



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
Robert Buckland QC MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of
State for Justice

Peter Dawson
Director
Prison Reform Trust
15 Northburgh Street
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13th July 2020

Dear Peter

ROLLOUT OF VIDEO CALLING IN PRISONS

When we met recently via Zoom, I undertook to write to you to provide more information about the rollout of video calling in prisons and the youth estate.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, work was being delivered to pilot video calling in line with the recommendations of Lord Farmer's review and his 2019 review of priorities in the female estate.

However, following the temporary suspension of social visits in March, we focused on the delivery of an emergency temporary solution and an alternative model was designed and tested at pace.

We have deployed a dedicated software solution designed for use in prisons, to ensure that video calling can be delivered in a secure way and in line with an acceptable use policy. The software has a range of built-in security features and a tailored booking system. The facility is now available at 26 establishments.

I know that Minister Frazer has written to you separately setting out how the programme works in more detail and how it is being rolled out across the estate.

In addition, we are considering a longer-term solution for video calls in line with Lord Farmer's recommendations, focussing on those who do not receive face-to-face visits under normal circumstances.

Thank you for raising this issue with me and I apologise for the delay in responding to you. As the work has been delivered at pace, I wanted to write to you only once we had a full picture of how the facility is being rolled out across the estate.

RT HON ROBERT BUCKLAND QC MP