



Ministry
of Justice

Lord Timpson
Minister of State for Justice

Andy Slaughter MP
Chair, Justice Select Committee
House of Commons
London
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10 October 2024

Dear Andy

STATUTORY INSTRUMENT TO AMEND PAROLE BOARD RULES

I am writing to notify the Committee that today I am laying before Parliament a statutory instrument (SI) to amend the Parole Board Rules 2019. The purpose of the SI is to implement two important elements of the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024.

Delegation powers

The first key change made by this SI is to expand Rule 4 to give the Chair of the Parole Board greater powers to delegate case management decisions to the Board's secretariat staff who are civil servants. This implements S.73(3) of the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 which allows the Secretary of State for Justice to make procedural rules enabling the delegation of the Parole Board's judicial functions.

The rules list the specific functions which may be delegated. This includes matters such as revoking or varying substantive directions made by panels, directing the production of necessary information and considering requests to vary deadlines. The new rules also contain a provision which enables the parties (SSJ and the prisoner) to request that a decision taken by the Secretariat should be reviewed by a member. Decisions on whether prisoners are safe to be released on licence, which are be quasi-judicial in nature, will remain reserved to Parole Board members.

The purpose of these changes is to improve the speed and efficiency of the parole system. We estimate that it could save the equivalent of 21 full-time Board members' time over the course of a year, which in turn will free up the capacity for c.200 additional parole hearings per annum which will contribute to easing pressure on prison capacity and will speed up parole reviews for the affected prisoners.

Sentences of Imprisonment or Detention for Public Protection (IPP / DPP)

The other main change delivered by this SI is to implement measures in S.66 of the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 pertaining to the termination of the licence for offenders subject to the IPP or

DPP sentence. Notably, the Act reduces the qualifying period for the Parole Board to consider terminating an IPP licence from ten years after first release from prison to three years and for a DPP licence (for offenders convicted when under 18) to two years. It also introduces a provision for the licence to be automatically terminated two years after the relevant qualifying period, in cases where it has not been terminated by the Parole Board and the offender has not been recalled to prison in those two years. These provisions in the Victims and Prisoners Act will, as announced by the Lord Chancellor on 5 September, commence on 1 November 2024 and 1 February 2025. This SI ensures those changes are reflected in the Parole Board Rules.

A copy of the draft SI is attached for your information. An Equalities Statement and an Explanatory Memorandum will also be published alongside it.



Lord Timpson
Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending