

# **Press release: 2018 – a year of change and challenge for the Parole Board: Chief Executive’s blog**

## **2018 – a year of change and challenge for the Parole Board**

2018 has not been an easy year for the Parole Board, where we’ve been subject to unprecedented scrutiny and some criticism. It is a testament to the dedication and fortitude of our staff and members that the performance of the Parole Board remains as strong as it does.

Given that the Board make thousands of difficult decisions each year, about people who have committed some of the most serious offences, it is inevitable that our decisions will be criticised and right that they are scrutinised. Most people who experience our work directly know that our decisions are made very carefully and with great thoroughness, ensuring both fairness to the prisoner and the protection of the public.

### **Decision summaries**

Our ability to produce summaries now puts us in a much better position to explain why we make our decisions. This process is working extremely well with well over 600 summaries now issued to victims.

### **New year, new opportunities**

As this year draws to an end, we are well placed to meet the new challenges that will arise in 2019, and we are entering it in a good position and with the confidence of our key partners. This confidence has recently been illustrated by the Parole Board being awarded additional funding this financial year to allow us to continue to schedule hearings at a rate that ensures continued throughput of cases.

In the new year we should receive the outcome of the review of our Rules, including the new review mechanism. From our discussions with the Ministry of Justice we are optimistic that the new framework will give us a strong platform on which to make further improvements.

### **Work with us – member recruitment 2019**

In recent weeks I have spent some time preparing the ground for our next recruitment campaign which we intend to launch early in 2019. Detailed information to assist people who might be interested [has now been added to our website](#).

The Parole Board are asked to make thousands of difficult decisions each year – Parole Board members tell me that the work is very rewarding. They make a difference to people's lives.

## **Commitment to improving diversity**

As I have commented previously, we are really keen to ensure we have greater success in attracting people from minority backgrounds. Nearly a quarter of those in prison are from a BAME background and it is important that the people making decisions about the liberty of those serving sentences better reflect the diverse communities they serve. This targeted drive is not a one off, it will be running through a series of campaigns over the next two years and will then be embedded into every campaign.

I have been speaking to a range of people who might be able to help us draw attention to our campaign and identify suitable candidates. You do not need to be a lawyer or a CJS professional to join the Parole Board – our primary focus is on recruiting people who can help us make rigorous, evidence-based decisions, which are both fair to the prisoner and ensure the protection of the public. Training and mentoring is provided after appointment.

## **Get in touch**

If you are interested in helping us, or you know of people who might be interested, it would be helpful if you could let us know:

[workwithus@paroleboard.gov.uk](mailto:workwithus@paroleboard.gov.uk)

Finally, I would like to commend all Parole Board staff and members, and indeed the many other hard-working and dedicated professionals who have worked with us to undertake our core function of protecting the public in the face of these challenges.

Martin