

News story: Statement from the Justice Secretary on John Worboys

John Worboys was convicted of horrific crimes. My thoughts and unreserved sympathy are with his victims for whom news of the Parole Board's decision to order Worboys' release must have reawakened the most appalling memories.

It is a priority for this government that victims of rape and sexual assault have full confidence in the criminal justice system. While sentence lengths for these horrific crimes have increased by over 30% since 2010 and more victims are coming forward, there is still more to do.

While it is right that the Parole Board should remain an independent body, I believe that there is a strong case to review how to allow greater openness about the decision-making process.

We also need to make sure arrangements across the criminal justice system ensure victims are both heard and, if they wish, kept informed about their case.

I have talked to the Victims' Commissioner, Baroness Newlove, and the Chair of the Parole Board, Nick Hardwick, about what changes we could make to help victims of crime and provide greater transparency about the Board's work. I want to make sure we consult victims groups and others, and to start this work now so that decisions can be taken before Easter.