

The Right Honourable Liz Truss MP
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

Dear Lord Chancellor,

28 July 2016

Parole

I am writing to congratulate you on your appointment as Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice. Despite the current challenges, I was very pleased to hear about your intention to continue the work of prison reform and I hope you will let me know if there is any way I can assist you with the reform process.

Of course, my priority is the parole system and I am looking forward to discussing with you the challenges in this area. I know one of the difficult issues on your agenda will be what to do about prisoners serving indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPPs). As you will be aware, this continues to be an area of significant parliamentary and media concern, and Michael Gove asked me to reflect on this issues as a priority. I attach a copy of my advice to him.

I am very clear that some IPPs continue to pose a serious risk and could not be released safely for a long time. However, in broad terms I have concluded that, without legislation, the Parole Board is capable of increasing the number of IPPs who are safely released. If we are able to deliver against my plan I anticipate that the Parole Board would be able to release around 2,600 of the remaining 4,133 IPPs within the next 4 years. We will be able to achieve this by:

- 1) Making the existing parole system work better. We have already reduced the number of cases outstanding by 25%, and with the right resources, want to ensure we eliminate unnecessary delay as quickly as possible.
- 2) Improving progression of prisoners through an enhanced problem solving approach, in partnership with NOMS.
- 3) Focusing Parole Board efforts on the cases that really matter to the public, victims and prisoners (this would ensure that IPP cases are prioritised).
- 4) Bolstering member confidence to ensure that they feel able to make the right decisions without fear of undue or unfair criticism; whilst ensuring that those who remain a danger to the public remain in custody.

One crucial part of the plan is the urgent recruitment of new members. We are currently in the midst of an appointments process that will, with your approval, ensure we have a wave of new members in the Autumn to help drive through these plans.

I am sure you will be receiving advice on legislative options. You will want to form your own views on these issues, but I would be happy to talk through my thoughts on the options if that be helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Hardwick', on a light blue background.

Nick Hardwick