

Press release: Parole Board Chief Executive's Blog – 2nd Edition – September 2018

It has been another busy few months here at the Parole Board and it doesn't seem to be easing up any time soon.

Welcome to our new Chair

First of all, some good news – [our new Chair has been appointed](#). Caroline Corby is now here on a permanent basis, which I think will be great for the Board after a period of significant scrutiny. She brings lots of experience and will provide the leadership we need. We can now focus on making the most of the reforms that are happening to make the Board more effective than ever before.

Office Move to Canary Wharf

We [have also moved offices](#) to a new Government hub in Canary Wharf, alongside other independent bodies, such as the HM Inspectorate of Prisons. As anyone who has moved house will know, this is never an easy task! But the team were fantastic in getting us organised, packed and getting us in with no disruption to our work. We are now in our new modern workspace and I think it reaffirms our independence by being out of the Ministry of Justice HQ building.

Speaking about the Board

I have been out and about again over the past few months speaking about the work of the Board. This included giving a speech at the Criminal Justice Management conference on where we are and where we want to be in the future. Talking at these events shows to me just how far we have come over the last few months, and how it is crucial that we bring people along on this journey with us.

Reducing deferrals and adjournments

There is a lot of ongoing work to reduce deferrals and adjournments. While some deferrals are unavoidable, I believe it is fundamentally unfair that prisoners have their parole review delayed for reasons out of their control. There are many pilot projects at different prisons across the country to see where delays are coming from and looking at solutions to ensure that hearings are concluded fairly and effectively. I am confident that along with HMPPS officials and prisoners' legal representatives, we will find effective ways to reduce deferrals and adjournments and start using these ideas more widely across the prison estate.

Increasing diversity

I am also reflecting on the work needed to improve the diversity of our members – I think it is crucial that they represent all parts of the community they serve.

As highlighted in [David Lammy's outstanding report](#), there is significant over-representation of BAME in the prison population, with over a quarter of the prison population from minority backgrounds. Therefore, it is vital that the membership of the Board is as diverse as possible – to help build public and prisoner confidence that we treat all people fairly, regardless of their background. It was depressing to hear from a young black prisoner serving a long sentence that he had never seen a black Parole Board Member. We must do better.

I know there are some outstanding potential members out there from a range of backgrounds and I want to find ways of encouraging more of them to join us – feel free to email me with ideas: CE0@paroleboard.gov.uk.