

Parole Glossary

Determinate Sentence – a sentence with a fixed end date, on which the prisoner must be released from prison with licence conditions.

Dossier – a dossier is a collection of information, evidence and reports about a prisoner. It is given to us as evidence to consider during a parole review.

Indeterminate Sentence (IPP/ISP) – a sentence with no end date, meaning the offender must stay in prison until we are satisfied that their risk has reduced enough for them to be released into the community. Most indeterminate prisoners will stay on licence for life. This means that they must keep to the licence conditions set for their release.

Licence Conditions – the rules and conditions a prisoner must keep to when they are released from prison. Any breach of these, could result in an offender being returned to prison.

Offender Manager (OM/Probation officer) - a professional employed by the National Probation Service. Offender Managers are based in the community and are responsible for managing an offender if released. They write a report for a parole hearing providing information about progress made, identified risks, and making a recommendation to the Parole Board on whether they think the offender is suitable for release.

Offender Supervisor (OS) - a professional based in the prison who is responsible for managing an offender whilst in custody. They are required to write a report on behaviour in custody and work completed to reduce risk and to make a recommendation to the Parole Board on what the decision should be.

Panel – the Parole Board members who are making the decision about a prisoner's possible release. A panel can be either one, two or three members.

Panel chair – each panel has a chairperson, who acts as the lead member and writes the decision.

Recalled – when someone has been returned to custody because they have not complied with their licence conditions. This could be committing another offence, or not following instructions given by an Offender Manager.

Representations – this is a letter or statement setting out the progress the prisoner has made while in prison, the outcome they want from their parole review, and why they feel they should get that outcome. This could be written by the offender themselves or by their solicitor.



Risk Management Plan (RMP) - the Offender Manager will write a risk management plan, as part of their report, on what measures will be in place in the community to ensure risk is managed effectively.

Secretary of State – the Secretary of State for Justice is the government minister responsible for the Probation Service/Prison Service. Officials working on their behalf provide information to the Parole Board for their review.

Tariff – the tariff is the minimum amount of time a prisoner must spend in prison. A pre-tariff review happens before they have served their tariff (a prisoner cannot be released from prison at this point), an on-tariff review happens at the point the tariff is served, and a post-tariff review happens after the tariff has been served.

Victim Liaison Officer – a representative from the National Probation Service, the victim's point of contact with regard to the offender's sentence, who will explain the parole process and help them to write a Victim Personal Statement for a parole hearing.

Victim Personal Statement (VPS) – this is a document the victim writes to explain how their life has been affected by the offence, in which they can set out their requests for licence conditions if the prisoner is released. For example, they may request an exclusion zone around their address, so the prisoner cannot come into that area.

Witness/witnesses - Prison staff, probation officers, healthcare practitioners and other professionals who have had contact with the prisoner and attend oral hearings to give evidence are called witnesses.