

**MINUTE OF PLENARY MEETING OF THE PAROLE COMMISSIONERS  
HELD IN THE SIGNAL BUSINESS CENTRE ON THURSDAY 4 TH  
DECEMBER 2008**

<b>Commissioners:</b>	Mr Peter Smith CBE QC Mr Brian Garrett Mr Donal McFerran Judge Derek Rodgers Prof John Jackson Dr Ruth Elliott Dr Ronald Galloway Dr Adrian Grounds Dr Damien McCullagh Prof Andrew Sanders	Mrs Elsbeth Rea OBE Mrs Mary Gilpin Mr Stephen Murphy CBE Mrs Elaine Peel Mr Thomas Craig Dr Patrick McGrath Prof Herb Wallace OBE Prof Peter Hepper Dr Oliver Shanks Mr Nigel Stone
<b>Secretariat :</b>	Mrs Moya Cushley Mr Peter Bowles	Mrs Kerry McIlwaine
<b>Apologies :</b>	Mr John Leckey Ms Teresa Doherty CBE Dr Duncan Morrow	Ms Clodach McGrory Mrs Anne Fenton
<b>Guest Speakers:</b>	Mr Brian Grzymek Mr Chris Matthews Mr Gary Archibald Mrs Sheila Ward	Criminal Justice Services Criminal Justice Services Personnel Services Division Personnel Services Division

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.
2. Commissioners heard a presentation on the review of sentencing in Northern Ireland and the resultant challenges following the Criminal Justice Order 2008 and the new public Protection Arrangements.
3. The Commissioners were advised that the Inland Revenue has requested that all Commissioners are added to the Northern Ireland Office payroll as 'Office Holders'.
4. Commissioners have still not been provided with an explanation of tests and a glossary of terms used in psychology reports. The Prison Service will be contacted again and the Secretariat to be kept informed of any progress.
5. Commissioners were advised that draft guidelines are currently being prepared on the format of psychiatric reports.
6. Commissioners were advised that work is continuing on the review of Commissioners' policies.
7. The Commissioners discussed two recent events: the formal launch for the Parole Commissioners which was held to clarify their role and heighten public awareness; and the Training Symposium event held the previous day.

8. The Commissioners were advised that a new recruitment process was underway to recruit additional Commissioners for the Parole Commissioners Office.
9. The Commissioners discussed the development of a Commissioners' handbook which would be used for training and induction purposes.
10. The Commissioners heard a 'rules' update, a new coherent set of rules, which will replace the current set used by Parole Commissioners. The rules are currently being developed in consultation with the Northern Ireland Office.
11. Commissioners heard a report from the Rehabilitation Group which included an update on the Strategy for the Management of Offenders and a recommendation to reinstate the Psychiatry/Psychology Group.
12. Commissioners heard a report from the latest legal group meeting which prompted a discussion on the appointment of Special Advocates. It was agreed that a meeting of all interested parties should be arranged to discuss further.
13. Commissioners discussed the '*Northern Ireland Prison Service - Psychology Stocktake*'. It was agreed that judgements must be made on the merit of each case. The Chief Commissioner, along with two or three Commissioners will arrange a meeting with the Director of the Northern Ireland Prison Service to discuss the report in full.
14. Commissioners reviewed the draft '*CJI - Independent review of risk assessment and transition to the community for Life Sentence Prisoners*' report. The Chief Commissioner will respond on behalf of Commissioners, to the report in writing by Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December.
15. The Commissioners discussed the process of proof-reading decisions.
16. As the Secretary of State has the power to extend the appointments of Commissioners over 70 and in light of the Brooke case the Chief Commissioner will write to the Criminal Justice Services Division seeking agreement that one year extensions of Commissioners' appointments after the age of 70 years will be automatic if recommended jointly by the Chief Commissioner and deputy Chief Commissioner (when appointed).
17. The Commissioners discussed a request for a copy of a hearing transcript. The Probation Board had requested the copy to use for training purposes. While the Commissioners did not want to appear unsympathetic to the problems encountered in training, they felt that it would be inappropriate to use actuality as a basis for training.
18. Commissioners heard details of a complaint against a Commissioner. The complaint had been received and investigated in accordance with the complaints policy.
19. The Commissioners were advised that two tender requirements, for legal and public relations, were currently in train and should be underway in January 2009.
20. Commissioners heard a report on the recent staff changes within the Secretariat.

The next plenary meeting will take place in March with a date to be confirmed in due course.

18 December 2008