

A Review of Transition to Community Arrangements for Life Sentence Prisoners in Northern Ireland

March 2009



Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland

A Review of Transition to Community Arrangements for Life Sentence Prisoners in Northern Ireland: Action Plan

| Recomm endation Number | Detail | Outstanding Issue(s) | Comment | Action (s) | Lead | Completi on Date |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 4 (para 2.14) | The Parole Commissioners should initiate a tracking process to include reasons for adjournment and more detailed targets for case completion. | The relevant target is to complete the process within the timetable determined in accordance with the Parole Commissioners' Rules. | A detailed tracking system is in place which allows for the monitoring of case completion and reasons for any adjournment. | Continue monitoring and alert Chief Commissioner to delays so that relevant action may be taken. | Secretariat | Ongoing |
| 5 (para 2.20) | The Parole Commissioners should undertake a review of the procedural demands that will be created by the new rules that are presently being developed, which will apply to ICS and ECS prisoners as well as lifers. They should do so in consultation not only with NIPS and other agencies, but also with the solicitors who routinely act for prisoners coming before panels. This review could focus on: the feasibility of panel chairmen taking a more proactive role in suggesting to the parties that the attendance of particular witnesses at hearings might be unnecessary; on how far it might be permissible for panels to become more inquisitorial in the course of hearings; and signal to the parties the issues that should be addressed. | Preparation for the review of ICS and ECS cases and for the recall of DCS cases is based on prediction. | It is proposed to establish a users' group to facilitate discussion as necessary to effect the development and implementation of new arrangements. | Establish relevant users' group. | Chief Commissioner | December 2009 |

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| 8 (para 2.27) | The Parole Commissioners should engage strategically with the NIPS and other statutory agencies to deal with administrative issues such as forecasting and planning work ahead. | | Such discussions that are necessary are already taking place and will be continued. | Continue consultations with NIPS, PBNI and relevant others. | Chief Commissioner and Secretariat | Ongoing |
| 16 (para 4.7) | Training should be undertaken by sentencers, practitioners, Parole Commissioners and policy makers in implementation of the ICS element of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008. | The selection and recruitment of additional Parole Commissioners has not yet been fully completed. | Such training has been undertaken by the majority of existing Parole Commissioners. | Such training will be made available in September/October 2009 to new Parole Commissioners and to existing Parole Commissioners who were unable to avail of previous training offered in June 2009. | Deputy Chief Commissioner and Secretariat | October 2009 |

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| 18 (para 4.15) | <p>The Parole Commissioners' administrative functions should be strengthened by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • succession planning to replace retiring Commissioners; • more explicit terms of reference for Commissioners, to include allocation of specific roles that will assist organisational development, and consideration of a regular time commitment; • implementing peer review and appraisal systems; and • introducing a business planning process and a more detailed annual reporting system with enhanced statistical content and analysis. | Such plans that are necessary to implement this set of recommendations are predicated on the required resources being made available in light of the implementation of the new casework arrangements. | <p>To date the following has been undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profiles have been prepared to facilitate discussion of the issues affected by any imminent retirements; and • A Deputy Chief Commissioner has been appointed and new interim structures including the establishment of an Executive Committee are in development. | <p>(i) Update profiles following appointment of new Parole Commissioners;</p> <p>(ii) Review and replace interim structures;</p> <p>(iii) Bring such proposals to the Executive Committee for discussion and final proposals to Parole Commissioners for adoption as policy; and</p> <p>(iv) Bring draft Business Plan for 2010/2011 to the Executive Committee for discussion and final draft to Parole Commissioners for adoption.</p> | Chief Commissioner, Deputy Chief Commissioner and Secretariat | <p>(i) October 2009</p> <p>(ii) December 2009</p> <p>(iii) September 2010</p> <p>(iv) December 2009</p> |