



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

1 April 2020

Dear Lord Chancellor,

Thank you for taking the important decision to temporarily release pregnant women and new mothers from prison, in order to protect them and their children from COVID-19.

I recognise that this will not have been an easy step to take, but with Catholic charities and chaplains working in our prisons, I recognise that this will help to relieve pressure on the prison estate and save lives.

On behalf of the Catholic Church in England and Wales I encourage you to build upon this important decision and continue to tackle the spread of COVID-19 among staff and prisoners by releasing others who do not pose a risk to the public, especially older or vulnerable people.

I would also like to thank you for providing more opportunities for prisoners to stay in touch with their families following the necessary cancellation of visits. Now more than ever it is essential to protect family ties and I hope more phones and other forms of contact can be made available as soon as possible.

Please be assured of my prayers for you, your family and your staff at this extremely difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Rev Richard Moth
Lead Bishop for Prisons
Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales