

the
Parole
Board

working with others
to protect the public

**Parole Board Strategy
2023-2025**

The Parole Board is an independent organisation that uses evidence to decide whether people can be safely released from prison and managed in the community. In doing so, it acts as a court.

The Parole Board makes these difficult decisions in a fair and balanced way to keep the public safe.

Our top priority is to **keep the public safe** by only releasing someone when it is safe to do so and where we are satisfied that effective arrangements are in place to manage their risk.

We have 4 strategic aims that help us to achieve this:

1. We make **independent, impartial** and **fair** decisions
2. We work **efficiently and effectively** and provide value for money
3. We seek to be as **open and transparent** as possible
4. We are **diverse and inclusive** and represent the community that we serve

We Value

- **Fairness**
- **Independence**
- **Transparency**

We are

- **Confident**
- **Collaborative**
- **Reflective**
- **Respectful**

Operating Context

Over the last seven years the Parole Board's work and membership has changed

- Our membership has doubled from c160 in 2015-16 to c300 this year. Similarly, our secretariat has increased from c117 people in 15-16 all based in central London to c190 people, many of whom are now based nationally. Work has been undertaken to increase the diversity of the membership and secretariat through outreach and recruitment.
- The number of oral hearings needing to be conducted has increased by around 50% from 6,000 to over 9,000 and we are now making nearly 35,000 decisions a year.
- The way in which we make our decisions has changed. As a result of COVID our operating model transformed with well over 95% of hearings currently taking place remotely with the majority of hearings continuing to be conducted in this way.
- The Board has become more open and transparent, producing summaries mainly for victims in nearly 2000 cases a year. Since summer 2022 we have been trialling victims observing the hearing of the offender who committed to crime against them, to ensure we can roll it out safely and more widely in the near future.
- Reconsideration introduced in 2019 provides a quick, cost effective and transparent way for the Board to look at a decision again and is used in about 200 cases a year.
- Throughout that time our release rate has consistently remained at c25% and our proven serious further offending rate within three years, less than 0.5%.

Our Challenge

- Our case load increases 10% year on year. This is being driven by increased prisoners serving determinate sentences being recalled to custody, coupled with a fall in executive re-release when compared to five years ago.
- MoJ analysts predicted that based on the current capacity of the membership and predicted increases in the prison population, by 2030 the Parole Board would need to conduct close to 18,000 oral hearings a year to meet demand.
- Since 2018, parole board chairs have taken on significant case management responsibilities to see cases through to conclusion as around 30% of oral hearings do not conclude on their listed hearing date, with new information being directed for the panel to consider either on the papers or at a re-convened hearing.
- Since 2019, as a result of the pandemic and changes that increased our remit, we created new teams to deal with changes. Over the life of a case from paper review to reconsideration, the prisoner could be dealt with by up to 10 different teams in the Board secretariat.
- Proposals in the Victims and Prisoners Bill could introduce a new referral power for 'top tier' cases a year to the Secretary of State. Where a panel makes a release decision in those cases (approx. 650 cases), the Secretary of State could ask for the case to be referred to him quashing the panel's decision, so he can consider the case again on the papers and introducing a new appeal right to the upper tribunal for any case he 'vetos' the prisoners release.
- If enacted the Bill could require the Board to panel those cases with a fifth category of law enforcement member. There are currently about 20 existing members with a law enforcement background and 25 members shortly to be recruited that we need to ensure are trained and able to make paper and oral hearing decisions on all 2000 top tier cases if this change were to take effect. Directly targeting recruitment in this way could impact on the diversity and inclusivity of the membership.

Our Strategic Priorities

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

	Next 2 Years Bring waiting times down and getting our relationships right to do that	Next 5 Years A more court like operating model
Independent, fair, impartial decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly share lessons learned from reconsideration, review committee and quality assurance outcomes that will assist in bringing waiting times down safely. Timely, simple, practical guidance for members and staff following key judgments and legislative changes that impact decision making. Decision writing training and support, that builds on lessons learned from setting aside, reconsideration and best practice from other jurisdictions. Sharing of best practice examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judicial leads to assist with panelling and setting standard practice
Efficiency and effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members supported to undertake work across all accreditations they hold to meet the business need. Increase the number of people who make decisions on determinate recall cases through 1) a good rule 19/MCA procedure that lots of non-chairs do 2) Increased use of single member oral hearings for determinate recall cases and limiting full oral hearings for those cases 3) Shorter dossiers and focused decision letters for determinate recalls focused on the minimum needed to make a quality decision Cradle to grave ownership with dedicated panel chair support for indeterminate cases, building on the TACT case management model. Better quality dossiers. Simpler, better automated templates that integrate with WAM/PPUD for the key tasks members and staff do all the time (PCD, SHRF, DECISION LETTER) that are updated timelier. A more dynamic and flexible listings model so that cases could be called in to fill gaps more easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased directional powers AI automation for dossiers to reduce duplication and improve quality A membership model that can scale to undertake more oral hearings
Openness and transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victims able to observe parole hearings with greater ease across the country Panels are trained and have the necessary guidance to ensure victim observed hearings are effective Support evidence-based research and analysis of both our current operating model and impact of reforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redacted release decisions published in all cases by the secretariat under delegated authority.
Diversity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage members and staff in working groups to review our operating model longer term and test ideas to bring down waiting times short term Provide opportunities for de-brief and peer support for all our people A fair and transparent process for selecting panels for hearings, including a process to deal with objections to panel composition Members are trained to deal with equality and diversity issues, mental capacity and mental health issues. 	

Waiting time reduction targets

	Baseline as at January 2023	Current position as at April 2023	Current position as at today (22 Sept 2023)	Target within 12 months December 2023	Target within 24 months December 2024
MCA queue	2107	2603	2483	1800 (a month in hand)	700 (2 weeks in hand)
Listings queue	3279	2721	2494	2550 (3 months in hand based on 850 oral hearings a month)	1000 (1 month in hand)
Determinate recalls in the listings queue	1445 (44%)	918 (32%)	777 (31%)	638 (25%)	150 15% (based on new ways of working)
Listings queue over 90 days	1,412	1,259	1151	1000	500
Active caseload	12,074	11,620	11208	11,000	10,000

Key Risks Indicators

Strategic Aim	Key Risk Indicators
Independent, fair, impartial decisions	<p>Parole Reforms There is a risk that the changes resulting from reforms to the parole system prevent us from operating efficiently</p> <p>Litigation There is a risk that we cannot adapt effectively to new legislation affecting the parole system.</p> <p>Quality assurance There is a risk that our quality assurance processes do not work effectively</p> <p>Policy There is a risk that our policy framework does not meet evolving business need, maintain the principles of public protection, fairness & the test for release, & is not evidence based.</p>
Efficiency and effectiveness	<p>Operational Case Management There is a risk that we do not manage our caseload in the most efficient way possible</p> <p>Digitalisation and Resilience There is a risk that we are unable to deliver all or part of our digitalisation programme to the timescale and quality required</p> <p>Compensation There is a risk that delays lead to an increase in successful compensation claims and the total amount paid out in compensation to prisoners.</p>
Openness and transparency	<p>Adverse Publicity There is a risk that adverse publicity in the media or social media about one or more release decisions undermines public confidence in the Parole Board.</p>
Diversity and Inclusion	<p>Diversity of skills There is a risk that a lack of diversity of staff & members give the perception that the Parole Board do not fully represent the community & make fair decisions.</p>

Key Risk Indicators 2023-2024

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

Risk	Indicator	Data Trend September 2023	RAG
Reputation	+/- Coverage	78% positive in 2023-24 compared to 63% in 2022-23.	
	Reconsideration Grant Rate	22-23 27% 23-23 Q1 27%	
	SFO Volume	22-23 Q1 6 Q2 7 Q3 8 Q4 10, 23-24 Q1 10	
Capacity	Receipts	2022-23 Q4 5,923 2023-24 Q1 5,170	<i>o/s</i>
	Chair availability		<i>o/s</i>
	MCA availability		<i>o/s</i>
Digitalisation	% Unavailable	22-23 Q1 2.8% Q2 3.5% Q3 3.7% Q4 2.0% 23-24 Q1 2.9%	
	MS Security Score	22-23 Q1 87% Q2 87% Q3 88% Q4 88% 23-24 Q1 87%	
	Core Azure Score	22-23 Q1 83% Q2 73% Q3 72% Q4 77% 23-24 Q1 81%	
Quality	MCA Pass Rate	97% Q1 23-24 97% 22-23	N/A
	PO Pass Rate	22-23 Q1 100% Q2 100% Q3 100% Q4 100% 23-24 Q1 100%	
	Complaint timeliness	2022-23 Q1 88% Q2 95% Q3 96% Q4 100% 23-24 Q1 100%	
	Reconsideration grant rate	22-23 27%, 23-24 Q1 27%	
People	Staff Attrition Rate	22-23 Q1 1.5% Q2 2.6% Q3 3.2% Q4 1.7% 23-24 Q1 1.4%	
	Member Attrition Rate	23-24 Q1 0.7%	
	Staff Sick absence Rate	22-23 Q1 0.9% Q2 1.7% Q3 1.4% Q4 2.5% 23-24 Q1 2.3%	

the
Parole
Board

working with others
to protect the public

**Parole Board Business Plan
2023-2025**

	<p>Next 2 Years Bring waiting times down and getting our relationships right to do that</p>	<p>Next 5 Years A more court like operating model</p>
<p>Independent, fair, impartial decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly share lessons learned from reconsideration, review committee and quality assurance outcomes that will assist in bringing waiting times down safely. Timely, simple, practical guidance for members and staff following key judgments and legislative changes that impact decision making. Decision writing training and support, that builds on lessons learned from setting aside, reconsideration and best practice from other jurisdictions. Sharing of best practice examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judicial leads to assist with panelling and setting standard practice
<p>By December 2023</p>	<p>We will publish updated guidance on wider allegations following the <i>Pearce</i> judgment (policy) Complete. Published September 2023. Next step is to share wider with stakeholders.</p> <p>We will update member guidance to reflect the judgments in <i>Dich</i> and <i>Bailey</i> (Policy) This is now in final draft form and with legal for sign-off</p> <p>We will produce a summary of reconsideration decisions and learning themes every 6 months (legal) Has been produced but resourcing affecting publication. Set aside learning to be completed. Currently being worked on and will be shared at Chair conference.</p> <p>We will scope a decision writing training programme for members (legal, policy, people) First step is reviewing what makes a good decision looking at MCA, Directions and OH decisions, IPP etc. Recon learning is being built into chair training, QVP has picked up and improved MCA training includes. We are exploring bringing in an external trainer/facilitator to progress this and feed into the chair training.</p> <p>We will run a lessons learned workshop for all reconsideration members (legal) First session took place in September. Planned quarterly. December currently being arranged.</p> <p>Evaluate the mental health streamlining project and implement improved processes and practice into business as usual to support swifter reviews for those prisoners who have been detained in a hospital setting. (Policy) Undertaken in August with recommendations for BAU currently being developed. Pilot officially ended August 2023 but will continue until BAU decision made by Management Committee in November/December 2023. Likely launch of BAU January 2024</p>	<p>We will produce standard practice for adjournments at oral hearing (legal, COO, policy) Draft being worked on. To go to November/December MC. This is also being informed by the work of PSOG.</p>
<p>By March 2024</p>	<p>We will pilot a new decision writing training course with some members (people, policy and legal) Produce best practice advice and guidance for members about the complex nature of those IPPs who are still in custody, which is informed by published research and other learning; and to adapt to changes in legislation in relation to IPP licence terminations (policy)</p>	

	<p>Next 2 Years Bring waiting times down and getting our relationships right to do that</p>	<p>Next 5 Years A more court like operating model</p>
<p>Efficiency and effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members supported to undertake work across all accreditations they hold to meet the business need. • Increase the number of people who make decisions on determinate recall cases through 1) a good rule 19/MCA procedure that lots of non-chairs do 2) Increased use of single member oral hearings for determinate recall cases and limiting full oral hearings for those cases 3) Shorter dossiers and focused decision letters for determinate recalls focused on the minimum needed to make a quality decision • Cradle to grave ownership with dedicated panel chair support for indeterminate cases, building on the TACT case management model. • Better quality dossiers. • Simpler, better automated templates that integrate with WAM/PPUD for the key tasks members and staff do all the time (PCD, SHRF, DECISION LETTER) that are updated timelier. • A more dynamic and flexible listings model so that cases could be called in to fill gaps more easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased directional powers • AI automation for dossiers to reduce duplication and improve quality. • A membership model that can scale to undertake 15,000 oral hearings
<p>By December 2023</p>	<p>We will train at least 20 existing members to chair (people) 11 signed up for November 23. We will regularly contact independent members who do not chair yet and do not regularly undertake paper panels (people) Being reviewed monthly. Everyone who is up for reappointment/have been reappointed has committed and opted into the training. We will introduce and test a sifting process for R19 to better workstream cases and make a better use of member time (change) Sift was tested in August and is being evaluated We will test panel chair support and amalgamate the panel chair and hearing support team (operations) In place. Initial findings are positive, support is being expanded to more chairs. Recruitment needed. We plan to merge hearing support and panel chair support and bring in 20 additional people (will go out to the regional teams in the first instance, to retain experience). Will try to get more chairs on board at chair conference. Aim for 80% of panel chairs to have support. Work with 11 priority prisons to inform the review of our operating model (priority prisons project) Initial recommendations finalised and agreed by MC. Trialling case manages in prisons. Reconstitute regional parole forums next. We will trial determinate recall hearing days at certain identified prisons (ops and priority prisons) We will stop or pause non-casework tasks that can free up member time for casework (COO) MCA QA paused. Research done out of hours. Reviewing national parole forums in light of HMPPS restructure. We will work with the ministry of justice to expand the scope for direct appointments (CEO, COO and people) Recruitment of direct appointments and assistant members in progress. Interviewing from mid-October in conjunction with Inclusive Boards.</p>	<p>We will recruit a commercial partner with experience in AI to help design the operating model (change)</p> <p>We will finalise the process and guidance for witness summons and contempt (legal, policy, COO)</p>
<p>By March 2024</p>	<p>We will direct appoint and train up to 30 members to make decisions on the papers and chair oral hearings (people) In progress. 9 identified so far. IB recruitment for further 20. Internal EOI to members for up to 10. We will recruit and train 25 members with a background in law enforcement (people) Complete. 28 start training in November. Ministers signed off on the 2nd Oct. Start training in November. We will undertake quarterly single member panel listings (operations) In progress planned through till February 24. July saw a lower adjournment rate and higher panel conduction rate. November listings even higher. Start February shortly. We will review the duty member process and arrangements (operations) Being reviewed in line with introduction of assistant members.</p>	

Next 2 Years

Bring waiting times down and getting our relationships right to do that

Next 5 Years

A more court like operating model

Openness and transparency

- Victims able to observe parole hearings with greater ease across the country
- Panels are trained and have the necessary guidance to ensure victim observed hearings are effective
- Support evidence-based research and analysis of both our current operating model and impact of reforms

- Redacted release decisions published in all cases by the secretariat under delegated authority.

December 2023

We will roll out victims observation nationally from January 2024 and agree the process for this with HMPPS based on the learning from the southwest pilot (comms, people) Go live national from January 24 with new MCA decisions. Sub to ministers being worked on. Risk that stakeholders cannot support. We will run a workshop for key staff who work closest with victims on how best to support victims going through the parole process (comms) Workshop is being designed and will run before Christmas Engage key stakeholders who commission victims support services, to better meet the needs of victim observers (Comms, governance, COO) Working with external consultancy on a proposal for how best to do this. Engaging with SAMP. New victim's lead recruited to pick this up. Team being stood up in the autumn.

We will introduce fuller summaries on some cases (comms, legal) Policy for these agreed with the MC. To be produced on one case in August likely to be noteworthy cases

March 2024

We will resource and train a dedicated victims teams to manage VPS reading, victim observations and summary production (legal, operations, change) – Head of victims support recruited. Work to sit under that team being mapped through. Team being stood up from the autumn. Once HoV starts, we need to work out what resource sits under that team.
 Potential automation of information from PPUD to the VCS waiting for roll out of new updates for PPUD (led by PPCS) (comms, governance, change)
 Regular updates to victims on adjournments/ referral to OH etc with more information.
 Develop informative videos (comms) Work on this is being planned for Jan/Feb to align with national roll out.

Full service up and running where PB liaise with VCS and VLOs (Comms, governance, change)

	<p>Next 2 Years OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE Bring waiting times down and getting our relationships right to do that</p>	<p>Next 5 Years A more court like operating model</p>
<p>Diversity and Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage members and staff in working groups to review our operating model longer term and test ideas to bring down waiting times short term Provide opportunities for de-brief and peer support for all our people A fair and transparent process for selecting panels for hearings, including a process to deal with objections to panel composition Members are trained to deal with equality and diversity issues, mental capacity and mental health issues. 	
<p>December 2023</p>	<p>We will launch a compassionate care package for members and staff (people) <i>On hold due to resourcing within team and need to prioritise increased recruitment/induction.</i> We will work with members to identify, design and test tactical initiatives that can bring the queues down (Change) <i>Members have been engaged on tactical initiatives and working with staff to test sift.</i> We will run a conference for chairs (people) <i>Conference for chairs planned for November</i> We will complete training for all members on questioning vulnerable prisoners (People) <i>underway. Co panellists prioritised.</i> We will review our internal process for and procedure for panel composition and share this with members (Operations) <i>This was drafted and a version shared with EDAG. It is with the Head of Ops for final review prior to wider communication to members. Only for noteworthy.</i> We will strengthen the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group by increasing awareness of its work and using them to inform the design of the operating model programme (Change) <i>Suggest cover at the next meeting of EDAG in December</i></p>	<p><i>We will scope an operating model review and engage members in the design of this (change)</i> Scope agreed with MC. Change lead allocated. Meeting external consultants that could support</p> <p>We will baseline the current operating model with members and staff(change)</p>
<p>March 2024</p>	<p><i>We will prepare for the April conference for members and staff (people) April conference venue booked, finalisation underway.</i> We will explore opportunities for lived experience and greater victim engagement in our training, events and share point resources (people and comms) - will be included at conference, to look at lived experience advisory committee? <i>On hold due to resourcing within the team but will try and engage something for conference</i> <i>We will standardise training for members and staff that includes prison visits and hearing observations (people) 3 prisons engaged to support hearing observations for staff in prisons and we are working on prison visits</i> Consider a specialist mental health cohort of members once mental health pilot is live (policy/ops) <i>Take the learning and recommendations from two Parole Board approved research studies into remote parole hearings to ensure they are as effective as possible, and support swift and fair parole hearings that do not disadvantage cohorts of prisoners (Policy, Ops)</i></p>	<p><i>We will review the senior structure of the secretariat and agree changes with the MoJ to increase resilience (COO and CEO) Internal audit completed that supports this approach.</i> Discussions in progress with MoJ. MC have given a steer on options and approach.</p> <p>We will review work structure for staff and members including opportunities for evening and weekend working (people and ops)</p>