

# Press release: Caroline Corby begins as permanent Parole Board Chair

Caroline Corby starts her permanent appointment as Chair of the Parole Board from today (1 November 2018).

She has been the Interim Chair of the Parole Board since April 2018, as well as a member of its Management Committee since 2015.

“I am delighted to have been appointed as Chair of the Parole Board. Although the announcement was made some time ago, today is my first official day in the permanent post.

“This is a good opportunity to set out a little bit about my priorities for the Board over the coming years.

“My priorities are for us to continue to improve our performance, maximise our influence in the various on-going reviews, take steps to address the lack of ethnic diversity among our Parole Board membership and, finally, I am determined to safeguard the Board’s independence. I cover each of these areas in a little more detail below:

## **Reviews of the Parole Board**

“We are currently subject to a number of reviews including a public consultation on a new internal review mechanism and [a departmental review of the 27 Parole Board rules](#). These present us with a real opportunity to make positive changes to the way in which the Board works. Martin Jones (Parole Board CEO) and I are in frequent dialogue with the MoJ and we are confident that we will emerge in the New Year with a framework that suits the way we want to work and gives us greater powers and control.

## **Improving Diversity in the Board**

“In 2017 David Lammy MP led a review of [the treatment and outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic \(BAME\) individuals going through the Criminal Justice System](#). A key finding was that trust in the system from people with a BAME background was low and that this was due to the lack of ethnic diversity among those making decisions in the CJS. The Parole Board has 240 members of which only 11 have a BAME background. In order to ensure that we have the confidence of prisoners and the public, a key priority for the Board will be to address the relative lack of ethnic diversity among Parole Board members in the next recruitment round in 2019.

## **Safeguarding Independence**

“As Chair I am determined to safeguard the independence of the Board. The [Wakenshaw judgment](#) in August 2018 looked at issues around independence and said that further changes should be made with respect to member tenure and

the lack of a formal process for removing a member. We are in discussions with the MoJ about possible changes. Safeguarding our independence is also at the heart of all our responses to the various on-going reviews.

## **Reducing Deferrals**

“Under Martin Jones’s leadership, the Parole Board has done a tremendous job in getting on top of the backlog of cases which has plagued us since the Osborn judgment in 2013. The next challenge is to address deferrals and adjournments. These are currently running at over 40% of all cases, with over 20% of cases being deferred on the day. I am confident that we can make real progress here. Indeed, the outcomes from our project to tackle this issue are very encouraging, with a noticeable reduction in on the day deferrals.

## **In Conclusion**

“It is a real time of change for the Board and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the organisation and wider justice system to improve the experience of parole for all who are affected by it.”

Caroline Corby, Chair for the Parole Board of England & Wales