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| **PCNI PLENARY MEETING – 29th APRIL 2014 –** **PRISON SERVICE TRAINING COLLEGE MILLISLE**  |
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| **In attendance:** | Ms Christine Glenn | Mrs Elsbeth Rea  |
|  | Mrs Anne Grimes | Dr Jackie Withers |
|  | Mr Jeremy Mills | Mrs Ruth Laird |
|  | Dr Shelagh Mary Rea | Mr Tom Craig |
|  | Judge Tom Burgess | Dr Adrian Grounds |
|  | Ms Mollie Weatheritt | Mr Timothy Thorne |
|  | Mrs Alexandra Delimata | Dr Pat McGrath |
|  | Mr John Gibbons | Mrs Maura Hutchinson |
|  | Mrs Anne Fenton | Mrs Debbie McQueirns |
|  | Mrs Elaine Peel | Mr Niall Small |
|  | Mrs Marian Killen | Ms Claire Hunt |
|  | Mrs Siobhan Keating | Ms Mary Barnish |
|  | Dr Duncan Morrow | Ms Clodach McGrory |
|  | Mr Noel Phoenix | Mr Emmet Murray |
|  | Mrs Linda McHugh | Justice Tracy Doherty |
|  | Mr Steve Murphy | Mr James Scholes |
|  | Mr John Jackson |  |
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| **Guest Speakers:** | Brian McCaughey NIPS |  |
|  | SO David Martin NIPS | Jackie-Bates Gaston NIPS |
|  |  | Roisin Muldoon PBNI |
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| **Guest** | Olivia O’Kane, Carson McDowellHugh Hamill PBNI |  |
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| **Secretariat:** | Mrs Joanne Williams | Mrs Kerry McIlwaine |
|  | Mrs Karen Weir | Mr Chris Tang |
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| **Apologies:** | Mr Nigel Stone | Mrs Debbie Hill |
|  | Mr Derek Rodgers | Prof Peter Hepper |
|  | Mr Stephen Leach | Mr Damien McCullagh |
|  | Mrs Micaela Greenwood | Mr Paul Mageean |
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| The following is a summary record of the Plenary of the Parole Commissioners on 29 April 2015. |
| ***Item 1*** | ***Chief Commissioner’s Introductions*** |
| The Chief Commissioner welcomed everyone to the meeting, gave a brief summary of the structure of the day and thanked Commissioners for their attendance. |

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| ***Item 2:*** | ***Presentation by Brian McCaughey – Director of Rehabilitation in NIPS*** |
| Mr McCaughey gave a brief presentation to the Commissioners. Brian spoke about the Prison Reform resultant from the Owers Report. The transformation of a cultural approach to working practices in a changed and challenging operating environment. Brian briefed the Commissioners on the key messages from the Owers Report:* Standards and Values;
* Develop, Change, Opportunity;
* Whole Prison Approach; and
* Part of Community.
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| ***Item 3:*** | ***Presentation by David Martin – Implementation Manager for the Prisoner Development Model.*** |
| Mr Martin gave a presentation to the Commissioners on the new Prisoner Development Model (PDM) within Prisons and on how this model will impact on Commissioners’ business. He discussed the following:* The recommendations from the Prison Review Team;
* Resettlement Strategy – new Prisoner Development Units (PDU) introduced at all sites;
* Focus on the Prisoners journey through a Personal Development Plan;
* Prisoner needs profile;
* The multi-agency approach to the PDM; and
* Desistance Awareness Training.
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| ***Item 4:*** | ***Presentation by Jackie Bates-Gaston – Chief Psychologist in NIPS*** |
| Prof Bates-Gaston spoke to the Commissioners about the psychology services delivered to prisoners. She discussed the following issues:* Reduced resources and challenges;
* Specific PCNI Directions;
* Services directed to the highest risk;
* Assessment of risk and need; and
* Time needed for offender to complete work.

Programmes being delivered have been reviewed with Probation. Jackie spoke to the range of programmes available to inform the Commissioners. A programme directory had been provided electronically to Commissioners.  |

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| ***Item 5:*** | ***Presentation by Roisin Muldoon – Assistant Director, PBNI*** |
| Ms Muldoon spoke to the Commissioners about the key developments during the past 18 months. Roisin focussed on the PCNI questionnaire on Oral hearings and the challenges that this presented moving forward. She spoke about the current fiscal climate within PBNI and the need to streamline services to ensure that resources were correctly directed. PBNI will continue to fulfil its statutory duty to provide reports to PCNI, but it will have to do so with reduced resources and fewer available staff. Processes need to be more streamlined with the possibility of shorter reports. They will face considerable challenges going forward and will have to consider:* Prioritisation of High Risk, RoSH and PPANI cases;
* Greater use of video link facilities;
* Attendance of PBNI staff at hearings – resource implications.

The presenters provided a question and answer forum for the Commissioners. The Chief Commissioner thanked NIPS and PBNI for their presentations today which were very informative for the Commissioners. |
| ***Item 6:*** |  ***Oral Hearing Guide*** |
| Joanne Williams spoke to the Commissioners on the Draft Oral Hearing Best Practice Guide. All Commissioners had been consulted on oral hearings last summer and their considerations had informed the basis for the current draft Oral Hearing Guide. Joanne advised Commissioners of some ‘themes’ which were coming through from all stakeholders (including prisoners), in particular:* Commissioners need to be in attendance at least 45 minutes before the commencement of the hearing;
* Commissioners need to give due consideration to the directions they are requesting, they need to consider the necessity, timeliness and relevancy of directions and be mindful that any direction can be appealed to the Chief Commissioner (time line for this being 7 days after receipt of the direction). They also need to be cognisant to whom the direction is being sent e.g. Historical psychology reports commissioned by the defence team for the trial are not available through NIPS and should be directed from the legal rep.
* Some directions being requested by Commissioners are too long – directions need to be clear and concise.
* Addendum Reports:
	+ Are they really necessary especially if there is a witness attending?;
	+ NIPS have advised that a report is current if it is less than six months old;
* Relevancy of adjournments - is it really necessary to adjourn?
* Questioning of witnesses:
	+ relevance of questions that are already explained in the dossier, and
	+ Some stakeholders feel that the questioning is aggressive.

Joanne provided summary comments from the stakeholder questionnaires on flip charts but advised that she would provide a full summary of all comments to the Commissioners electronically.Joanne asked for endorsement of the Oral Hearing Guide – she agreed to accept additional comments from Commissioners by the end of May, after which date the guide would be endorsed and circulated as a final document to all Commissioners.  |
| ***Item 7:*** | ***Working Groups – Case-studies*** |
| The Commissioners were allocated to panels and given some problematic scenarios previously provided by the Commissioners to discuss. The case studies were actual cases which had presented problems and Commissioners were asked to consider the case and advise on how they would have progressed the hearing to a conclusion.Eleven cases were discussed and reported on. The Commissioners reviewed each case in detail and reported back in groups to review and share best practice.

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| ***Item 8:*** | ***Cadre Groups*** |
| The Commissioners broke up into the three cadre groups, legal, psychology/Psychiatry and lay group. They were allocated 30 minutes to discuss issues of concern within their working group.The Groups reported back on the following:Lay Group * The lay commissioners group advised that they didn’t like the name ‘lay group’, they would like to revisit and consider an alternative name for their group.
* They would also like a portal on their laptops for sharing information and best practice.
* Consideration should be given to the make-up of panels as it was not a requirement for a legally qualified Commissioner to chair every panel.

Psychologists/Psychiatry * This group would like to start an electronic working group which would provide a forum for psychologists and psychiatrists to discuss issues on risk management and NIPS practices –issues of concern could be discussed in confidence with Jackie Bates Gaston (perhaps quarterly) this would provide a platform for discussing best practice and finding workable solutions in times of financial constraint.

Legal Group* The legal group had discussed the length of decisions and whether it would be possible to shorten the decision without compromising the quality.
* The current decisions tend to be narrative heavy and decision light. It was suggested that proportionally this should be 50/50.
* They also suggested a new template for decisions.
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| **Kerry McIlwaine****Minute-taker** |