



Government of the Netherlands

Custodial Institutions Agency extends corona measures until 28 April

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In line with the measures announced this Tuesday by the Dutch government, the Custodial Institutions Agency (DJI: Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen) has extended the measures taken earlier in prisons, forensic care facilities and young offenders institutions until 28 April. These measures concern postponing visits and prison leave for detainees in in prisons and forensic care facilities, as well as reducing their trips to and from court. In addition, the visiting policy for young offenders institutions will be made stricter to prevent the spread of coronavirus. This means that detained youth are also no longer able to receive visitors as of 1 April.

Limited number of infections

At present, four detainees have been found to have a coronavirus infection. One was in custody at De Schie Penal Institution, who is being treated in the prison hospital in Scheveningen since 18 March. The other three are being detained under a hospital order, and are currently being treated in the Oostvaarderskliniek and Rooyse Wissel clinics. As a preventive measure, all institutions and clinics are isolating any detainees with cold symptoms, a cough, shortness of breath or who are running a fever over 38° Celsius; this resembles the home self-isolation that other people are in. Currently, this concerns one detainee in the prison system and four in forensic care facilities. None of the detainees in young offenders institutions have yet been found to have a coronavirus infection. There are currently 10,368 detainees being held in the prison system, forensic care facilities and young offenders institutions. In keeping with the guidelines set by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), only individuals from vulnerable groups (as determined from a medical perspective) are being tested, those running a greater risk of the disease (i.e. COVID-19) taking a more serious course; for their follow-up treatment it is essential to know whether they are infected with the coronavirus. This is comparable to how matters are being dealt with in the rest of the Netherlands.

Consequences of the measures

The measures which have been in place since 13 March of course have had an impact on those staying in correctional institutions. The daytime programmes have been temporarily adjusted in a number of institutions. In order to allow detainees to remain in touch with their loved ones, which is necessary for their reintegration, they are being given more opportunities for telephoning and can now use Skype. In addition, various initiatives have been taken at local level in order to keep the situation in hand and safe. As yet, the measures are generally being met with understanding by staff and detainees, and have not yet led to any incidents or unrest of note.

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'I am extremely proud of the way that the DJI staff have adapted to the changed circumstances these past few weeks. Of course both staff and detainees have concerns about their health, like everyone in the rest of the country. This is very understandable, but the measures we are taking are intended to ensure health and safety in our institutions.'

says Sander Dekker, Minister for Legal Protection.

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Topic

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