

# YOUR UPCOMING PAROLE ORAL HEARING



User Voice worked with Sheffield Hallam University and spoke to people about their experiences of parole hearings. The project was interested in experiences of hearings held remotely (by telephone or videolink), as this is the new way that most hearings are run. Sheffield Hallam University also researched how language is used differently in remote hearings compared with face-to-face hearings.

Here is some advice based on what people who have experienced remote hearings said and what the researchers found.

## BEFORE YOUR HEARING



**Seek legal advice early** – Legal Aid may be available for Parole Board reviews if eligible



**Understand the technology** – ask your POM to show you how videolink works



**Body language** – it is harder to read body language by videolink. Plan how to communicate clearly. Talk to your POM/legal rep



**Lean on your support network** – talking with friends, family, wingmates and professionals can help



**Read your dossier** – make notes and highlight areas you think might come up



**Adjournments happen for various reasons** – speak to your legal rep to understand these types of delay

## DURING YOUR HEARING



**Hearings are formal** – videolink hearings may appear more informal, it is still a formal hearing and so act appropriately



**Ask for breaks** – the panel chair will explain what will happen and about taking breaks



**Be prepared to speak about your offences**, your progress (e.g., with evidence of programmes completed), your risk factors, and your future plans



**Stay calm** – technical issues occur in videolink hearings; take a breath and wait



**Speak up** – ask for clarification if you don't understand something or if you don't fully hear a question



**Use your legal rep** – you can ask to speak with your legal rep privately, even if you are not in the same room

## AFTER YOUR HEARING



**Decision Time** – it usually takes 14 days for a decision. Some decisions remain provisional for 21 days. Your legal rep will advise you



**Feeling anxious?** This is normal. Speak to people you trust



**Need clarity?** Ask support staff or your legal rep to explain the decision



**Didn't get the result you hoped for?** Talk to your POM about things you could do between now and your next hearing



**Unhappy with mode of hearing?** If videolink didn't work for you, consider requesting a face-to-face hearing next time



**Need information on challenging the decision?** Talk to your legal rep