

Parole Board Chief Executive's blog – March 2020

Given the unprecedented times we find ourselves in, I felt it only right to personally outline the Parole Board's approach at this time. Where possible, the Parole Board is continuing to carry out planned hearings in line with government advice. Guidance and information on Coronavirus (Covid-19) is still coming in so we must be prepared to reconsider our plans at any time.

There are members of the Parole Board and key members of parole hearings who have had to take the decision to self-isolate following public health advice. This, inevitably, has had a knock-on effect on our ability to hold certain future hearings. I would like to pay tribute to the members and other people who are going into prison every day to ensure we keep cases moving. The decisions we make have huge consequences.

Rest assured we are working tirelessly behind the scenes to find new and innovative ways in which to progress hearings, however we must put the health and safety of everyone involved in the parole system first. We are exploring every possible avenue to ensure the maximum number of cases can be progressed.

Providing the most effective and safe service we can during this period is essential so, acting on advice, we will seek to maintain hearings for as long as we can. However, it is almost inevitable access to prisons will be impacted in the coming days and weeks. This is likely to mean that some cases may need to be slowed down or postponed but we will keep all parties informed and updated on plans.

My executive team is meeting daily to review and test our business continuity plans. We are in an unpredictable and fast-moving situation and we will have to make very swift decisions to ensure business continues as efficiently as possible. We are doing everything we can. Please stay safe.