

PBNI Disclosure Log – Response to Request

Request Reference: 023.22.16
Date of Request: 26 July 2016
Date of Response: 18 August 2016

Request

What training do Probation Officers receive before they can make a decision to return a person to custody– can I have a copy of same?

Is there guidelines and a procedure that probation officers have to comply with and follow before deciding to recall a person? If so, can I have a detailed copy of same please?

What overall qualifications does a person have to have to become a probation officer, if any?

Response

Probation Officers are required to hold a professional qualification which is currently a degree in Social Work. They must have a professional registration in line with the requirements of the NI Social Care Council (NISCC).

They must maintain their continuous professional development through evidencing learning activities to a minimum of 30 hours per year. By registering with NISCC, a Probation Officer is signing up to their standards of conduct and practice.

Probation Officers commencing employment with PBNI go through an induction which includes training on, for example, Risk Assessment, Pre-Sentence reports, Child Protection, Best Practice Framework incorporating NI Standards in respect of its work with offenders and victims.

PBNI is also committed to ensuring that all staff including Probation Officers have access to learning, development and training opportunities which enable them to be suitably knowledgeable and skilled to carry out their role within the organisation.

I would clarify at the outset, that decisions on the release and recall of all life sentence and public protection sentence prisoners in Northern Ireland are made by the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland (PCNI) not PBNI.

The role of the PCNI is set out in the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 legislation and the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001. In making a decision to release or recall an individual, the PCNI must have (a) due regard to the need to protect the public from serious harm; and (b) have regard to the desirability of

- (i) securing the rehabilitation of prisoners; and
- (ii) preventing the commission of further offences by prisoners.

For further information you can contact the NI Parole Commissioner's direct by writing to the:

Parole Commissioners' Secretariat
Laganside Court
Mezzanine
1st Floor
Oxford Street
BELFAST
BT1 3LL

Alternatively, if you have access to the internet you can visit the website at <https://www.parolecomni.org.uk>

A licence supervised by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), will include a number of conditions¹ which must be complied with, for example, they will have to keep in touch with their Probation Officer as instructed, they must not travel outside the jurisdiction without prior approval from their Probation Officer, they

¹ Licence conditions are set by the NI Prison Service (NIPS) on behalf of the Department of Justice. PBNI may be consulted by NIPS on other licence conditions in respect of Article 17 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, relating to DCS (determinate custodial sentence) Licences) or by PCNI in respect of other conditions under Article 18 relating to ECS and ICS licences (extended and indeterminate custodial sentence). Such consultations are on a case by case basis.

must not behave in a way which undermines the purposes of the licence which includes the protection of the public and the prevention of re-offending.

Conditions are applied in order to assist PBNI to manage an individual's risk and contribute to successful resettlement in the community.

There are any number of factors which may either reduce PBNI's ability to effectively manage that individual's risk in the community or prevent PBNI from doing so. If a Probation Officer, in their professional judgement and evidence of an escalation of risk, believes that the individual can no longer be managed in the community, they will, following consultation with the relevant line manager, make a recommendation to the PCNI in respect of recall or revocation of the licence.

As indicated the decision to recall or revoke is made by PCNI.

PBNI in all cases will comply with agreed standards and I enclose for information the relevant extract (Section 5a) from PBNI's Best Practice Framework incorporating NI Standards in relation to Recall and Revocation of licences.

If you have any queries about this letter, or if you feel I have misinterpreted your request please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the way PBNI has handled your request, you may ask for an internal review using our complaints procedure. A copy of our [complaints procedure](#) is available on our website www.pbni.org.uk. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

Please note that PBNI publishes responses to requests for information on its website where we believe there may be a wider public interest. If requests are published they are anonymised i.e. details of the requester are not published.