

People in detention and institutions

- People deprived of their liberty, including in prisons, pre-trial detention, immigration detention, institutions, compulsory drug rehabilitation centres, and other places of detention are at heightened risk of infection in the case of an outbreak. There is a high risk of contamination and physical distancing is difficult to achieve. Their situation should be specifically addressed in crisis planning and response.
- States should adopt special measures to ensure access to information and equality in preventive and other health care for all persons deprived of their liberty.
- States should urgently explore options for release and alternatives to detention to mitigate the risk of harm within places of detention, including for persons who have committed minor, petty and non-violent offenses, those with imminent release dates, those in immigration detention and those detained because of their migration status, people with underlying health conditions, and those in pre-trial or administrative detention. People detained without legal basis should be released, as should people in compulsory drug detention centres or treatment programmes.
- There should be a moratorium on children entering detention, and states should release all children from detention who can be safely released.
- The situation of people with disabilities and older persons living in institutions is particularly grave. Limiting contact with families may be justified as part of emergency health measures but may result in people with disabilities and older persons being further exposed to neglect and abuse. Community-based support and accessible violence prevention tools should be in place.
- View the [Interim Guidance on COVID-19: Focus on Persons Deprived of Their Liberty](#) (PDF)
- View the [Technical Note: COVID-19 and Children Deprived of their Liberty](#) (PDF)