



Ministry  
of Justice

The Right Honourable  
**Alex Norris MP**  
Lord Chancellor & Secretary  
of State for Justice

The Clerk of the Justice Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

3 August 2026

Dear Clerk of the Justice Select Committee,

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SENTENCING ACT**

When this Government took office in 2024, the prison system was days away from total collapse. My predecessor immediately took swift, and decisive, action to stabilise the criminal justice system. Prisons at capacity would have meant courts cancelling trials and unable to sentence criminals, police forced to halt arrests, and a breakdown in law and order – alongside a more fundamental collapse in public confidence and consent in our criminal justice system.

This government took difficult decisions to deliver a sustainable, long-term solution to the prison capacity crisis via the Sentencing Act, and ensure that the public is never put at risk again from the threat of prisons running out of space.

For me as the new Lord Chancellor, it is vitally important that we do right by victims while championing public protection and strengthening confidence in the criminal justice system. And I know that we must do more to support victims. The Prime Minister and I have listened to concerns from victims and survivors about the implementation of important elements of the Sentencing Act. We subsequently took the decision to pause implementation of the progression model to ensure that two crucial things are balanced: the need to put victims at the heart of our work while ensuring we never run out of space to lock up the most dangerous criminals, a scenario which would represent the worst possible outcome for victims.

I know that concerns have centred around the “earned progression model” introduced in the Act, which will see most offenders on standard sentences released between 33% and 50% of their sentence. I want to be clear: serious violent and sexual offenders serving Extended Determinate Sentences and therefore judged by the court to be dangerous are *already* ineligible for release under the progression model. They can only be released after serving at least two-thirds of their custodial term, and in any event can only be released before their full term if deemed by the Parole Board that they are safe to be managed in the community. Likewise, offenders serving a Sentence for Offenders of Particular Concern, Life sentence

and offenders serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences are already out of scope of the progression model.

As part of the review announced by the Prime Minister, he and I have considered every possible option available to us. We have decided to exclude rape and certain child sex offences from these changes. Once released from custody, to further boost victim protection, these offenders will now face stronger surveillance after leaving prison, including:

- **GPS trail monitoring for 12 months**, giving probation constant access to their location via GPS tag.
- **Strengthened community supervision**, keeping them in the highest probation supervision tiers, with close contact and oversight
- **Mandatory consideration of referral to Approved Premises**, probation's most secure community accommodation.

I can also announce a substantively strengthened package of support for victims. All eligible victims who have already opted into a Victim Contact Scheme will be contacted in their preferred way to inform them of the outcome of the review whether it affects them. Those where their offender is to be released earlier will receive a further letter once the sentence calculations have been undertaken. We will also seek to proactively trace all impacted victims and offer them tailored information ahead of their offenders' release. In all cases, I am committed to ensuring that there are proper, trauma informed communications with those affected to help them navigate the changes as they take effect.

To support victims impacted by or concerned about prisoner releases, we will establish a national helpline, offering emotional support, practical advice such as safety planning, and signposting to onward services, as well as general information about the sentencing changes. We will also boost funding to local areas to ensure local services can offer full support to victims and survivors. This could include specific training and advice on what the sentencing changes mean, local signposting to appropriate support, and practical advice like safety planning.

Additionally, we will also apply enhanced supervision arrangements to organised child sexual exploitation flagged offenders – such as grooming gangs - who are not covered by exclusions outlined above. They will now face stricter supervision, including elevated risk assessments and stronger multi-agency plans where necessary, and be subject to robust licence conditions.

Any offender released from prison will be managed under strict licence conditions in the community with a presumption that prison leavers will be tagged. From October brand new tougher powers will become available for probation officers, including restriction zones for the most serious sexual and violent offenders, and the ability to prohibit offenders from driving, attending public events, or entering pubs, clubs and bars. Offenders released on licence can be immediately recalled if they breach their conditions or if they cannot be safely managed in the community. As part of managing offenders back into the community,

we are undertaking a substantial expansion of tagging as part of the £700m investment in probation and community services.

These are decisions no Minister would ever want to take but it is right these sickening crimes are excluded from these reforms. Victims will also have access to better support and reassurance that offenders leaving prison face tougher supervision and punishment.

**I will deposit a copy of this letter in the House Library.**

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**RT HON ALEX NORRIS MP**  
**LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE**

## **Annex – List of offences now excluded from the progression model**

1. Rape (1956 Act)
2. Rape (2003 Act)
3. Intercourse with girl under 13
4. Incest by a man
5. Permitting girl under 13 to use premises for intercourse
6. Causing or encouraging the prostitution of, intercourse with or indecent assault on girl under 16
7. Rape of a child under 13
8. Assault of a child under 13 by penetration
9. Causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity
10. Rape of a child under 16
11. Assault of a child under 16 by penetration
12. Causing or inciting a child under 16 to engage in sexual activity involving penetration
13. Sexual activity with a child family member
14. Paying for sexual services of a child
15. Causing or inciting sexual exploitation of a child.
16. Intercourse with girl under 16
17. Permitting girl under 16 to use premises for intercourse
18. Indecent conduct towards a young child
19. Inciting girl under sixteen to have incestuous sexual intercourse
20. Indecent photographs of children
21. Possession of indecent photograph of a child
22. Sexual assault of a child under 13
23. Sexual activity with a child
24. Arranging or facilitating commission of a child sex offence
25. Meeting a child following sexual grooming etc.
26. Abuse of position of trust: sexual activity with a child
27. Abuse of position of trust: causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity

28. Abuse of position of trust: sexual activity in the presence of a child
29. Abuse of position of trust: causing a child to watch a sexual act
30. Inciting a child family member to engage in sexual activity
31. Controlling a child in relation to sexual exploitation
32. Arranging or facilitating sexual exploitation of a child
33. Procurement of girl under twenty-one
34. Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity
35. Abduction of unmarried girl under 18 from parent or guardian
36. Abduction of unmarried girl under 16 from parent or guardian
37. Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child
38. Causing a child to watch a sexual act
39. Child sex offences committed by children or young persons