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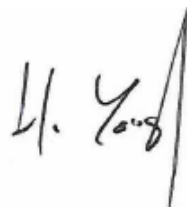
30 April 2020

Dear Margaret,

PRISONS – EARLY RELEASE UNDER EMERGENCY POWERS

Many thanks to you for your discussions with me over the last few weeks on the issue of prison release. I wanted to provide you with an update on the position. The Regulations are close to being finalised and we propose to lay them shortly. Although I had proposed to lay them today, final legal checks are being made to ensure that they will operate effectively, these final checks are absolutely necessary for a robust early release scheme that has public safety at its heart. I propose, therefore, to move the laying day to early next week. This will also mean eligibility will begin at the start of a week thus helping avoid having emergency prisoner release run from closer to a Friday, when access to services may be more difficult.

I will update the Justice Committee ahead of the Regulations being introduced. Laying the Regulations early next week will not significantly delay when the vast majority of eligible prisoners are released or the necessary easing of pressures on our prisons. I welcome the efforts of all partners in working hard to prepare to support these processes and my discussions with partners indicate they have done much to prepare and are standing ready to support release when it starts. Arrangements are also being put in place to notify victims who have signed up to the Victim Notification Scheme when individual prisoners are released.



HUMZA YOUSAF

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