 staff at Cork University Hospital would have to self-isolate following a case of community transmission of COVID-19 at the hospital
- 11<sup>th</sup> March – First fatality, an elderly patient in County Kildare
- 12<sup>th</sup> March; [Taoiseach Leo Varadkar](#) announced the closure of all schools, colleges and childcare facilities
- 29 March – Government announce countrywide lockdown for initial 2 week period
  - Ireland's movement from the Containment Phase in its strategy to combat the spread of the virus towards the Delay Phase.

# Covid 19 in IPSC Timeline

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- 6<sup>th</sup> February – New RPO commenced Semester 1 training (Initial 12 weeks)
- RPO's - 3 weeks in training when first Covid 19 case identified in Ireland and 5 weeks in training when lockdown announced
- Seminal Moment – 29<sup>th</sup> March - Government announced lockdown
- Exponential increase in Covid 19 cases
  - **Should Training Continue ?**
  - **Could we train RPOs safely and to a level of competence to work independently in a prison setting?**
  - **How would Covid 19 impact staffing levels in Irish Prisons?**

## Next Steps

Discussion with HR Director IPS

Mandate by HR Directorate (following consultation with Dept of Justice) to proceed with training



# IPSC Continuity Strategy

## FACILITIES

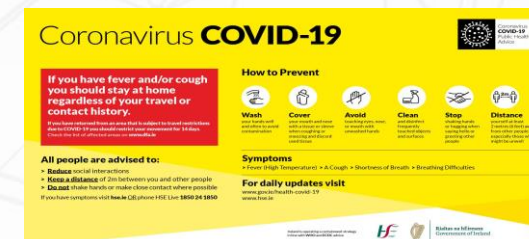
- Temperature Checking
- Hand Sanitiser Stations
- Social distancing
- Signage / Floor Markings
- Reduced Capacity
- Dedicated Isolation Room/Route to same
- Room Capacity Designations

## EDUCATION

- Infection Control Team provided staff with
- Covid 19 Training
- Definition
- Epidemiological Overview
- Signs and Symptoms
- Modes of Transmission
- Protection against Covid 19
- Symptoms Protocol

## TRAINING

- All non-essential training cancelled
- RPO Syllabus Revision
- Communication
- Classroom Controls
- Close Contact Risk Mitigation
- Innovation



# Conclusion

## Successes

- Standard of training was maintained
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Class currently in training for 2020
- An additional 2 more training groups planned before end 2020

## Limitations

- Lack of opportunities for socialisation for RPO
- Passing Out Parade
- Guest Lecture Visits / Supplementary





# Thank You Questions

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