

**MINUTES OF THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE LIFE SENTENCE
REVIEW COMMISSIONERS HELD IN MILLENNIUM HOUSE ON
THURSDAY 3 May 2007**

Commissioners:

Mr Peter Smith QC (Chairman)	Mr Donal McFerran
Mr Thomas Craig	Dr Patrick McGrath
Dr Ruth Elliott	Ms Clodach McGrory
Mrs Anne Fenton	Mr Stephen Murphy
Dr Ronald Galloway	Mrs Elsbeth Rea
Mrs Mary Gilpin	Prof Andrew Sanders
Dr Adrian Grounds	Dr Oliver Shanks
Prof Peter Hepper	Mrs Elaine Peel
Dr Damien McCullagh	Prof Herbert Wallace
Mr John Leckey	Mr Brian Garrett

Secretariat: Mrs Moya Cushley; Mrs Sheena McKittrick

Apologies

Ms Teresa Doherty
Prof John Jackson
Dr Mr Nigel Stone

Judge Derek Rodgers

Dr Duncan Morrow

1. The notes and minute of the previous meeting were agreed.
2. Commissioners had still not been provided with an explanation of tests and a glossary of terms used in reports psychology reports. The Prison Service would be contacted again and the Secretariat would be kept informed of any progress.
3. Confirmation had been received from the Prison Service that a process for the validation of "confidential information" had been instigated.
4. Confirmation had been received from the Prison Service that minutes of MASRAM meeting would now routinely be included in dossiers.
5. Three sessions of Diversity training had now been completed. A final session would be arranged in due course for those Commissioners and Secretariat staff who had not yet attended.
6. The Chairman had held a constructive meeting with the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice. He had been very sensitive to the difficulties faced by the Commissioners. The LSRC was now on his list of bodies for inspection. The conduct of any such review would be discussed at a later date.
7. The equipment for the recording of hearings would be delivered in the next few days. Case workers would be trained in its use and routine recording of hearings would begin shortly.

8. Commissioners heard details of the current caseload including ongoing judicial review proceedings in three cases.
9. The Chairman had met with the Director-General of the Prison Service and the Head of Criminal Justice Division to discuss failures in supervision etc in a case currently before the Commissioners that resulted in the prisoner being convicted of further offences. It was important to ensure that similar failures could not be allowed to happen again and what was needed now was a way to move the matter forward to constructively try to build confidence in the process.
10. The Chairman told Commissioners of the problems he encountered in a case in which there was information certified as "confidential" under Rule 15. He had been concerned that the lack of information/detail provided in the gist gave the prisoner very little idea of the case against him.
11. Commissioners heard a report from the latest legal group meeting which included the new scheme for paying Special Advocate fees.
12. Commissioners heard a report from the latest rehabilitation group meeting which included their ongoing discussions with PBNI in respect of the role of victims in the LSRC process.
13. Commissioners heard a report from the latest psychology/psychiatry group meeting at which the Commissioners met with the Director-General of the Prison Service to offer any help they could over the shortage of mental health services in prisons. As a starting point the Secretary would set up a meeting at the appropriate level in the Dept of Health.
14. Commissioners received an update on the proposed Criminal Justice Order 2007 from representatives of the Criminal Justice Directorate. The main topics discussed were the reappointment of LSRC/ appointment of Parole Commissioners and the resources that would be required to fund the proposed legislation.
15. Commissioners heard a report from the latest Parole Group meeting which included briefings on recent visits to the Parole Board HQ and the Parole Board Annual Conference. These visits had both highlighted the problems that could arise during the introduction of the new legislation.
16. The Chairman and two other Commissioners had recently met with journalists from various newspapers and television channels. They had been very interested and the meeting had spawned various articles in the days following.
17. The next plenary meetings were scheduled for Thursday 20 September and Thursday 6 December 2007.

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