

PAROLE

Advice and support for victims
on the parole of offenders

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It can be very difficult to hear that the person who committed a crime against you has been paroled. Victims and survivors report experiencing strong emotions – commonly shock, concern and apprehension – which can affect many different aspects of life.

We're here to help you during this sensitive time. We support hundreds of people every day to cope with the impact of crime, and this doesn't end when an offender is convicted. We recognise that the ongoing effects of crime can last years, regardless of the type of crime committed.

So if you or your family need support to cope emotionally or to understand the practical and legal details of parole, we can help.

What is parole?

Parole is the conditional release of an offender from custody.

This only happens when an offender has served no less than half their prison sentence (or they have served the length of their tariff), and only if the Parole Board decides they are safe to rejoin the community.

The offender will also have to abide by conditions put in place by the Parole Board; called being released on licence.

If these conditions are breached, or the offender breaks the law again, they will be returned to prison.

An example of a licence condition could be staying away from a certain location or person, or abiding by a curfew. A parole officer will supervise the offender in the community until the end of their sentence.

The Parole Board

Every year the Parole Board makes thousands of decisions on whether or not to grant parole to offenders. They are an independent authority, separate from the government and the prison service.

They make decisions based on risk assessments which take into account information from a wide range of sources, including the prison service, the courts and professionals, such as psychiatrists.

You can find more information about parole and the Parole Board on **www.gov.uk**.

Victim Contact Scheme

You'll be invited to join the Victim Contact Scheme if you are the victim of a violent or sexual crime and your offender has been sentenced to twelve months or more in prison (or a hospital under the Mental Health Act).

The Scheme is run by the National Probation Service. If you do decide to join the Scheme, which is entirely voluntary, you will be assigned a Victim Liaison Officer (VLO).

The VLO will keep you up to date with any changes in the offender's sentence, as well as how and when they may be released.

Victim Personal Statements

A Victim Personal Statement gives victims the chance to explain to the Parole Board how the crime they experienced has affected them, and how they may be impacted by the offender's parole.

The statement will not directly change the Parole Board's decision, but it does allow victims to put forward views on the licence conditions imposed.

For more information on this, or on any aspects of the parole process, speak to your Victim Liaison Officer or Victim Support.

How to get in touch

Our contact details are on the back cover of this leaflet. You can call us weeks, months or even years after a crime.

We are always here to listen and help.

Visit **victimsupport.org.uk** to find services near you and for more information.

How we can help

We are an independent charity offering free, confidential support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents. We can help in the following ways:

- Practical support from a specially trained person, in a way that works for you
- Emotional support and connections with other specialist services, such as trauma therapists
- Advice on providing input to the Parole Board and writing a Victim Personal Statement
- Information about the criminal justice system, courts and parole procedures
- Practical advice to help you feel safer and be safer.

We know that crime affects the whole family. We offer support to everyone directly affected, and can help parents and carers support children.

Diversity matters and we value it

We are committed to supporting the needs of the diverse communities we serve. We can provide interpreters and information in alternative formats. If you have additional needs please let us know so we can put the right support in place.

Where to go for support:

We are an **independent** charity offering **free, confidential** support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents.

For information and support, contact us by:

- calling: Supportline **08 08 16 89 111**
- using our 24/7 live chat service:
victimsupport.org.uk/live-chat
- using BSL: **victimsupport.org.uk/bsl**
- Online: **victimsupport.org.uk**

To find out how you can help us, visit
victimsupport.org.uk/get-involved

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