



Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP

Chair of Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR)
Houses of Parliament
London
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: ADR 79477

30 June 2020

Dear Harriet,

EARLY RELEASE OF PRISONERS DUE TO COVID-19

Thank you for inviting me to discuss the rights of children whose mothers are in prison at the recent JCHR oral evidence session on 8 June. At the end of the session, in response to Baroness Ludford's earlier question, I agreed to write with an update on the number of women released from custody due to Covid-19. I apologise for my delay in doing so.

As you will be aware, women within the female estate are considered for temporary release on a rolling basis in three tranches, on either Special Purpose Licence (SPL) via the Release on Temporary Licence Policy (ROTL) scheme, or End of Custody Temporary Release (ECTR). The three tranches are –

1. Individuals who are pregnant or residing on Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) – SPL
2. Individuals who are medically extremely vulnerable as per NHS criteria - SPL
3. Individuals who are within 2 months of their release date – ECTR

As of the latest data publication on 19 June 2020, I can confirm that the following number of releases have taken place:

SPL		ECTR	
Tranche 1		Tranche 2	Tranche 3
Individuals who are pregnant	Individuals on MBUs	Individuals who are medically extremely vulnerable	Individuals within 2 months of release
7	16	< 5	7

I have provided a weekly breakdown in a confidential annex attached to this letter.

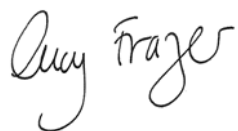
From Friday 26 June we have been publishing weekly data on Covid-19 in HM Prison and Probation Service in England and Wales. This statistical publication will include updates on those being released early from custody and can be found on GOV.UK - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-and-probation-service-covid-19-statistics>

Early release is only one facet of our approach to tackling Covid-19 across the prison estate and I acknowledge that the number of releases may not be as high as initially expected. In the context of the release of women, this has been due to a number of reasons, including the need for thorough risk

assessment, the requirement to secure appropriate and meaningful accommodation and healthcare pathways to ensure continuity of support, and in some cases the choice of some women not to be considered.

Thank you for your letter dated 26 June, in which you ask for figures as to how many of the women we have temporarily released have dependents in the community. I will respond to this point as soon as possible. As you are aware, this is not something we collect centrally.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Lucy Frazer'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LUCY FRAZER QC MP