



Note to solicitors

Update on the impact of Coronavirus on the parole process in Scotland

The purpose of this note is to update solicitors involved in the parole process on how the Parole Board for Scotland (the Board) will operate during the current Coronavirus shutdown. We believe the approach we are taking is sensible and proportionate in response to the current circumstances.

Consideration of cases

Cases will continue to be considered by the Board. All staff and Board members are operating from home and consideration of cases at Tribunals and oral hearings is being conducted by teleconference which solicitors and witnesses are able to participate in. The Board has produced guidance for solicitors on using the [teleconference system](#) which can be found on the Board's [website](#).

Where Tribunals and oral hearings are taking place by teleconference arrangements have been made for solicitors to have a separate call with their clients immediately prior to the Tribunal or hearing. A list of phone contacts for arranging this is attached as Annex A to this note.

Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020

The parole provisions contained in the Act commenced on Tuesday 7 April. The main impact of the provisions is that the cases of recalled extended sentence prisoners in the extension part of their sentence will now be referred to the Board by Scottish ministers under Part III of the Parole Board (Scotland) Rules 2001. This means that they will initially be considered at casework meetings. This applies to all cases referred from the date of commencement.

This does not preclude these cases from then being referred to oral hearings if, in accordance with the Rules, the Board decides this is in the interests of justice. Any oral hearings would normally take place by teleconference as previously advised.

We will inform those prisoners affected by this change of how it impacts them. In doing so we will remind them of their right to legal representation in the parole process

The Act also amends Rule 20 to remove the requirement for all parties to agree before cases are considered without an oral hearing in Part IV cases. For the time being the Board has agreed as policy that we will continue to hold oral hearings by teleconference for all Part IV cases.

The amendment to Rule 20 is however useful in providing an alternative way of proceeding if this policy becomes unsustainable because, for example, there is a significant drop in the Board's capacity due to illness, or the capacity of SPS to facilitate teleconferences changes.

We will be changing some of our documentation in Part IV cases to reflect the fact that it is possible for cases to be considered on papers alone if all parties prefer to proceed in that way.

Submitting written representations

We have been asked by solicitors what the position is regarding legal aid for preparing written representations given that there may be an increased requirement for these. We have discussed this with SLAB who have confirmed that there is no change to policy or guidance on their part required for these new circumstances.

SLAB have indicated that most solicitors already take a reasonable and proportionate approach to written representations, but that issues have occasionally arisen at accounts assessment stage where representations have simply duplicated large amounts of the material already available to the Board in the dossier.

Contacting the Board

All of our staff are now working from home. If you need to contact the Board you should email us. Correspondence relating to specific cases should be sent to casework@paroleboard.scot. For all other enquiries please email us at enquires@paroleboard.scot.

If you are unable to email us please call on 0131 244 8373 and leave a message and a number we can get back to you on. We will do that as soon as possible but please bear with us during this period of uncertainty.

Further updates

The best way to keep up with any developments is to check the Board's twitter account - @ParoleBoardScot and our [website](#).



Colin Spivey
Chief Executive
Parole Board for Scotland
22 April 2020

Agents visits – contact numbers

ESTABLISHMENT	CONTACT NUMBER
Addiewell	01506 874 500 ext 3086
Barlinnie	0141 770 2094
Castle Huntly	01382 319378
Cornton Vale	01786 835328
Dumfries	01387 284326
Edinburgh	0131 444 3124
Glenochil	01259 767282
Grampian	01779 485679
Greenock	01475787801 opt 2
Inverness	01463 229030
Kilmarnock	01563 548907 or 01563 492001
Low Moss	0141 762 9558
Perth	01738 458166
Polmont	01324 722350
Shotts	01501 824160 (484160)