



Parole Commissioners
for Northern Ireland

ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022



Parole Commissioners For Northern Ireland

Annual Report 2021/22

Report for the year end 31 March 2022

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly pursuant to Paragraph 7(2) of Schedule 4 to the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Amended by the NI Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

On 28 July 2022



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Foreword

Naomi Long MLA
Minister of Justice
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Dear Minister

Paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 4 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, as amended, requires that as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year the Chief Commissioner of the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland shall submit a report to the Department of Justice on the performance of the Commissioners' functions during that year. In compliance with that requirement I am pleased to submit my report to your Department in respect of the financial year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

I was appointed as Chief Commissioner on 9th September 2019. This is therefore my third report as Chief Commissioner.

I have previously highlighted how the Commissioners have coped with the severe restrictions placed on our work by the pandemic. In the last year we have continued to rely on remote hearings rather than in-person hearings in the prisons as would have been the case prior to March 2020. We have had some discussions with the Prison Service about the possibility of returning to in-person hearings in some cases, we will continue those discussions in the year ahead.

Unfortunately, the impact of the public health crisis on vital risk reduction work with prisoners has continued to be felt despite efforts by our colleagues in the Prison Service, PBNi and elsewhere. I remain concerned at the adverse effect this has had upon the work of the Commissioners and in particular on our statutory duty to have regard to the desirability of rehabilitating prisoners. It will be vital for our work and, more importantly, for the rehabilitation of offenders and the protection of the public that all involved make a sustained effort in the time ahead to return to a more normal environment.

The last year has also seen changes to Rule 22 of the Parole Commissioners' Rules (Northern Ireland) 2009 to provide registered victims and others with the right to request summaries of the reasons for PCNI decisions. A second iteration of the changes took effect in March 2022 and I can report that we are putting in place procedures to ensure we meet such requests.

There have, as in previous years, been a number of judicial review decisions in the last year which have been of significance to the Commissioners. I discuss these and other developments over the course of the last year in the body of this Annual Report.

I am pleased that we have continued to deal with the cases referred to us in a timely and professional manner and that we continue to maintain our high standards. I am committed to ensuring that we discharge our functions in accordance with Article 46 of the 2008 Order having due regard to the need to protect the public and regard to the desirability of rehabilitating prisoners and preventing further offences.

I commend this Report to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Horgan', written in a cursive style.

Chief Commissioner

Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland

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Background

Due in large part to the coming into effect of the Human Rights Act in October 2000 and the report of the Criminal Justice Review in March 2000, it was considered that decisions with regards to the release of life sentence prisoners should be taken, not by government, but by a judicial body. To have judicial character, the body would need to be independent of the executive (and of the parties concerned); impartial; and able to give a legally binding direction regarding the prisoner's release.

The Government therefore brought forward legislation that required all life sentence prisoners to have the punitive element of their sentence judicially determined and their suitability for release independently assessed and directed at the appropriate time by an independent body of judicial character. The legislation in question was the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001 (2001 Order) and the Life Sentence Review Commissioners' Rules 2001 (2001 Rules). The Order came into force in October 2001.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 made a number of significant changes to the sentencing framework for England and Wales. As a result it was felt that Northern Ireland should have its own review. In March 2005 the Northern Ireland Office published a consultation paper on the sentencing framework in Northern Ireland which considered new measures to enhance public protection. The exercise was largely informed by provisions contained in the Criminal Justice Act 2003, particularly the introduction of indeterminate and extended public protection sentences for dangerous sexual and violent offenders.

Ministers concluded that the sentencing framework should be revised and that legislation should be brought forward to provide for the introduction of indeterminate and extended sentences for dangerous sexual and violent offenders allowing individuals posing a risk of serious harm to be detained indefinitely or to the end of their extended sentences.

Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008

The relevant legislative provisions are contained in the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 (2008 Order). Among other things it provided that the Life Sentence Review Commissioners be renamed the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland and that the responsibilities of the Commissioners be extended to include decisions as to the release and recall of prisoners sentenced to indeterminate and extended custodial sentences and the recall of prisoners who receive other determinate sentences.

The Parole Commissioners' Rules (Northern Ireland) 2009 (2009 Rules) came into operation on 1 April 2009. These Rules replaced the Life Sentence Review Commissioners' Rules 2001 and apply to both the 2001 Order and the 2008 Order.

Current Legislation

The work of the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland is therefore governed by two 'Orders' and one set of 'Rules' - The Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008¹, the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001 and the Parole Commissioners' Rules (Northern Ireland) 2009.

The principal provisions of the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) 2001 Order provide for:

- the setting by the court of a relevant period, or 'tariff', as the period of the sentence to be served to satisfy retribution and deterrence before review for release;
- the power of the Commissioners to direct a prisoner's release on licence if continued detention is not required for the protection of the public;

¹ The NI Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010, provides for the continuing role of the Secretary of State in cases where national security is involved.

- the attachment by the Department of Justice of conditions to the release licence, in accordance with recommendations of the Commissioners;
- the revocation by the Department of Justice of the licence of a released prisoner and the latter's recall to prison;
- the consideration by the Commissioners of such recalls and their power to direct the release of recalled prisoners; and
- the arrangements for setting of tariffs for prisoners already serving life sentences.

The principal provisions of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 provide for:

- the appointment of Commissioners;
- the Commissioners to advise the Department of Justice with respect to any matter connected with the release or recall of prisoners referred to them;
- the renaming of the LSRC as the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland (PCNI);
- the appointment of Parole Commissioners to include a Chief Commissioner and, if necessary, the appointment of a deputy Chief Commissioner;
- the introduction of public protection sentences for violent and/or sexual offenders based on an assessment of dangerousness;
- the necessity for all public protection sentence prisoners to be referred to the Commissioners to assess suitability for release;
- the imposition of licence conditions on persons who have been sentenced to a public protection sentence or a determinate sentence of 12 months or more;
- the revocation by the Department of Justice of the licence of a released prisoner and recall to prison, if so recommended by Parole Commissioners; and

- the consideration by the Commissioners of such recalls and their power to direct release.

The Rules set out in detail the procedures that apply to life and public protection sentenced prisoners where the Department of Justice (or Secretary of State in matters of national security) refers a prisoner's case to the Commissioners regarding his release or recall. Currently there are no Rules governing the recall and re-release of determinate custodial sentenced (DCS) prisoners. However, as far as is practicable, the Rules will be applied by the Commissioners. They provide, in particular, for:

- the appointment by the Chief Commissioner of a single Commissioner to consider a case initially and provide a provisional direction/direction on release;
- the appointment by the Chief Commissioner of a panel of three Commissioners to consider those cases where release has been directed or, in the case where a prisoner is not to be released, the prisoner has requested an oral hearing of his/her case (wherever practical, one panel member should be legally qualified and another a psychiatrist or psychologist);
- the representation of the prisoner and the Department of Justice;
- the appointment by the Commissioners of a representative to act on behalf of the prisoner or for a single Commissioner to carry out an interview, with the prisoner's consent where he/she does not appoint one him/herself;
- the submission of information and reports by the Department of Justice and of representations and documentary evidence by the prisoner;
- the making of directions and the holding of oral hearings to consider the prisoner's case and the procedure for such hearings (including the granting/refusal of the attendance of witnesses and observers);

- the time limits within which notifications and responses must be made;
- the distribution of directions by the single Commissioner and/or panel chairman and the consideration of appeals against such directions by the Chief Commissioner; and
- the withholding, in specified circumstances, of particular items of evidence from the prisoner, or the prisoner and his representative and in the latter event, the appointment by the Attorney General of a Special Advocate to represent the prisoner's interests.

Workload and Key Statistics

There has been an increase in 2021/2022 in new referrals of 4% (25 cases) with a decrease in the number of recall requests of 7% (14 cases). There was a small decrease in the recall reviews of 1% (2 cases) but a substantial increase in further reviews of such cases 38% (17 cases) compared to last year (2020/2021).

142 cases were completed at the single Commissioner stage. This is a substantial increase of 19% (23 cases) against the 2020/2021 figures.

In DCS recall reviews² 54% of the cases completed in year were completed at the single Commissioner stage without reference to a Panel, a small reduction on last year's figure (56%). 17 DCS cases were referred to Panel by the single Commissioner (11% decrease) and there were 87 requests for an oral hearing, a 5% increase on last year (4 requests).

The overall number of all case types referred to panel amounted to 35, which is exactly the same as the previous year.

This year the overall case completion figure of 628 is almost exactly the same as last year (627).

The number of recall recommendations issued this year has decreased by 7%³ (14 cases). ECS recall requests decreased by 11% (2 requests) and as in the previous year there were no ICS recall requests. There has been a decrease in lifer cases of 25% (1 request) and a decrease in DCS requests of 6% (11 requests). On 4 occasions out of 180 requests, the Commissioners did not recommend recall.

Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic panel hearings were almost exclusively conducted remotely through the use of WebEx video conferencing. Commissioners completed 272 panel hearings, which is a decrease of 11% (34 cases). There were four paper hearings.

Overall, 946 provisional directions/directions, single Commissioner decisions, panel decisions, pre-tariff recommendations, licence consultations/variation/cancellation recommendations and recall recommendations have been issued in year, which is a 1% (11 cases) decrease on last year.

² This includes those cases dealt with under Articles 28(4) and 29(6)

³ Figures for recall recommendations issued may differ from recall referrals received in year

Key Statistics

| New Referrals | | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Article | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| 6 | 50 | 57 | 61 | 72 |
| 7(2) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8(3) | 14 | 13 | 18 | 29 |
| 9(1) | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| 9(4) | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 18 | 83 | 88 | 87 | 80 |
| 20 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 20A* | N/A | N/A | N/A | 2 |
| 24(5) | 40 | 29 | 26 | 27 |
| 28(2)(a) ECS/ICS | 30 | 20 | 28 | 16 |
| 28(2)(a) DCS | 163 | 182 | 169 | 166 |
| 28(4) ECS/ICS | 30 | 20 | 13 | 17 |
| 28(4) DCS | 152 | 172 | 153 | 148 |
| 29(6) | 44 | 30 | 45 | 62 |
| 46(3) | 13 | 11 | 6 | 14 |
| Total | 623 | 632 | 614 | 639 |

* New Article introduced in 2021 following changes to the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Act 2021

| Cases Withdrawn | | | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Article | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 7(2) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8(3) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9(1) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9(4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24(5) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28(2)(a) ECS/ICS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28(2)(a) DCS | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 28(4) ECS/ICS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 28(4) DCS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29(6) | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 46(3) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 8 | 0 | 2 | 5 |

| Cases Completed | | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Article | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| 6 | 43 | 60 | 65 | 63 |
| 7(2) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8(3) | 14 | 13 | 17 | 30 |
| 9(1) | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| 9(4) | 7 | 6 | 1 | 6 |
| 18 | 101 | 79 | 104 | 69 |
| 20 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 20A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 1 |
| 24(5) | 40 | 28 | 26 | 28 |
| 28(2)(a) ECS/ICS | 31 | 20 | 18 | 16 |
| 28(2)(a) DCS | 163 | 182 | 178 | 166 |
| 28(4) ECS/ICS | 21 | 26 | 19 | 18 |
| 28(4) DCS | 165 | 154 | 145 | 166 |
| 29(6) | 37 | 36 | 42 | 52 |
| 46(3) | 13 | 11 | 8 | 10 |
| Total | 637 | 620 | 627 | 628 |

| Cases completed at single Commissioner Stage | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Article | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| 6 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 9 |
| 9(4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | 18 | 15 | 16 | 13 |
| 28(4) ECS/ICS | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| 28(4) DCS | 100 | 91 | 73 | 90 |
| 29(6) | 25 | 17 | 14 | 25 |
| Total | 152 | 136 | 119 | 142 |

| Cases referred to Panel | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Article | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| 6 | 12 | 5 | 7 | 7 |
| 9(4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 18 | 26 | 15 | 9 | 8 |
| 20A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 1 |
| 28(4) ECS/ICS | 7 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| 28(4) DCS | 21 | 14 | 11 | 5 |
| 29(6) | 8 | 7 | 8 | 12 |
| Total | 74 | 43 | 35 | 35 |

| DCS Oral Hearing Requests | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Article | 2018/19 | | 2019/20 | | 2020/21 | | 2021/22 | |
| | Refused | Granted | Refused | Granted | Refused | Granted | Refused | Granted |
| 28(4) DCS | 1 | 37 | 3* | 58 | 1 | 60 | 0 | 63 |
| 29(6) | 1 | 6 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 24 |
| Total | 2 | 43 | 3 | 67 | 1 | 82 | 0 | 87 |

* two decisions to refuse an oral hearing were overturned on appeal to the Chief Commissioner

| Panel Hearings Held | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Article | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| 6 | 45 | 56 | 71 | 66 |
| 9(4) | 7 | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| 18 | 95 | 70 | 103 | 68 |
| 20A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 1 |
| 28(4) ECS/ICS | 22 | 28 | 16 | 13 |
| 28(4) DCS | 64 | 81 | 84 | 83 |
| 29(6) | 15 | 19 | 31 | 34 |
| Total | 248 | 260 | 306* | 272* |

* Due to Covid -19, hearings in prisons were suspended with the majority held remotely and a few on paper.

| Release Decisions | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Article | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| 6 | 3 | 10 | 9 | 7 |
| 9(4) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 18 | 13 | 12 | 10 | 7 |
| 20A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 1 |
| 28(4) ECS/ICS | 7 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| 28(4) DCS | 47 | 43 | 22 | 38 |
| 29(6) | 14 | 12 | 8 | 10 |
| Total | 84 | 84 | 51 | 66 |

| No Recommendations for Further Review (due to the proximity of custody expiry or licence expiry date in the individual case) | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Article | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9(4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | 23 | 12 | 13 | 12 |
| 28(4) ECS/ICS | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| 28(4) DCS | 76 | 78 | 83 | 62 |
| 29(6) | 11 | 19 | 16 | 21 |
| Total | 116 | 113 | 114 | 98 |

| Recalls | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Article | 2018/19 | | 2019/20 | | 2020/21 | | 2021/22 | |
| | Recall | Not recalled | Recall | Not recalled | Recall | Not recalled | Recall | Not recalled |
| 9(1) | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| 28(2)(a) ECS/ICS | 30 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 16 | 2 | 14 | 2 |
| 28(2)(a) DCS | 154 | 7 | 177 | 5 | 167 | 9 | 163 | 2 |
| Total | 186 | 8 | 202 | 5 | 187 | 11 | 180 | 4 |

Licence Conditions – Recommendations

| Article | | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|--------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 8(3) | Condition(s) cancelled | 8 | 7 | 6 | 4 |
| | Condition(s) not cancelled | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| | Condition(s) varied | 4 | 4 | 5 | 13 |
| | Condition(s) not varied | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Proposed Conditions (s) – agreed | 1 | 1 | 3 | 8 |
| | Proposed Conditions (s) – not agreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | | | | |
| 24(5) | Consultation – agreed | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Consultation – not agreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Consultation – partially agreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Condition(s) varied – agreed | 18 | 13 | 8 | 11 |
| | Condition(s) varied – not agreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Condition(s) inserted – agreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Condition(s) inserted – partially agreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Condition(s) cancelled – agreed | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Variation and insertion agreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Variation and cancellation agreed | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Proposed Conditions(s) – agreed | 15 | 14 | 16 | 15 |
| | Proposed Conditions(s) – not agreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | | |
| Total | | 52 | 41 | 42 | 56 |

Protected Information Cases

By their very nature, these types of cases are complex and fall outside the normal timetables set out in the Parole Commissioners' Rules 2009. The timetable can become unavoidably protracted. Once the Commissioners have been advised of the existence of such protected information and a gist of that information has been provided by the Secretary of State, the single Commissioner will refer the matter to a panel as soon as is practicable in order to have the process of the appointment of a Special Advocate advanced and a timetable set. The panel must carefully consider all the information put to them and hear any arguments in regard to disclosure and the sufficiency or otherwise of the gist provided. This necessitates a procedure of direction hearings, exculpatory reviews and open and closed hearings before a decision can be made.

The information is ordinarily, but not always, concerned with national security issues. In these circumstances the Commissioners are required to review the gist of the information certified by the Secretary of State and consider whether there is sufficient specificity to allow the prisoner to make representations. The Special Advocate will act in the interests of the prisoner in regard to the protected information. The panel will make its decision based on the statutory test of whether the prisoner poses a risk of harm/serious harm and consider whether that risk can be safely managed in the community.

We dealt with one protected information case this year: It was a complex and protracted case and the Panel issued its decision to release the prisoner in July 2021. Unusually the Secretary of State initiated judicial review proceedings challenging the Panel decision. That challenge remains before the High Court although the prisoner has been returned to prison.

Judicial Challenges/Reviews

There has been an increase in the number of new challenges this year from 9 to 10.

There were eight judicial review challenges carried forward from the previous year, as well as a civil action for damages. Ten new pre-action letters were received in year.

Of the cases carried forward, four are now closed without further action as the judge refused to grant leave, or dismissed the challenge. Five of the new pre-action cases were also settled without further recourse to the court following pre-action response on behalf of the Commissioners.

The most common challenge to our decisions has been that the decision-making Panel has failed to consider relevant information but there have also been challenges to recall recommendations; licence conditions, the re-referral period recommended and the date of hearing.

The case of McGuinness, challenging the release of Michael Stone, is still ongoing. An aspect of that challenge involves the applicant contending that Rule 22 is unlawful insofar that it prohibits public hearings.

Quality Issues

Previously in our Annual Reports, my predecessor and I have written about ambiguities surrounding the standing of PCNI Panels to direct the attendance of witnesses and the discrepancy between the PBNI SROSH test and the statutory test we have to apply. Thankfully those matters appear to have been resolved.

I remain concerned however in relation to two other matters. While there has long been discussion about the possibility of a review of the PCNI Rules, which in the fullness of time may well be a positive step, my view is that the proper application of the Rules as they stand would enhance the parole process. It continues

to be the case that dossiers are often received by the Commissioners which do not meet the requirements of Schedules 1 and 2 to the Rules which means that Commissioners very often have to direct additional reports or material.

In addition, I am concerned about the lack of legal representation of the Department in some PCNI hearings. Generally, the Department is represented in DCS Recall cases referred under Article 28(4) of the 2008 Order. However, in the more serious Article 6 and Article 18 referrals, the Department generally is not represented. While I appreciate the budgetary constraints upon the public purse, I believe more consistent legal representation of the Department at PCNI hearings will help ensure the full ventilation of the issues of risk to the public and rehabilitation of the prisoner that we are obliged to consider.

Parole Commissioners' Rules

Changes to Rule 22, to reflect changes to the equivalent Rule in England and Wales made after the Worboys judgement in 2018, were made during the last reporting year and finally took effect in March 2022. The change to the Rules in essence provides registered victims and others with the right to request summaries of the reasons for PCNI decisions. We will be obliged to grant such requests unless there are exceptional circumstances. Dealing with the implications of those changes will require the development of new guidance for Commissioners and a policy for the management of such requests. Work is underway in relation to these matters. A small number of requests have already been received under the new amendment.

Stakeholder Engagement

I am glad to report that we have continued to work closely with our colleagues in Probation Board Northern Ireland (PBNI) and Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS). Three way and bilateral meetings have continued throughout the last year in the same way as

before and have allowed us to address emerging issues. We have also worked with the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, which provides healthcare in the prison system, and NIPS to deal with concerns about the Trust meeting PCNI recommendations in a timely manner. Efforts have been made on all sides to address these concerns and new measures put in place. We will monitor those arrangements going forward.

We have also engaged with NIPS in relation to the possible return to some in-person hearings. A very small number of in-person hearings have taken place but plans for further progress had to be abandoned at the end of the year due to a worsening in the public health situation. However, this is a matter that we will return to as circumstances improve although it is unlikely we will return to in-person hearings in every case. A cautious and gradual approach will be taken to returning to in-person hearings.

Commissioners

During this financial year the PCNI lost one experienced Commissioner due to resignation. Commissioner, Mrs Dawn Harris, made a significant contribution to the work of the Parole Commissioners during her tenure. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks for her years of hard work and dedication throughout her time in office.

I continue to be grateful for the excellent work done by Commissioners and for the diligent way in which they discharge their statutory responsibilities.

Secretariat

The Commissioners continue to receive excellent support from our staff in the Secretariat. There have been some changes to personnel over the last 12 months but this has not affected the quality of the team. The Commissioners' Secretariat are based on the 1st Floor Mezzanine in Laganside Court, Oxford Street. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic social distancing requirements and the physical restrictions

in court buildings heavily influenced how PCNI conducted their business. During the pandemic the staff were unable to avail of the office accommodation. The Secretariat was fortunate to have immediate secure access to technology to enable working remotely during the pandemic. Working remotely over the last two years has been challenging but staff have demonstrated their adaptability and commitment to business continuity, while innovating, adapting and increasing their use of digital technology. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic will continue to be evident for some time but the PCNI and the Secretariat are committed to learning from the experiences and bringing together best practice developed during the pandemic. I am grateful to the staff for their dedication and work throughout these uncertain times as they continued to provide sustained services during an extremely challenging time.

Governance

We continue to enjoy productive working relationships with our sponsors in both the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) and the Department of Justice. I would like to express my thanks to Glynn Capper who is currently Acting Director of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS). Mark Goodfellow took up the position of Chief Operating Officer and worked closely with the Commissioners to facilitate the performance of their statutory functions, while being respectful of their independence. Mark has recently left Courts to take up a role in the Department of Justice. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mark for his support and to wish him well as he prepares to take up his new position.

Mrs Gillian McClearn, who was Secretary to the Parole Commissioners has now left NICTS and has moved on to take up a new role in the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Board. I should like to take this opportunity to wish her well in her new position. Mr Dermot Harkin, once again, stepped into the position of Acting Head of Tribunal Services in NICTS; Dermot has previously held

this role and the role of acting Secretary to the Parole Commissioners. He has an excellent understanding of the work of the Commissioners and provides productive advice and direction to both the Secretariat and Commissioners.

Going Forward

Dealing with the ongoing difficulties caused by the pandemic has been to a large extent all-consuming over the last two years for the Commissioners but also for our colleagues in the Department of Justice, Prison Service, Healthcare and PBNI. Maintaining the integrity of the parole process in this environment has been a significant challenge. I have written about this in last year's report and efforts had to be sustained throughout this last year as well to ensure the continued operation of the parole process. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all involved in these efforts.

A perhaps inevitable consequence of the pandemic has been the curtailment of vital risk reduction activities within the three prisons. Programmes have not run in the way they used to and key staff in NIPS Psychology and PBNI have often not been able to be present in the prison to deliver face to face work. There has also been a reduction in the availability of pre-release testing. This of course has had negative consequences for the parole process. Towards the end of the period covered by this report it appears that a corner may have been turned. However, it will be vital for all involved to make a sustained effort to ensure that the opportunities lost to prisoners during the last two years to reduce their risk or demonstrate their rehabilitation are restored to them as quickly and as fully as possible.

Also as discussed above, we will be dealing in the coming year with the long-awaited changes to Rule 22. The main impact of this change will be to place an obligation on the Commissioners to provide a summary of our reasons to victims and others if they make such a request unless there are exceptional circumstances which conclude that such a summary

should not be provided. We look forward to meeting our new obligations in this regard and to working with the Department and others to ensure the new changes operate effectively.

Resources

The Chief Commissioner and the other Parole Commissioners are Departmental appointees appointed under The Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 and are therefore statutory office holders. All Commissioners serve on a part-time basis and are fee paid. They are supported by a Secretariat of 15 civil servants who are appointed to the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Services.

This report discloses the remuneration paid to Commissioners and staff and the running costs of the organisation.

Fees and Expenses

The PCNI are paid on a case fee basis and a pro-rata fee for undertaking other non-casework business. The case rates payable to each category of Commissioners during 2021/22 were as follows:

| Article under CJO or LSO | Article Description | Single Commissioner | Chair of Panel (Legal) | Other Panel Member (Psych/ Criminal Justice) |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------|--|
| Article 6 | Lifer Release Decision | £898 | £914 | £539 |
| Article 8(3) | Variation of Licence (Lifer) | £359 | - | - |
| Article 9(1) | Recall Recommendation (Lifer) | £180 | - | - |
| Article 9(4) | Recall Review | £898 | £914 | £539 |
| Article 18 | ECS/ICS Release | £898 | £914 | £539 |
| Article 20(a) | Terrorist Related Offences (DCS/ ECS) Release Decision | £898 | £914 | £539 |
| Article 24(5) | Variation of Licence (ECS/ICS) | £359 | - | - |
| Article 28(2)a | Recall Recommendation (ICS/ ECS/DCS) | £180 | - | - |
| Article 28(4) | Recall Review (ICS/ECS/DCS) | £718 | £686 | £359 |
| Article 29(6) | Further Review of Article 28(4) | £718 | £686 | £359 |
| Article 46(3) | Pre-tariff Review: | | | |
| | • Single Commissioner | £539 | - | - |
| | • Interviewing Commissioner | £539 | - | - |
| Article 22(A) | Summary of Reasons | £135 | £135 | |
| | Review request for panel hearing on DCS case: | £180 | - | - |

Commissioners are also paid allowances for travelling and subsistence in accordance with prescribed scales.

Financial Summary

Expenditure incurred by the Department of Justice in providing for the work of the Commissioners in the year ending 31 March 2022 is detailed below:

| PCNI Expenditure – Financial Year 2021/22 | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 2016/17 (£000) | 2017/18 (£000) | 2018/19 (£000) | 2019/20 (£000) | 2020/21 (£000) | 2021/22 (£000) |
| Commissioners' Remuneration | £945 | £874 | £929 | £947 | £896 | £911 |
| Commissioners' Travel, Accommodation and Expenses | £63 | £67 | £64 | £64 | £4 | £1 |
| Legal Costs | £50 | £89 | £64 | £32 | £86 | £101 |
| Premises | £103 | £104 | £100 | £111 | £106 | £117 |
| General Administration | £84 | £47 | £58 | £53 | £32 | £32 |
| Staff Salaries | £487 | £505 | £495 | £525 | £541 | £553 |
| | | | | | | |
| Total Expenditure | £1,732 | £1,686 | £1,710 | £1,732 | £1,665 | £1,715 |

APPENDIX A

Membership of the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

Chief Commissioner

Mr Paul Mageean qualified as a solicitor in 1991 and was originally in private practice. In 1995 he joined the Committee on the Administration of Justice as their Legal Officer during which time he successfully brought a number of cases to the European Court of Human Rights. Subsequently he worked for Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland from 2005 until 2008 when he was appointed as the first Director of the Graduate School for Professional Legal Education at the University of Ulster. From 2013 until 2018 he was the Director of the Institute of Professional Legal Studies at Queen's University Belfast. He served as a member of the NI Human Rights Commission from 2017 until 2020 and the Parole Board in the Republic of Ireland from 2017 to 2021. He also sits as a member of the Policing Authority in the Republic of Ireland. In the summer of 2021 he was appointed as a non-executive Board member with the Legal Services Agency. He was appointed as Chief Commissioner of PCNI in September 2019.

Commissioners from a Legal Background

Judge Desmond Marrinan was called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in 1972 and later to the Irish Bar and the Bar of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. He specialised in criminal law, EC law and professional negligence until appointed a County Court judge in 2003. He served as such until 2018 dealing mostly with criminal trials in the Crown Court and he continues to sit as a Deputy County Court Judge. From 2008-2011 he sat as the Recorder of Londonderry. He was formerly the Vice-Chair of the Law Reform Advisory Committee. From 1971-1978 he lectured in public law at the Queen's University of Belfast and latterly was an external examiner for the Institute of Professional Legal Studies at QUB. In June 2019 the Department of Justice appointed Judge Marrinan to conduct an independent review into hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland. His review of hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland

was presented to the Minister of Justice and published in December 2020.

Ms Christine Glenn qualified as a barrister in 1980. She was the Justices' Chief Executive in the Inner London Magistrates' Courts Service until 2001 and Chief Executive of the Parole Board for England and Wales from 2001 until March 2009. She sat as a judge in the First Tier Tribunal, dealing with asylum and immigration cases. She served as a member of the Thames Valley Courts Board from its inception until 2010. She also worked as a consultant on parole and criminal justice, including advising governments and training parole boards in Cyprus, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Anguilla, and the British Virgin Islands. She has worked as a Visiting Expert at the United Nations and Far East Institute in Japan and has also presented on parole and its impact on reducing prison overcrowding at the United Nations Congress on Crime in Brazil 2010. She is a member of the Association of Paroling Authorities International Training and Development Committee, representing the international division. She previously served as Chief Commissioner.

Mrs Anne Fenton MBE has been a qualified solicitor since 1978. She was Director of the Institute of Professional Legal Studies at Queen's University, Belfast from 1998 to 2013. She is a legal member of the Review Tribunal and in 2005 she was appointed by the Lord Chancellor to hear Restricted cases before that Tribunal. From January 2014 to August 2019 she was Under-Treasurer of the Inn of Court of Northern Ireland.

Mr Noel Phoenix qualified as a solicitor in Northern Ireland in 1983 and has practised for many years in criminal law across the entire range of court tiers in the jurisdiction. He was admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in England and Wales in 2005 and is a qualified Advanced Advocate. He holds a Master's Degree in Human Rights and Criminal Justice and serves as a member of the Human Rights and Equality Committee of the Law Society of Northern Ireland. Noel was appointed as a Notary Public in 2006 and he served on the

Solicitor's Disciplinary Committee between 2008 and 2019. Noel has served as a part time trainer at The Institute of Professional Legal Studies since 1998 and was appointed as a Training Principal for LPC trainees in 2007. He was appointed a Parole Commissioner in 2014 and a legal chair of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel in 2017. Noel has had a high profile in negotiations for the remuneration of legal aid practitioners and was elected as chairman of the Solicitors Criminal Bar Association in 2018. He continues in private practice as a senior partner in a leading law firm.

Professor John Jackson is a professor of Law at the University of Nottingham and a qualified barrister. He was previously Dean of the School of Law at University College Dublin and has taught at several other universities including Queen's University Belfast, the University of Sheffield, the City University, London and University College Cardiff. He has held visiting professorships at Hastings College of the Law, University of California and the Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales and was a Fernand Braudel Senior Fellow at the European University Institute in 2007 – 2008. From 1998 to 2000 he was an Independent Assessor for the Northern Ireland Criminal Justice Review and he has been a Sentence Review Commissioner since 2012.

Mr Jeremy Mills qualified as a solicitor in 1990. He spent 15 years with a firm of corporate solicitors in Belfast and was a partner for 10 years. Between 2007 and 2012 Jeremy served as a part time Legal Chairman of the Northern Ireland Valuation Tribunal. From 2008 to 2012 he was also a member of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Independent Review of Decisions Panel. He was a member of the Board of Bryson Charitable Group from 2008 until 2018. In 2009 he was appointed to Transport Northern Ireland's panel of independent Public Inquiry Inspectors. He is also a non-executive Director of the Odyssey Trust Company and its subsidiary, W5. He has been a Parole Commissioner since 2009.

Mr John F Gibbons qualified as a solicitor in 1991, and manages his own law firm, which he established in 1995. He was recently sworn in as a Legal Member of the Victims Payment Board, dealing with claims around pensions for victims of the Troubles. He was sworn in as a Legal Member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Northern Ireland, in January 2015, and then became its Deputy Chairman in 2019. He chaired the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal between 2009 and 2020 and was a trustee board member and treasurer of Citizens Advice, Belfast, between 2008 and 2014. In 2010 he was appointed a Legal Chairman of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Independent Appeals panel and between 2012 and 2020 he was the Legal Chair to the Pharmaceutical Society for Northern Ireland's Fitness to Practice scrutiny committee.

Ms Maura Hutchinson qualified as a solicitor in 1996 and worked for a number of years in a City of London legal practice. She set up and managed a grant-giving programme in the charity and voluntary sector and was a solicitor at Law Centre (NI) until 2010. Maura currently sits as a Judge of the First Tier Tribunal - Immigration and Asylum Chamber and as a Deputy Judge of the Upper Tribunal. She is also an Adjudicator of the Traffic Penalty Tribunal Northern Ireland, a legal member of the Social Security Appeal Tribunals and a legal member of the Review Tribunal and is appointed to hear Restricted Cases within that Tribunal. Maura was appointed to the Victims Payment Board, as a legal member, in 2021.

Mrs Marian Killen was admitted as a solicitor in Northern Ireland in 1978 and in England and Wales in 2016. She held a number of legal positions in the Northern Ireland Office, Court Service and Northern Ireland Civil Service before being appointed to the post of Assistant Crown Solicitor in 2007 which she held until 2017. She is a trained Mediator and Solicitor Advocate and served for many years on a number of Law Society and other Committees. In addition to her role as a Commissioner, Marian was appointed as

a Deputy District Judge (civil) in the County Court and a Deputy Master in the High Court in 2009. She was appointed as a Legal Assessor to the Nursing and Midwifery Council's Fitness to Practise Tribunal in 2017 and as a Chair of the Health Care Professional Council's Fitness to Practise Tribunal in 2017. In 2018 she was appointed as a Legal Assessor to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council's Fitness to Practise Tribunal and was appointed as Legal Advisor to Social Work England's Fitness to Practise Tribunal in 2018.

Mr James Scholes qualified as a barrister in 1973. He was appointed Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions in 2008 and served as Acting Director of Public Prosecutions from 2009 to 2011. He was appointed a Civil Service Commissioner in 2012 and he currently serves on the Board of Chest Heart and Stroke.

Mr Niall Small qualified as a Solicitor in 1992. He worked in private practice for 10 years before becoming a founding partner in the firm of Small & Marken Solicitors in Antrim. He has been reappointed to the Guardian Ad Litem Solicitor Panel in Northern Ireland and has recently been appointed as a legal chair of the HSCB Disciplinary Committee for Dental, Optometry and Pharmaceutical services. He is a trained mediator and has qualified as a Solicitor Advocate. He has held several positions with a number of voluntary organisations throughout Northern Ireland. He was sworn in as a Legal Member of the Review Tribunal for Northern Ireland, on 7 September 2020.

Mr Timothy Thorne qualified as a barrister in 1987. He practiced mainly in the fields of criminal defence and prosecution. He was a Deputy Assistant Judge Advocate General sitting in Courts Martial and is a fee-paid judge in the First Tier Tribunal, in the Immigration & Asylum Chamber and the Care Standards Tribunal. He was also a Deputy Chairperson of the National Health Service Tribunal and a consultant trainer to the Inns of Court School of Law in London. He is also presently a non-Executive Director of a legal training company.

Mr Mark Finegan was admitted as a solicitor in 1993. He spent ten years as a solicitor in private practice before joining the Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions in 2003 as a Senior Public Prosecutor. He has also worked as a Senior Principal Legal Officer in the Office of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland for nine years. He is a qualified Solicitor Advocate and has previously been a member of the Crown Court Rules Committee and the Criminal Justice Issues Group.

Mr Martin O'Brien has been a practising barrister at the Bar of Northern Ireland for 32 years, specialising in employment and discrimination law. He has a Master's degree in Human Rights and Emergency Law, and for 18 years was an academic lecturer at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies at Queen's University Belfast. Martin was called to the Bar of Ireland in 1998 and served as a part time Judge of Employment Tribunals from 1998-2009. He is also a part-time Judge of Appeals Tribunals, and an Adjudicator of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeal Panel. Martin is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. In addition to sitting on a number of boards and committees, Martin is also the Chairman of a children's Safeguarding Advisory Panel.

Commissioners from a Psychiatry and Psychology Background

Dr Adrian Grounds was a University Senior Lecturer in forensic psychiatry at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, and an honorary consultant forensic psychiatrist in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust, until retiring in 2010. He is now an honorary research fellow at the Institute of Criminology, and a medical member of the First Tier Tribunal (Mental Health) in England. He has also been a Sentence Review Commissioner since 1998.

Professor Peter Hepper is a Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the Queen's University of Belfast. He was Head of School of Psychology for 13 years and has served as Chair of the Irish Football Association

Appeals Committee, Non-Executive Director Ulster Hospitals Trust. He is a Chartered Psychologist, a Fellow of the British Psychological Society and a member of the European Association of Threat Assessment Professionals. He has been a Visiting Professor at Kyushu University, Japan, University New South Wales, Australia, and Vanderbilt University, USA. Professor Hepper is a qualified hostage negotiator and forensic interviewer of children. He trains individuals and organisations in interview and interrogation techniques. He is trained in linguistic threat analysis, behavioural indicators of violence and violent attacks, risk and threat assessment, including, assessment and management of espionage threats, and transnational organised crime. He has taught and trained students and professionals on The Psychology of Serial Killers, “profiling” and sex crimes.

Dr Damien McCullagh is a Consultant Clinical and Forensic Psychologist in private practice having formerly Lead Clinical Psychologist within the Learning Disability Directorate of the Southern Trust (2000-2017). He is a Chartered member of the British Psychological Society and a registered Forensic and Clinical Psychologist with the Health and Care Professions Council. He has been appointed to the Review Tribunal as a lay member in 2020. Dr McCullagh previously worked as a Principal Psychologist with the Northern Ireland Prison Service where he had primary responsibility for providing psychological risk assessments on Life Sentence Prisoners to the Life Sentence Review Board (1997-2000). He previously held posts in Adult and Child Psychology Services in the Republic of Ireland and with Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Services in Omagh (1989-1997). Dr McCullagh is an Honorary Lecturer in Forensic Risk Assessment at Queen’s University, Belfast. He is also an Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) accredited Behavioural Investigative Advisor. He has previously been the Chairman of the Board of Governors of Drumragh Integrated College in Omagh from 1995-2005.

Dr Micaela Greenwood is an independent business psychologist and management consultant. Her previous positions include Principal Occupational Psychologist at the Police Service of Northern Ireland and Associate Director of the MSc in Occupational Psychology at Queen’s University of Belfast. Micaela was appointed as a Sentence Review Commissioner in 2015.

Mrs Deborah McQueirns is an independent Registered and Chartered Forensic Psychologist, Chartered Scientist and Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS). Her previous positions include Principal (Lead) Forensic Psychologist in female and high secure prisons, Consultant Psychologist in private healthcare specialising in forensic learning disability and acquired brain injury, and specialist forensic psychologist in forensic mental health and in HMPPS Close Supervision Unit. She is currently working as an independent consultant practitioner psychologist and has provided expert testimony in criminal courts for over ten years. Her particular areas of expertise include personality disorder, acquired brain injury, forensic learning disability, ASD and mental health.

Mr Emmet Murray is a Health and Care Professions Council registered and British Psychology Society Chartered Forensic Clinical Psychologist, currently working in the area of Adult Mental Health and Child Protection. He was previously a Principal Psychologist with the Northern Ireland Prison Service and is currently an Expert Advisor with the National Policing Improvement Agency.

Ms Claire Hunt is an HCPC registered Practitioner Psychologist, Chartered Forensic Psychologist and an associate fellow of the British Psychological Society. She has worked as a Forensic Psychologist for 27 years. She has been a psychologist member of the Parole Board for England and Wales since 2011. Ms Hunt has been working as an expert witness in criminal and family law proceedings for 19 years and regularly attends court to provide expert testimony. Previously she worked in

HM Prison Service for 11 years, working with high risk offenders, both male and female.

Mrs Siobhan Keating is a Registered Psychologist (HCPC) and Chartered Forensic and Clinical Psychologist (BPS). She currently works as a Consultant Psychologist in Belfast Health & Social Care Trust in the Community Forensic Mental Health Service. Previously she was a Principal Psychologist with the Northern Ireland Prison Service and a Senior Occupational Psychologist with the Dept. of Employment (NW England). She is an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society.

Dr Andrea Higgins is an HCPC registered Practitioner Psychologist. She is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist with the Ministry of Justice, UK and has worked in a variety of clinical and forensic settings, providing specialist services including the assessment of risk of reoffending, which is an area of special interest for her. She is the former Clinical Director of "Aware", an organisation providing services for persons with Depression and Bipolar disorder across the Republic of Ireland. She is experienced in the identification and management of risk of reoffending in both community and prison populations. Dr Higgins is the former chair of the Division of Clinical Psychology within the Psychological Society of Ireland and Vice-Chair of the Neurological Alliance of Ireland. She has a special interest in offending behaviour in the context of neurological conditions and mental health.

Commissioners from a Criminal Justice Backgrounds

Mr Stephen Murphy CBE is a former Director General of the National Probation Service for England and Wales, prior to which he was Chief Probation Officer first in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and then in Northumbria. He is a former member of the Parole Board for England and Wales on which he served from 1995 to 2005 and 2010 to 2020.

Mrs Elaine Peel is currently a Company Director. She was formerly an Assistant Chief Probation Officer with 24 years' experience of working with offenders. During her time with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland she was instrumental in setting up a wide range of multi-agency services for prisoners and their families and the implementation of the first programmes to deal with domestic violence in Northern Ireland. She was a Director of the National Community Justice Training Organisation.

Mrs Alexandra Delimata is a self-employed consultant who works primarily with community groups, enterprises and small businesses in North West Ireland. Until 2004, she was Corporate Secretary of The Travel Partnership Corporation, an international consortium of travel associations. Prior to relocating to Ireland in 2001, she was Assistant Director, Corporate Development, for the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in Geneva.

Mrs Ruth Laird CBE is a human resource professional with particular experience in organisational development, equality and diversity. She was formerly Director of the National Trust, Director of HR, BBC, and a Fair Employment Commissioner. Ruth has held appointments as a Judicial Appointments Commissioner, Civil Service Commissioner and Independent Assessor for Public Appointments. She has served as a non-executive Director of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, and as a member of the Legal Services Civil Appeal Panels. She was a Board member of Business in the Community, a founder member of the Employers' Forum on Disability and a council member of Ulster University. She is currently a panel member for Police Misconduct Hearings, an experienced member of the Review Tribunal and a non-executive Director of the Western Health and Social Care Trust. Ruth was appointed recently as an Ordinary Member of the Victims' Payments Board for Northern Ireland.

Professor Duncan Morrow is an academic in the Ulster University where he is Director of Community Engagement. Until 2012 he was Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council (CRC) and has taken an active role in peace building and the legacy of violence in the past. Professor Morrow was also a Sentence Review Commissioner for Northern Ireland. He is chair of the Scottish Government Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion.

Mrs Elsbeth Rea OBE is a retired social worker. She has worked as both a Senior Probation Officer with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, as a lecturer in Social Work at Queen's University Belfast and for various social work and social care bodies and agencies on a sessional basis. She is currently a Lay Magistrate and a Lay Member of the Bar Disciplinary Committee. She has held public appointments with the Northern Ireland Committee of Ofqual, the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust, the Police Authority for Northern Ireland and the Eastern Health and Social Services Council. Elsbeth served as Deputy Chief Commissioner of PCNI between 2009 and 2012.

Mrs Debbie Hill is a barrister (non-practising). She began her career in Youth Justice before working in the Probation Service as a District Manager responsible for courts and as the District Sex Offender Specialist. She re-trained as a barrister. Mrs Hill was previously Chair for Parole Board England and Wales for 12 years, Lay member for Mental Health Review Tribunal and Chair for General Chiropractic Council. Currently a specialist Lay member for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Disability Qualified member for Social Security, Chair for MPTS, HCPC, NMC and Social Work England.

Ms Mary Barnish is a former senior probation officer who worked for London Probation for 35 years. Her management roles have included the family courts service, programmes for women offenders, victims unit, and a public protection unit responsible for the assessment and supervision of high risk offenders. From

2002 -2005 she was seconded to HM Inspectorate of Probation for England & Wales, auditing accredited programmes and conducting effective supervision inspections, including a thematic inspection on domestic violence. More recently she was a member of London Probation's Inspection and Standards unit where her responsibilities included HR and complaints investigations and conducting serious case reviews.

Mrs Louisa Fee qualified as a Solicitor in September 2004. She worked in General Private Practice until October 2017 specialising in Family and Criminal law. She was appointed to the Guardian Ad Litem panel in 2012. In November 2017 she was appointed legal advisor for the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, and thereafter became the Director of Legal Services in October 2018. She was appointed to the Civil Legal Services Appeals Panel in April 2019. She was sworn in as a Legal Member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Northern Ireland in August 2019. She has been appointed to the Board of Governors at Park Education Centre, Aquinas Grammar School and St Bride's Primary School Belfast.

Mr Mike Fowkes is a former police officer who served in Devon and Cornwall Police for thirty years. As a Senior Investigating Officer he led numerous murder and major crime investigations. Following retirement from the police, one of his roles involved investigatory work for a specialist criminal law practice, who represented clients facing serious criminal allegations. He currently works as a chair and panel member on Fitness to Practise Hearings for the Health and Care Professions Tribunal Service and the General Pharmaceutical Council. He is also a specialist lay member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for England. His voluntary work included helping 14 to 17 year olds to successfully complete Referral Order sentences issued to them by the Youth Courts. He is also a magistrate in the Family Courts.

Mr Jarlath Kearney is currently an Equality Commissioner for Northern Ireland, appointed by the Secretary of State in 2016. He is an experienced senior strategy advisor. In 2018, he was appointed as a National Expert for the European Commission's TAIEX Programme on a project of institutional transformation, equality and rights, and democratic development in the Balkans region. Jarlath was previously a Board member of both the Arts Council for Northern Ireland and the Community Relations Council. He holds Masters Degrees in Human Rights Law and Journalism Studies, and writes a regular column for The Irish News.

Mr Ciaran McQuillan qualified as a Solicitor in 1994. He worked in private practice for 12 years specialising in Personal Injury litigation and Criminal Law. In 2006 he joined the Public Prosecution Service of Northern Ireland. He has served as an Assistant Director for the last 10 years and is presently head of the Serious Crime Unit. He was a member of the Law Society's Advocacy Working Party for 12 years and in 2013 was appointed to the Magistrates Court Rules Committee.

Ms Tracy Overing was called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in 2004. She specialises in the area of children and family law and continues to practise in other areas of law including criminal, matrimonial and judicial review. Ms Overing is a well-respected member of the profession with extensive experience in complex cases of fact and law including the sexual abuse of children, domestic abuse, ward ship, adoption, public and private law proceedings with domestic and international elements, Hague Convention and Non-Hague Convention proceedings. She has completed additional training to become an Advanced Advocate. Ms Overing appears in all court tiers and has been involved in a number of cases which have set legal precedent. In October 2014 Ms Overing was appointed as Chair of the Disability Appeals Tribunals conducting appeal hearings in the application of social security law. She continues in this post to date.

Mrs Vilma Patterson spent over 30 years in the construction industry as a Director and Shareholder of John G Duff (Annadale) Ltd and is a past member of the Training Committee for the Construction Industry Training Board for Northern Ireland. She was the founding Chair of the Women in Business Network, and is a former Board Member of the Women on the Move Network. Ms Patterson was Chairman of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and she has been a non-executive member of the Audit Committee of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, a Civil Service Commissioner for Northern Ireland and member of the Parades Commission. She is a former Chair of the Independent Monitoring Board for HMP Maghaberry and Chairman of the Association of Members of Independent Monitoring Boards for Northern Ireland. She has served as a member of the Prison Service Pay Review Body and the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. She is a current Member of the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland and is a Disability Qualified Member of Appeals Tribunals.

Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland

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