

Parole Board for England and Wales

Business Plan

April 2017 to March 2018



The Parole Board's mission statement is:

The Parole Board is an independent body that works with other criminal justice agencies to protect the public by risk assessing prisoners to decide whether they can be safely released into the community.

The Board has five statutory functions in England and Wales:

1. Deciding whether to release indeterminate sentence prisoners, including life sentence prisoners and prisoners given imprisonment for public protection sentences (IPPs), after their minimum term of imprisonment has expired;
2. Deciding whether to release some categories of determinate sentence prisoners;
3. Deciding whether some prisoners who have been recalled to prison can be re-released;
4. Advising the Secretary of State whether indeterminate prisoners can be progressed from closed to open conditions; and
5. Advising the Secretary of State on any release or recall matters referred to it.

Strategic Aims 2016 to 2020:

The Parole Board must interpret its role and statutory duties in the context of its current environment. It should carry out its responsibilities to assess prisoners for release as part of wider efforts by its criminal justice partners to reduce reoffending and the consequent creation of more victims by reform of the prison system. The Parole Board has a key role to play by ensuring resources and capacity are not wasted by keeping individuals in prison because of inefficiencies in the parole system and that the parole system supports rehabilitative processes.

The Parole Board has five overarching strategic aims for the period 2017 – 2018:

1. Safely eliminate the backlog of outstanding cases that are delayed due to capacity constraints by the end of 2017;
2. Work with partners to ensure that by the end of 2017 the majority of IPP prisoners have been safely released, or, where risk is not judged to be manageable in the community, have clear plans in place that will enable them to progress;
3. Ensure the Board's remit is focused on those cases where its expertise is of most value and does not detract from our partners' rehabilitative responsibilities;
4. Ensure that the Board's cultural and procedural approach to risk is consistent with the successful implementation of its other strategic objectives; and
5. Ensure that staff and members of the Board work in partnership to continuously improve our processes, whilst treating all with respect and humanity.



Background:

In January 2017, the Parole Board welcomed the National Audit Office Investigation into the Parole Board backlog of outstanding cases.

The report recognised the progress the Board has made in reducing outstanding cases, developing a new strategy, recruiting over 100 members, improving the way we use performance information, and piloting digital working. By the end of March 2017 over 90% of our members had tablets and 54% were working completely paperless.

Areas highlighted in the investigation for the Board to focus on were: compensation payments to prisoners, deferrals, member fees, and modelling efficiencies.

In 2016 the Board was consulted as part of the Chief Inspector of Prisons' "Unintended Consequences" thematic which considered barriers to release and progression of IPP prisoners.

Two recommendations were made to the Board:

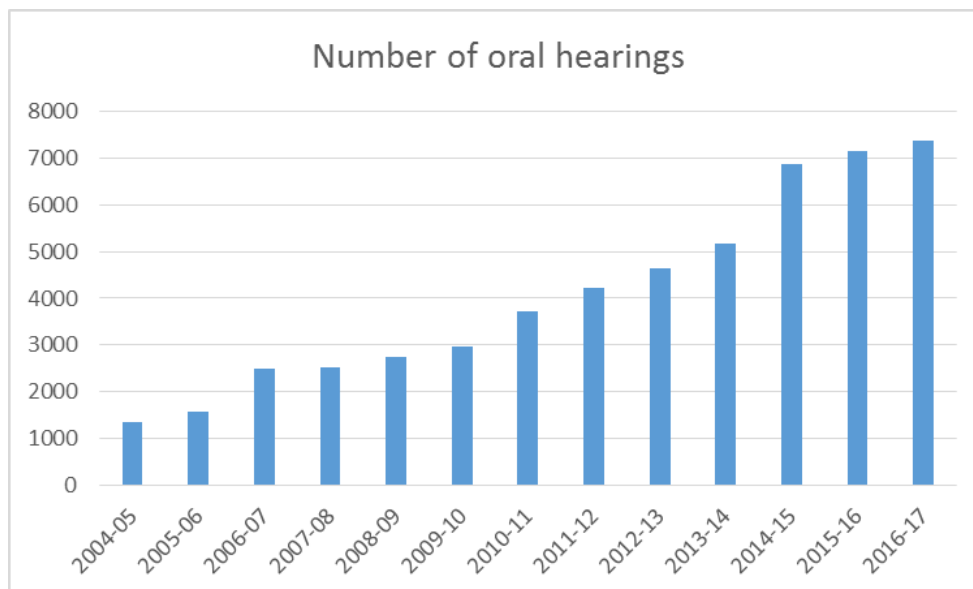
- i) that our information and management systems should be used to identify the reasons why IPP prisoners are turned down for progression and/or release on licence, and this should inform work in prisons to reduce their risk
- ii) that decision making about recall cases should be expedited.

The Parole Board Rules changed at the end of November 2016 to enable decisions to be made for release/progression on the papers for IPPs. To date there have been 15 release decisions and 2 progression decisions on the papers.

The Parole Board management information provided by our case management system provides limited ability to evaluate qualitative information to review the underlying reasons provided in the decisions for non-progression, however the Parole Board is working with HMPPS via a joint IPP improvement plan working group. This group has commissioned Ministry of Justice Analytics colleagues to assist with management information, given their expertise and ability to link to wider information systems.

2017/2018 Operating Context:

- The average number of outstanding cases peaked in January 2015 at 3,163, in April 2016 it was 2,422, and at the end of March 2017 it was 2,033, a fall of 17% over the year. The Parole Board has a target to reduce this to 1,200 cases by the end of December 2017.
- 30% of oral hearings conducted were deferred or adjourned in 16/17.
- 50% of deferrals before the day of the hearing, and 69% on the day of the hearing, relate to reports.
- In 2016/17 the Parole Board conducted 7,377 oral hearings, 37% more than in 2012/13 pre *Osborn*, and 16,866 paper hearings.



- 123 staff and 212 Parole Board members (as at 31/03/17). The membership increased to 262 members when 50 new members joined the Board in June 2017.
- Budget for 17/18 is £19.2 million. £1.1 million capital and £18.1 resource.
- In July 2017 the Parole Board will mark its 50th anniversary.



Key Performance Indicators:

The Parole Board has five key performance indicators related to each aim in our four-year strategy.

- 1. Get the Backlog to 1200 by December 2017 and by March 2018 set new measures for safely managing the board's ongoing case load.**
- 2. Work with partners to get IPP numbers to 1500 by 2020.**
- 3. Work with partners to update our policy for handling determinate cases by March 2017 and decrease the proportion of determinate recall cases requiring oral hearings by 2020**
- 4. Complete a review of our approach to risk by March 2017 and implement a strategy based on the recommendations by 2020**
- 5. Increase staff and member engagement levels by 2020**

To understand how well the Board is performing against its strategy, the Board closely measures and monitors performance in the following areas and reports on these to the Management Committee and/or relevant sub-committee at least quarterly:

<p>Finance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The unit costs of paper and oral hearings - The release rate - Compensation payment amounts 	<p>Prisoners, Victims and the Public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complaint numbers, reasons and outcomes - Serious further offence rates and serious further offence case review outcomes
<p>Internal Business Processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The deferral and adjournment rates - The number of cases listed for oral hearing - Cases in the listing queue longer than 90 days - The oral hearing case completion rate 	<p>Learning and Growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff and members recruited and retained - Staff and members trained - BAME ratio of staff and members - Members working paperless

Business Plan 2017-18:

Each of the five strategic aims has a number of objectives which contribute towards achieving that aim.

Set out below are those objectives that will impact between April 2017 and March 2018 and the tasks we intend to complete during that period to achieve those.

Tasks highlighted in blue have been assessed as most significant to progressing our overall strategy.

1. Safely eliminate the backlog of outstanding cases that are delayed due to capacity constraints by the end of 2017

- 1.1 Continue to manage cases and maximise listings to ensure the most efficient throughput of cases;
- 1.2 Complete the successful implementation of the digitalisation programme by 2020;
- 1.3 Complete the recruitment, induction and training of new members and the judicial vice-chair promptly enough to achieve the objective of reducing the backlog;
- 1.4 Make a sustained reduction in unnecessary deferrals and adjournments; and
- 1.5 Keep prisoners and victims updated on delays affecting them.

By the end of September 2017 the Parole Board will:

Task	Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Train and mentor 10 new panel chairs	Director for Member Development and Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up a new Member Case Assessment (MCA) administrative case management team	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Launch an up to date online Members Handbook that works with members new digital devices	Director of Member Development and Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recruit sufficient case managers to bring us up to complement and maintain that level in the future	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Routinely list 800 oral hearings a month	Director of Operations



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot initiatives to help unblock delayed cases and quality check ready to list cases 	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake administrative quality reviews to ensure dossiers are complete first time and within 18 weeks of referral 	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a new listing prioritisation framework 	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue further guidance to members on using Office365, which will ensure information is safely backed up 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a member deferral group to analyse data, engage members and make recommendations to the management committee 	Director of Member Development and Practice

By the end of March 2018 the Parole Board will:

Task	Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train and mentor 104 new members, 50% each in cohort 1 (November 2016) and cohort 2 (June 2017) 	Director for Member Development and Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out E-dossier tablets to 100% of members and have at least 80% of our membership working paperless 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace PPUD with PPCMS and align our business processes 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out Office365 tablets / laptops to all staff (compatible with member digital processes) 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out digital recording tools to 75% of panel chairs 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and test innovative approaches in up to six prisons that could help to reduce the deferral rate 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review key performance measures and revise targets based on workload at the end of 2017 	Director of Business Development and Improvement

2. Work with partners to ensure that by the end of 2017 the majority of IPP prisoners have been safely released, or, where risk is not judged to be manageable in the community, have clear plans in place that will enable them to progress

- 2.1. Develop a joint strategy with HMPPS for IPP prisoners with visible senior leadership. Ensure that measure to give Parole Board members confidence about the effectiveness of preparations for release and management post-release are evidence based, proportionate and necessary;
- 2.2. Examine the scope for the Parole Board to have a problem-solving role in progressing IPP prisoners. Focusing on progression and holding to account (whilst avoiding inappropriate involvement in sentence planning and maintaining independence);
- 2.3. Collaborate with inspectorates and academics to ensure the Parole Board has a deeper understanding of what may delay the progress of IPP prisoners and how that might be resolved;
- 2.4. Make proposals on any additional legislative measures that may be necessary to ensure progression of IPP prisoners; and
- 2.5. Reassure victims and the general public that those IPP prisoners that continue to present an unacceptable risk will remain in custody.

By the end of September 2017 the Parole Board will:

Task	Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with MoJ policy officials and HM Prisons and Probation Service to progress different types of IPP offenders 	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue guidance to enable members to deliver the policy to release IPPs on the papers without the need for oral hearing 	Director of Member Development and Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use regular <i>Inside Time</i> articles and up to date information on our website to communicate policy and progress relating to the remaining IPP prisoners 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and share the findings of an exploratory study with Cambridge University on what affects success at oral hearing, based on observation of hearings involving a number of IPP prisoners 	Director of Business Development and Improvement

By the end of March 2018 the Parole Board will:

Task	Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend quarterly national IPP progression forums established by HMPPS with the aim of co-ordinating approaches to successful progression	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and improve communications to ensure a joined up strategy for IPPs with HMPPS colleagues	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess ideas from the Indeterminate Sentence Prisoner Progression Board (ISPPB) to facilitate paper decisions in IPP cases	Director of Operations

3. Ensure the Board's remit is focused on those cases where its expertise is of most value and does not detract from our partners' rehabilitative responsibilities

- 3.1. Limit the Board's role in recall cases; review, and if appropriate reduce, the Board's role in determinate sentence prisoners with limited periods left to serve; and
- 3.2. Change the Parole Board's Listing Prioritisation Framework to ensure that we are better able to focus on the cases that matter and provide better overall fairness to all prisoners.

By the end of September 2017 the Parole Board will:

Task	Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a pilot to reprioritise recall cases so a sentence expiry date (SED) within 24 weeks will not be given an oral hearing, and those with an SED within 12 months will not be prioritised 	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose changes to the Board's Listing Prioritisation Framework 	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the number of monthly listings and fill any gaps resulting from cancellations and early deferrals 	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a team of MCA case managers, to improve quality assurance 	Director of Operations

By the end of March 2018 the Parole Board will:

Task	Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run dedicated determinate recall and short SED panels one day a week in the hubs/remote hubs 	Director of Operations



4. Ensure that the Board’s cultural and procedural approach to risk is consistent with the successful implementation of its other strategic objectives

- 4.1. Establish a senior strategic governance process for the parole system;
- 4.2. Establish a member-led review of the Parole Board’s approach to risk;
- 4.3. Implement a program for key stakeholders to observe parole hearings;
- 4.4. Review the Review Committee to ensure its approach supports a consistent approach to risk; and
- 4.5. Agree a program of on-going research to constantly test and improve our approach to risk.

By the end of September 2017 the Parole Board will:

Task	Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement recommendations from the Review Committee’s 2016 review 	Director of Member Development and Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree our research priorities and processes for the next 3 years with the Management Committee 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a member led review of the Parole Board’s approach to risk (RADAR) and present proposals to Management Committee 	Director of Member Development and Practice

By the end of March 2018 the Parole Board will:

Task	Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up informal relationships with several universities or research bodies to carry out research on parole related matters related to our priorities 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that research findings are shared and fed into policy development 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a new member quality assurance framework 	Director of Member Development and Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a research project on decision making in indeterminate cases and make recommendations to the Management Committee in 2018/2019 	Director of Business Development and Improvement

- Undertake an outreach programme to increase the diversity of applicants in future member recruitment campaigns

Director of Member Development and Practice



5. Ensure that staff and members of the Board work in partnership to continuously improve our processes, whilst treating all with respect and humanity

- 5.1. Reduce procedural problems and encourage collegiate working by developing a flexible regional approach with regular regional for a for members as well as staff;
- 5.2. Maintain and strengthen arrangements for consulting external stakeholders;
- 5.3. Agree and establish a program of implementation events for members and staff to come together;
- 5.4. Improve the level of staff and member engagement to at least that of comparable organisations by strengthening recruitment, retention, development and consultation processes;
- 5.5. Continue to develop a culture of continuous improvement within the Board; and
- 5.6. Strive to ensure that we treat the victims involved with the parole process with sensitivity and humanity.

By September 2017 the Parole Board will:

Task	Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regional groups of Parole Board members and National Probation Service (NPS) staff; to meet regularly and host a national forum bi-annually 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a new stakeholder engagement strategy with the Management Committee 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a working group of members to assist in the review of policy and guidance 	Director of Member Development and Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill staff in handling calls, complaints and correspondence. Monitor compliance with the published timescales 	Director of Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communications with the MoJ Sponsorship Team to establish clear and timely lines of responsibility 	Head of Corporate Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate engagement between the Standards Committee and Members' Representative Group 	Director of Member Development and Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review feedback opportunities for stakeholders 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the strategy and 	Senior Management Team (All

action plan agreed been the SMT and Employee Engagement Group	Directors and the Chief Executive)
---	---

By the end of March 2018 the Parole Board will:

Task	Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of <i>Twitter</i> to communicate with stakeholders and reach 1,000 followers 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Office365 to improve communication between members and staff and replace the current members' extranet 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark the Parole Board's 50th anniversary through a series of events, publications and other initiatives 	Director of Business Development and Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an options appraisal and make recommendations to the Management Committee on our ongoing occupancy of the MoJ Building at 102 Petty France 	Director of Business Development and Improvement



Financial and Human Resources:

The Parole Board has allocated finance and administrative resource as follows to achieve the tasks:

	FTE for 17/18	Resource allocated for 17/18 £m	Capital allocated for 17/18 £m
Director of Member Development and Practice	10.0	1.4	
Director of Operations	91.0	11.9	
Director of Business Development and Improvement	11.0	2.2	1.1
Corporate Services (HR,FIN & COR)	4.6	0.6	
Litigation	4.0	1.6	
CEO	2.0	0.3	
Total	122.6	18.1	1.1

Risks:

The Parole Board has eight strategic risks which could impact on our ability to deliver our strategy:

1. Budget – There is a risk we will be unable to deliver our four year strategy due to insufficient grant in aid funds from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

Controls in place:

- Regular review of spend against budget by the Management Committee
- Regular discussions with the MoJ to ensure any issues are picked up promptly and resolved

2. Caseload and backlog – There is a risk that our ability to hear cases does not match our existing and incoming caseload through budgetary and operational challenges

Controls in place:

- Increased listings to 750 per month to reduce the caseload to 1200 by December 2017
- Recruiting and training 104 new Parole Board members to increase capacity and flexibility to hear more cases

3. Digitalisation – There is a risk that we are unable to deliver all or part of our digitalisation programme to the timescale and quality required

Controls in place:

- Bringing in external expertise to assist with Office365 migration
- Carrying out a lessons learned exercise to inform future projects

4. Strategic stakeholders – There is a risk that our strategic stakeholders don't have the capacity to provide the information or support necessary to deliver our strategy

Controls in place:

- Holding joint events to improve understanding of issues including a directions compliance project
- Regular review meetings with senior managers from other organisations to ensure awareness of developing issues

5. Member recruitment – There is a risk that the training, induction and mentoring of new members impacts on our ability to progress cases

Controls in place:

- Splitting the induction of the 104 new members into two cohorts to reduce the impact on existing members' capacity
- Pairing each new member with a mentor to tailor their induction



6. Serious further offences – There is a risk that the commission of serious further offences by someone released on parole undermines the public’s confidence in the parole system

Controls in place:

- Quality assurance of decision making, reviewing lessons learned and updating guidance to reflect
- Sharing good news about the Parole Board on *Twitter* and our website

7. Litigation – There is a risk that listing more cases will increase spend on litigation beyond our budget

Controls in place:

- Following procedures and checking individual claims closely
- Commissioning an independent audit of our litigation processes

8. Reputation – Something happens that significantly and adversely affects our reputation

Controls in place:

- Ensuring we have robust policies in place on things like data breaches and cyber security
- Reviewing our complaints handling policy and ensuring any lessons learned from complaints are implemented

