



Parole Commissioners  
for Northern Ireland

ANNUAL REPORT  
2019-2020



# **Parole Commissioners For Northern Ireland**

## **Annual Report 2019/20**

### **Report for the year end 31 March 2020**

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 30 July 2020



© Crown Copyright 2020

ISBN: 978-1-912313-37-2

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v.3. To view this licence visit

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/)

or email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned

This publication is also available at [www.parolecomni.org.uk](http://www.parolecomni.org.uk)

Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to us at

Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland

1st Floor, Mezzanine, Laganside Court, Oxford Street, BELFAST BT1 3LL

Naomi Long MLA  
Minister of Justice  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SG



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 2019 to 31 March 2020.

I was appointed as Chief Commissioner on 9th September 2019. This is therefore my first report as Chief Commissioner. Discharging the duties associated with the Chief Commissioner role, including writing this report, has been made all the easier by the work done by my predecessor in this post, Christine Glenn. Christine was Chief Commissioner since 23rd June 2011 and during that time guided the Commissioners through a series of challenges always ensuring that our focus remained on our key statutory responsibilities. She has left an indelible imprint on our work. I would like to thank her for her hard work and her assistance to me since my appointment.

In terms of the workload of the Commissioners, this has been another stable but busy year as is clear from the statistics provided below.

There have been a number of relevant 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 fashion 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 Maguire'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey circular graphic element.

**Chief Commissioner**

Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland

# Contents

Background	6
Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008	6
Current Legislation	6
Workload and Key Statistics, including Management Tables	8
Protected Information Cases	14
Judicial Challenges/Reviews	14
Quality Issues	15
Parole Commissioner Rules	15
Stakeholder Engagement	16
Commissioners	16
Secretariat	16
Governance	16
Going Forward	17
Resources	18
Fees and Expenses	18
Financial Summary	19
Contingent Liabilities	19
Appendix A – Commissioners’ Profiles	20

# 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 2008<sup>1</sup>, 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;
- the attachment by the Department of Justice of conditions to the release licence, in accordance with recommendations of the Commissioners;

<sup>1</sup> 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 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 a small increase this year in new referrals of 1%. There has also been a small increase in the number of recall requests received (5% increase) and subsequently recall reviews received as well (5% increase).

136 cases were completed at the single Commissioner stage. This is a decrease of 12% against the 2018/19 figures.

In DCS recall reviews<sup>2</sup> 59% of the cases completed in year were completed at the single Commissioner stage without reference to a Panel, a slight reduction on last year's figure (62%). 21 DCS cases were referred to Panel by the single Commissioner (28% decrease). A further 70 requests (56% increase) for an oral hearing were received with 67 granted and a further 2 granted on appeal to the Chief Commissioner.

The overall number of cases referred to panel amounted to 43, a 42% decrease on the previous year.

For the second year running the overall case completion figure has continued to decrease showing a downturn in output of just under 3% (17 cases), which may be due to the reduction in cases being completed at single Commissioner stage combined with an increase in adjournments at hearing (27%) resulting in an increase in cases being carried forward into the next reporting year.

There has been an increase in the number of recall recommendations issued this year – an increase of 7%<sup>3</sup> (13 cases). Although there has been a reduction in ECS and ICS recall requests by 35% (11 requests), there has been an increase in lifer cases of 150% (3 requests) and an increase in DCS requests of 13% (21 requests). On 5 occasions the Commissioners did not recommend recall and on 3 occasions the recommendation to recall was not accepted by the Department of Justice/ Secretary of State and the prisoner was not recalled.

Commissioners completed 260 panel hearings, an increase of 5% (12 cases) on the previous year.

Overall, 911 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 2% increase on last year.

One important development during the course of the last year is that a review of the allocation of single Commissioner cases was undertaken by the Commissioners. This was to ensure that cases were allocated fairly and in a way which ensured an equitable distribution of the different types of cases in our workload. A new pilot allocation system was tested from 1st November 2019. That proved successful and has now been fully implemented. This will be kept under review throughout the coming year. I am grateful to the Commissioners who led this review and to the secretariat staff who assisted with it.

<sup>2</sup> This includes those cases with under Articles 28(4) and 29(6)

<sup>3</sup> Figures for recall recommendations issued may differ from recall referrals received in year



# Key Statistics

New Referrals				
Article	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
6	52	47	50	57
7(2)	0	1	0	0
8(3)	4	9	14	13
9(1)	4	8	2	5
9(4)	3	7	2	5
18	110	92	83	88
20	0	1	0	0
24(5)	37	38	40	29
28(2)(a) ECS/ICS	28	34	30	20
28(2)(a) DCS	169	180	163	182
28(4) ECS/ICS	25	27	30	20
28(4) DCS	156	166	152	172
29(6)	47	37	44	30
46(3)	7	15	13	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>632</b>

Cases Withdrawn/No Jurisdiction				
Article	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
6	1	0	0	0
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	3	1	1	0
20	0	0	0	0
24(5)	3	2	2	0
28(2)(a) ECS/ICS	0	0	0	0
28(2)(a) DCS	0	2	1	0
28(4) ECS/ICS	1	0	0	0
28(4) DCS	2	0	0	0
29(6)	1	2	4	0
46(3)	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Cases Completed</b>				
<b>Article</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
6	51	49	43	60
7(2)	0	1	0	0
8(3)	4	9	14	13
9(1)	4	8	2	5
9(4)	3	3	7	6
18	101	100	101	79
20	0	1	0	0
24(5)	34	39	40	28
28(2)(a) ECS/ICS	28	33	31	20
28(2)(a) DCS	168	181	163	182
28(4) ECS/ICS	30	29	21	26
28(4) DCS	162	155	165	154
29(6)	44	38	37	36
46(3)	12	12	13	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>620</b>

<b>Cases completed at single Commissioner</b>				
<b>Article</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
6	12	11	7	10
9(4)	0	0	0	0
18	14	21	18	15
28(4) ECS/ICS	3	10	2	3
28(4) DCS	91	103	100	91
29(6)	25	24	25	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>136</b>

Cases referred to Panel				
Article	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
6	7	10	12	5
9(4)	2	1	0	0
18	26	26	26	15
28(4) ECS/ICS	6	4	7	2
28(4) DCS	18	21	21	14
29(6)	8	10	8	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>43</b>

DCS Oral Hearing Requests								
Article	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	Refused	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	Granted
28(4) DCS	0	52	0	32	1	37	3*	58
29(6)	1	10	0	6	1	6	0	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>67</b>

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

Panel Hearings Held				
Article	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
6	53	43	45	56
9(4)	2	2	7	6
18	94	90	95	70
28(4) ECS/ICS	27	22	22	28
28(4) DCS	76	62	64	81
29(6)	20	15	15	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>260</b>

## Release Decisions

Article	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
6	14	12	3	10
9(4)	1	1	0	1
18	19	24	13	12
28(4) ECS/ICS	10	8	7	6
28(4) DCS	47	45	47	43
29(6)	14	18	14	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>84</b>

## No Recommendations for Further Review (due to the proximity of custody expiry or licence expiry date in the individual case)

Article	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
6	0	0	1	0
9(4)	0	0	0	0
18	22	18	23	12
28(4) ECS/ICS	1	8	5	4
28(4) DCS	79	69	76	78
29(6)	17	13	11	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>113</b>

## Recalls

Article	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	Recall	Not recalled	Recall	Not recalled	Recall	Not recalled	Recall	Not Recall
9(1)	4	0	8	0	2	0	5	0
28(2)(a) ECS/ICS	27	1	32	1	30	1	20	0
28(2)(a) DCS	163	5	178	1	154	7	177	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>5</b>

<b>Licence Conditions - Recommendations</b>					
<b>Article</b>		<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
8(3)	Condition(s) cancelled	3	6	8	7
	Condition(s) not cancelled	0	1	0	1
	Condition(s) varied	0	2	4	4
	Condition(s) not varied	1	0	1	0
	Proposed Conditions(s) – agreed	0	0	1	1
	Proposed Conditions(s) – not agreed	0	0	0	0
24(5)	Consultation – agreed	15	10	5	0
	Consultation - not agreed	0	1	0	0
	Consultation - partially agreed	0	2	0	0
	Condition(s) varied – agreed	18	5	18	13
	Condition(s) varied - not agreed	0	1	0	0
	Condition(s) inserted – agreed	1	10	0	0
	Condition(s) inserted - partially agreed	0	1	0	0
	Condition(s) cancelled – agreed	0	3	0	0
	Variation and insertion agreed	0	3	0	0
	Variation and cancellation agreed	0	1	0	1
	Proposed Conditions(s) – agreed	0	0	15	14
	Proposed Conditions(s) – not agreed	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>41</b>

## 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.

There have been two Protected Information cases this year, one of which was carried forward from the previous year. Commissioners have completed one of these cases with the other ongoing. 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.

## Judicial Challenges/Reviews

There has been a reduction in the number of challenges this year.

There were eight cases carried forward from the previous year, five new pre-action letters received and one civil action for damages. All five new pre-action cases have been settled without further recourse to the court. There have been a variety of reasons submitted as challenges to the decisions made by the Commissioners ranging from very general assertions that the decision is unreasonable to the failure to consider relevant information.

Of the eight cases carried forward from the previous year two were completed at pre-action stage, one was dismissed by the Court of Appeal, one was stayed and four remain ongoing.

Two decisions of the Court of Appeal in June 2019 were of particular significance to the Commissioners and the way that we carry out our work. Both were very helpful in terms of clarifying the law in areas that had long been contested. The decisions arose from judicial reviews taken by the same prisoner, Mr Toal, and are therefore known as Toal 1 and 2.

In Toal 1, [2019] NICA 37, the Court of Appeal made clear that a panel of Commissioners has the power to call witnesses of its own motion. The Court observed that it was likely that such occasions would be rare due to witnesses being called by the parties and the normally extensive written materials provided to the panel, but the use of the power by a panel was not subject to a test of exceptionality. This is an important development for the Commissioners and will assist us in effectively discharging our statutory responsibilities.

In Toal 2, [2019] NICA 34, the prisoner had made the case that the PCNI panel should ask itself if the prisoner posed a *significant risk* of serious harm before considering release even though the statutory test contained in Article 18 of the 2008 Order did not contain the word "*significant*". The Court of Appeal rejected this suggestion. The decision emphasises

the importance of Commissioners sticking as close as possible to the statutory language in formulating decisions.

## Quality Issues

In previous Annual Reports my predecessor rightly raised her concern about inadequate witness provision by the Department of Justice and regular lack of legal representation in some types of cases. These issues continue to adversely affect the way in which the Commissioners discharge their duties. However, at least insofar as the matter of witnesses is concerned, our powers have now been clarified by the Court of Appeal in the Toal 1 decision, referred to above, in that the Panel has the power to direct the attendance of witnesses. It is of note however that the Court clearly envisaged this power being exercised rarely due to witnesses generally being called by the parties. It appears therefore that the primary responsibility in relation to ensuring the attendance of relevant witnesses continues to rest with the Department.

In previous reports my predecessor also discussed the ongoing difficulties created by the continued use by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) of its significant Risk of Serious Harm (sROSH) test. The view of Commissioners is that the test we are obliged to consider (in cases involving life sentence prisoners or those serving indeterminate or extended custodial sentences) is that set out in the legislation, namely whether it is no longer necessary to protect the public from serious harm that a prisoner be confined. Serious harm is defined as "*death or serious personal injury whether physical or psychological*".

It seems that the sROSH test concentrates on the sentencing stage of proceedings and is based on a 'high likelihood' of such harm. That is not the threshold for parole referrals and under the Parole Commissioners'

Rules (Northern Ireland) 2009; we are entitled to have an assessment of the risk of serious harm provided to us. This matter has also been helpfully clarified by the Court of Appeal in the Toal 2 judgment. As noted above the Court rejected the suggestion that the word "*significant*" be read into the Article 18 test. The decision reinforced the need for the Commissioners to adhere closely to the statutory language. This decision and its implications have resulted in further discussions with PBNI referred to below. It remains my hope this matter will be successfully resolved before the submission of my next Annual Report.

## Parole Commissioners' Rules

The Rules Review being undertaken by the Department of Justice is ongoing. An interim document compiled by Judge Burgess was circulated to PCNI and other stakeholders in June 2019. PCNI had significant reservations about a number of the suggestions made in that document and made our views known to the Department and to Judge Burgess. I understand that the interim document was drawn up to assist the Department in its ongoing Rules Review but does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department or the likely outcome of the Review. I welcome that clarification from the Department. It also appears that the Review is likely to take some considerable time, due to ongoing work pressures on the Department including of course the significant recent impact of the Coronavirus. It is likely however that changes will be made to Rule 22 in advance of the full Review and I address this below.

## Stakeholder Engagement

We continue to engage positively with stakeholders especially PBNI and NIPS. I have made a conscious effort to deepen that engagement and I am grateful for the degree of interaction we have had in the last year with PBNI and NIPS. PCNI decisions rely heavily on the timeliness and quality of the information we receive from these two agencies and the PCNI Rules are clear as to what information we need to receive in order to make fully informed and fair decisions. I am grateful to PBNI and NIPS for their continued engagement on this and other vital topics. We also hold productive meetings with our sponsors and the Department of Justice and I am grateful to officials in both the Court Service and the Department for their positive approach and engagement.

In addition, we were delighted to be able to assist the Probation and Mediation Service for the Czech Republic in setting up new parole arrangements. We hosted a study visit in June 2019 for a group of Czech colleagues and I am most grateful to my Commissioner colleagues, and to PBNI and NIPS who contributed to this event. The feedback in relation to the event was very positive and it was noteworthy that PCNI was seen as an exemplar of parole in an international context.

## Commissioners

During this financial year the PCNI lost three experienced Commissioners due to retirements and Commissioners choosing not to be reappointed. Two of the three Commissioners had served since the establishment of the PCNI and before as Life Sentence Review Commissioners. All three Commissioners, Dr Patrick McGrath, Ms Clodach McGrory and Ms Anne Grimes, made a significant contribution to the work of the Parole Commissioners during their tenure. I would

like to take this opportunity to express my thanks for their years of hard work and dedication throughout their time in office.

In addition, I am pleased to report that the Lord Chief Justice recommended Judge Piers Grant, for appointment as a Parole Commissioner. He was appointed in November 2019 and I know that he will make an important contribution to our work.

In anticipation of forthcoming retirements, the DoJ carried out a recruitment campaign in 2019. Six additional Commissioners were appointed to the Criminal Justice cadre in October 2019. All six Commissioners have completed training and induction. Five of the six have now joined the complement of Commissioners, and I look forward to working with all six of the newly-appointed Commissioners in the years ahead.

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. I am grateful for their cheerful and efficient assistance and I know that my colleagues feel the same.

## 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 Peter Luney who has been acting Chief Executive of the Courts and Tribunals Service over the last financial year. Peter has maintained a productive professional relationship



with the Commissioners, while being respectful of their independence. Through the sponsorship arrangements he works closely with Commissioners to facilitate the performance of their statutory functions.

Mr Dermot Harkin in his temporary role as Head of Tribunal Services in NICTS, has now been acting Secretary to the Parole Commissioners for almost nine months. In this short time he has developed an excellent understanding of the work of the Commissioners and provides productive advice and direction to both the Secretariat and Commissioners.

## Going Forward

The decisions of the Court of Appeal in Toal 1 and 2 discussed above have provided much needed clarity on two important aspects of the law which will assist in the ongoing review of the PCNI Rules. I look forward to that review being concluded but recognise that the review process and any consequential changes may take some time.

In addition to the outworking of the review, there are other challenges ahead for the Commissioners. It is highly likely that in advance of the review, Rule 22 of the PCNI Rules, which precludes the publication of any information regarding the parole proceedings, will be amended to ensure compliance with the English High Court decision in what is known as the Worboys case<sup>4</sup> which upheld a challenge to the equivalent Rule in England and Wales. The outworking of this change is likely to have significant operational implications for PCNI.

We will also continue to work with partner agencies, including PBNi and NIPS, on the implications of the Court of Appeal decisions in Toal and a range of other matters. There has, as has been discussed above, been a renewed and positive inter-agency dialogue in recent

times and it is important that this is sustained to ensure a full and mutual understanding of and compliance with the PCNI Rules and relevant jurisprudence.

---

<sup>4</sup> R v Parole Board & Oters [2018] EWHC 694

# Resources

For most of the year covered by this report, the Commissioners have been supported and advised by a Secretariat comprising of 16 staff. The Commissioners' Secretariat are based on the 1st Floor Mezzanine in Laganside Court, Oxford Street Belfast.

## 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 2019/20 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 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	-	-
	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 2020 is detailed below:

PCNI Expenditure – Financial Year 2019/20						
Category	2014/15 (£000)	2015/16 (£000)	2016/17 (£000)	2017/18 (£000)	2018/19 (£000)	2019/20 (£000)
Commissioners' Remuneration	927	836	945	874	929	947
Commissioners' Travel, Accommodation and Expenses	76	74	63	67	64	64
Legal Costs	22	29	50	89	64	32
Premises	187	120	103	104	100	111
General Administration	91	80	84	47	58	53
Staff Salaries	530	499	487	505	495	525
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,833</b>	<b>1,638</b>	<b>1,732</b>	<b>1,686</b>	<b>1,710</b>	<b>1,732</b>

## Contingent Liabilities

The PCNI discloses contingent liabilities where it determines that there may be a requirement to make economic outflow as a result of a current obligation arising from an in-year judicial review, when, at the end of the financial year the outflow is considered to be only **possible** rather than **probable**. A provision is set aside for the level of legal costs estimated that PCNI may have to settle. Such a provision had to be made this year as a result of a successful judicial review against PCNI. However, the PCNI have not yet received the bill of costs associated with this outflow which will be accrued and reported on in the next financial year.

# APPENDIX A

## Membership of the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020

### 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 is a Human Rights Commissioner and also serves as a member of the Parole Board in the Republic of Ireland. He also sits as a member of the Policing Authority in the Republic of Ireland. 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.

**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.

**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.

**Ms Clodach McGrory** practiced at the Bar in Northern Ireland from 1990 to 1995 and subsequently worked at the Law Centre (NI). She was a member of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights from 1998 to 1999 and served a term of office on the Irish Human Rights Commission from December 2000 until August 2006. She was a member of the Prison Review Team which was appointed by the Minister of Justice in June 2011 to conduct a comprehensive review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and reported in October 2012. She is currently a part-time Chairperson of Social Security Appeal Tribunals and has been a Life Sentence Review Commissioner/ Parole Commissioner since 2001. Ms McGrory was appointed Chairperson of the Sentence Review Commissioners on the 21 January 2013.

**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.

**Ms Anne Grimes** qualified as a solicitor in 1990. She worked at Law Centre (NI) for 12 years. She was appointed as an Immigration Judge of the First-tier Tribunal in 2002 and also as a Deputy Judge of the Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) in 2010. Anne was appointed as a part-time Chairperson of the Social Security Appeal Tribunals in 2017. She is also a Sentence Review Commissioner.

**Mr John F Gibbons** qualified as a solicitor in 1991, and runs his own law firm, which he established in 1995. He was originally appointed a member of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal in 2009 and was reappointed for a third term, in 2015. He 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 in 2012 he was appointed legal chair to the Pharmaceutical Society for Northern Ireland's Fitness to Practice scrutiny committee. He was sworn in as a Legal Member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Northern Ireland, in January 2015.

**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 (Awards for All) in the charity and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland and was a solicitor at Law Centre (NI) until 2010. Maura has been a Judge of the First Tier Tribunal - Immigration and Asylum Chamber since 2006 and was appointed as a Deputy Judge of the Upper Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber in 2015. She was appointed as an Adjudicator of the Traffic Penalty Tribunal Northern Ireland in 2006. Maura was appointed as a part-time Chairperson of the Social Security Appeal Tribunals in 2014 and as a part-time legal member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal in 2015. She has also previously acted as a lay member for the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency.

**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. Aside from her role as a Commissioner, Marian was appointed as a Deputy District Judge (County Court) and a Deputy Master (High Court) in 2009. In 2016 she was appointed as a Legal Assessor to the Nursing and Midwifery Council's Fitness to Practise Tribunal and in 2017 she was appointed as a Chair of the Health Care Professional Council's Fitness to Practise Tribunal. In 2018 she was appointed as a Legal Assessor to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council's Fitness to Practise Tribunal and in 2019 she was appointed as Legal Adviser to Social Work England's Fitness to Practise Tribunal.

**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.

**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. Since 2010 he has worked as a Senior Principal Legal Officer in the Office of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland. He is a qualified Solicitor Advocate and has been a member of the Crown Court Rules Committee since 2011.

**Mr Martin O'Brien** has been a practising barrister at the Bar of Northern Ireland for 29 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 the current Chairman of the Board of Governors of St. Patrick's Academy, Dungannon and 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 and assessment and management of espionage threats.

**Dr Damien McCullagh** is a Consultant Clinical & 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 & a registered Forensic and Clinical Psychologist with the Health & 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 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. She is currently working as a consultant practitioner psychologist and trainer. Her particular areas of expertise are in personality disorder, acquired brain injury, forensic learning disability, ASD and mental health. Mrs McQueirns is also a PhD researcher at the University of Portsmouth in narrative identity and agency in older male prisoners.

**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.

**Dr Shelagh-Mary Rea** was a Consultant Psychiatrist with specialist status in General Adult Psychiatry and Old Age Psychiatry. She practiced as a Consultant in Old Age Psychiatry for twenty-four years in the Northern Sector of the Western Health and Social Care Trust areas until her retirement in 2010. She worked as a part-time medical member of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority for Northern Ireland from April 2009 until her retirement in December 2018. She is a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

**Ms Claire Hunt** is a Registered Psychologist, Chartered Forensic Psychologist and an associate fellow of the British Psychological Society. She has worked as a

Forensic Psychologist for 24 years. She is a psychologist member of the Parole Board for England and Wales and she also works part-time in mental health services, as a Consultant Psychologist. Ms Hunt has been working as an expert witness in criminal and family law proceedings for 16 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 forensic learning disability and mental health in-patient secure services. 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 Linda Blud** is a Chartered Psychologist, a Registered Forensic Psychologist and Chartered Scientist. She served as a member of the Parole Board in England and Wales between 2004 and 2012 and was re-appointed to the Board in 2017. She served as a member of the MOJ Correctional Services Accreditation and Advisory Panel of England and Wales between 2008 and 2016 and a member of Scottish Government Accreditation Panel for Offender Programmes between 2006 and 2010. She was a Principal Psychologist at HMP's Offending Behaviour Programmes Unit from 1995 – 2001. Since that time she has worked as an independent forensic psychology consultant and has worked with a number of prison psychology services in Europe and America, including Northern Ireland, where she provided support with programme delivery and risk assessment between 2011 and 2015.



**Mrs Dawn Harris** is a BPS (British Psychological Society) Chartered Forensic Psychologist, Associate Fellow of the BPS and a registered HCPC (Health Care and Professions Council) Forensic and Clinical Psychologist, and an accredited Psychotherapist. She previously worked in the Scottish Prison Service, becoming Head of Psychology for a maximum security prison and open, low secure prison. She is experienced in the assessment and treatment of offending behaviour, and is co-author of the Sex Offender Treatment Programme currently being delivered in Scotland in both the prison and community settings, and also wrote the anger management programme that is currently being delivered in Scotland in the prison setting. Dawn has a specialist interest in the assessment and treatment of psychological trauma, particularly within the offending population. She co-founded and owned a private psychiatric hospital in 2015 which specialised in treating people with a history of psychological trauma, and was the first specialised hospital in the UK. She developed and now delivers BPS approved training to professionals in Trauma Informed Practice. Dawn is also a risk assessor for the Risk Management Authority in Scotland, authorising her to assess people considered at high risk of committing further sexual and/or violent offences and are potentially facing an Order of Lifelong Restriction. Dawn currently works in independent practice providing a highly specialist forensic and clinical service.

**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 for Depression and Bipolar disorder providing services across the Republic of Ireland (2018-

2020). She has completed doctoral training in forensic clinical psychology and associated specialities and 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 issues. In 2013, she established a clinical psychology service in a specialist neuropsychiatric hospital, providing services to patients with neurological, neuropsychiatric and mental health conditions. She is an Adjunct Lecturer in University College Dublin and a member of the European Huntington's Disease Network working groups.

## **Commissioners from a Criminal Justice Background**

**Mr Nigel Stone** was Senior Lecturer in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of East Anglia (UEA) and is now a Visiting Fellow there. Until 1997 he also served in the Probation Service for 25 years, holding a joint appointment as Probation Officer and Head of Home Office sponsored training programmes for probation students at UEA. He was a criminologist member of the Parole Board for England and Wales 1997-2007 and was reappointed to the Board in 2010.

**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 member of the Parole Board for England and Wales on which he also served from 1995 to 2005.

**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, a part-time member of the Review Tribunal and a non-executive Director the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

**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.

**Dr Patrick McGrath** retired in 2002 from the NHS after 30 years' service as a General Practitioner and now continues in regular clinical practice as a Forensic Physician. He formerly taught Medical Ethics and Law at the University of Ulster as a visiting Professor until retirement from that position in 2015. In 2006 Dr McGrath was elected a Foundation Fellow of the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians.

**Miss Linda McHugh** is a Management Consultant and a Board Member of a number of voluntary sector organisations. She is a former Vice-Chair of Community Housing Association and a former member of the Audit Committee of the Law Society. She was an Independent Member of the Parole Board for England and Wales from 2002 until 2009 and was a non-executive member of its Management Board and Chairman of its Audit and Risk Management Committee.

**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.

**Mrs Debbie Hill** is a barrister (non-practising). She began 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. She is currently an independent member of the Parole Board for England and Wales, a lay member of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and the Mental Health Review Tribunal for Wales. Mrs Hill is currently sitting as a Chair for the General Chiropractic Council fitness to practice Panels and is also a lay member/Chair for the MPTS fitness to practice hearings.

**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 police senior investigating officer (SIO) he led numerous murder and major crime investigations. Following retirement from the police one of his roles involved carrying out investigatory work for a specialist criminal defence law practice who represented clients facing serious criminal allegations. He is currently working as a self-employed lay panel member on fitness to practise hearings for two health and care regulators. He is also a chair of Mental Health Act hearings, reviewing cases of patients detained for treatment in mental health services hospitals and making decisions on whether to uphold the patient's detention, or to discharge them. His voluntary roles included working with young offenders and helping in the recruitment of new Magistrates.

**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 9 years and is presently head of the Serious Crime Unit. He is a member of the Law Society's Advocacy Working Party 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 (Annandale) Ltd. Interested in skills development for the industry she is a past member of the Training Committee for the Construction Industry Training Board for Northern Ireland. In 2002 she was the founding Chair of the Women in Business Network, and is a former Board Member of the Women on the Move Network which works to support and encourage female entrepreneurship. Ms Patterson is past 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, and also a Civil Service Commissioner for Northern Ireland. Previously Vilma was a Member and Chair of the Independent Monitoring Board for HMP Maghaberry 1996 to 2008 and Chairman of the Association of Members of Independent Monitoring Boards for Northern Ireland. She was a member of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland for period 2006-2010. From 2011 to 2013 she was a member of the Prison Service Pay Review Body. Currently she is a Member of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body, a Parole Commissioner for Northern Ireland and Member of the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland.







## Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland

1st Floor  
Mezzanine  
Laganside Court  
Oxford Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 3LL

Telephone: 02890 412969

Fax: 02890 545915

Email: [info@parolecomni.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@parolecomni.x.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.parolecomni.org.uk](http://www.parolecomni.org.uk)

Published and printed by DoF, Digital Print Services,  
Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast BT4 3SX  
Tel: 028 9016 3397

978-1-912313-37-2



9 781912 313372 >