



FAO:

SWS Justice Standing Committee
Chief Social Work Officers
Prison-based Social Work Managers

Date: 25 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Justice Social Work and Parole Board Scotland – Update working arrangements relating to Covid-19

We thought it would be helpful to update you on developments regarding the interaction between justice social work and the Parole Board for Scotland. The current situation has required extraordinary organisational and process change and the Board are both hugely appreciative of the continued contribution of social work colleagues, and mindful of the need to minimise workloads for social work colleagues in relation to the parole process. This note sets out revised arrangements for Oral Hearings/Tribunals, arrangements for contacting the Board and guidance on provision of reports in an abbreviated format.

Arrangements for Oral Hearings/Tribunals

With immediate effect the Board will no longer attend prison establishments to conduct Hearings/Tribunals. These will now be conducted by teleconference where possible. The Board has asked members to pay particular attention to whether witnesses need to be called or whether information can be gleaned from reports. Where witnesses are required attendance will be remotely via teleconference. If you have been cited to appear as a witness Parole Scotland will contact you with guidance on how to join the teleconference.

Please also note that outstanding immediate re-release hearings will go ahead by telephone if necessary.

Arrangements for contacting the Board

Staff in Parole Scotland are now working from home. It would be greatly appreciated if, unless absolutely necessary, contact with the Board is via the usual email routes rather than telephone.

Revised report requirements

To minimise work for social work colleagues the Board has agreed the following guidance, to apply until further notice, for the content of social work reports submitted to the Board. The preference is to retain a report format even if there are gaps under headings.

1) BASIS OF REPORT

Social worker to provide brief information in relation to how the information in the report has been compiled eg V/C with prisoner or referral to previous reports, updated information from SPS etc.; identify what information is missing eg, LS/CMI and why.

2) INTRODUCTION

Not necessary. All information in relation to the index offence is already in the dossier Section A

3) FAMILY BACKGROUND AND PERSONAL/HOME CIRCUMSTANCES

Not necessary. All information in previous reports Section E. Only need to note changes since the last report that impact on risk/protective factors. CBSW will wish to comment on any changes to the 'Attitude of those at the Proposed Address' and 'Environment Issues' especially for higher risk domestic, sexual and violent offenders.

4) EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT/LEISURE

Not necessary. All information in previous reports Section E

5) HEALTH/SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Brief update which can be obtained from SPS. Historical information in previous reports Section E

6) OFFENDING HISTORY

Not necessary. Schedule of previous convictions will suffice

7) INDEX OFFENCE

Not necessary. All information in Section A

8) ATTITUDE TO OFFENCE

If it is possible to provide an update if there has been a change since the last report

9) RESPONSE TO IMPRISONMENT

Update only required which can be obtained from SPS. Not all JSW staff will be familiar with the full parole dossier. The SPS RIC (Response in Custody) and LLO (Lifer Liaison Officer) reports in particular will cover a lot of detail about the prisoners' time in custody since the last submission. JSW only need to comment on this where it links to risk.

10) PLANS FOR RELEASE

Update only required re proposed address for release and suitability. Confirm whether any relevant Adult Support and Protection (ASP) and Child Protection (CP) issues are being managed through the CRMP and any requirement for specialist resources to ensure multi-agency support.

11) RISK ASSESSMENT

Confirmation only required that no change to level of risk as per previous reports or update if risk assessment has changed. Confirm (detail not required) whether a comprehensive CRMP is in place that has been agreed with Multi Agency partners, as necessary, including supervision, monitoring, victim safety planning and interventions. Include a brief update in relation to any programme work which has been undertaken since the last report was compiled, when the work is likely to be completed and identification of any further programme work which remains outstanding, when this is likely to commence and proposed timescales for completion. For more complex cases, LS/CMI & RoSH are likely to have been completed or updated since the last report and text can be copied. Staff may need to state that they have been unable to review (if due) due to Covid-19 or that a file review has been completed. See above regarding SPS RIC and LLO reports.

12) CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Brief paragraph only required. Reasons why release supported or not.

13) LICENCE CONDITIONS

Only additional suggested conditions required. The Board can draft the remainder.

The only exception to this is where reports are being prepared for the first time. In that situation, Pars 3,4,5,8,10 and 11 will require new information as no previous social work reports are available to refer to.

We would also encourage Prison Based and Community Based social work to liaise with each other in relation to the particular paragraphs of their reports which do not require repetition.

For example:

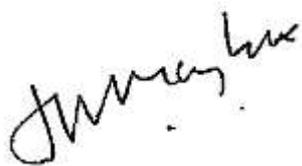
- Par 9 “Response To Imprisonment” should only require to be addressed by the PBSW
- Par 10 “Plans For Release” can be addressed by the CBSW
- Par 11 “Risk Assessment” can be addressed by the PBSW

It may be that even with a first report, there will be some antecedent information in a pre-sentence CJSWR if there is one.

In exceptional circumstances where either the PBSW or CBSW is unavailable to prepare the report then we would ask that one or other attempt to fill in the gaps if possible.

We hope this provides some clarity on the current position but inevitably there may be a need to refine some of this if there are further developments. We will write to you if this is the case.

Regards



James Maybee
Chair
SWS Justice Standing Committee



Colin Spivey
Chief Executive
Parole Board for Scotland