

Andrew Hinchcliffe
31 Coward Drive
Oughtibridge
Sheffield
S350JP

the Parole Board

working with others
to protect the public

28/08/09

Dear Mr. Hinchcliffe,

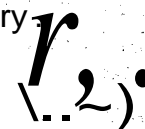
Thank you for your letter addressed to Linda Lennon, Chief Executive and Sir David Latham, Chairman of the Parole Board. I am replying on behalf of the Parole Board.

I cannot comment on the circumstances of any individual prisoner and therefore can only respond in general to the issues you raise by explaining the role of the Parole Board in the criminal justice system.

The Parole Board for England and Wales is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). Its role is to protect the public by carrying out risk assessments to decide whether prisoners can be safely released into the community. In doing so, it works with other parts of the criminal justice system including the Prison and Probation Services (NOMS). The aim of the Parole Board is to make risk assessments which are rigorous, fair and timely with the primary aim of protecting the public and which contribute to the rehabilitation of prisoners where appropriate. The Parole Board's main functions in deciding whether to release *offenders* are based on its own assessments of each *offender's* level of risk.

The Board uses an inquisitorial approach to the information contained in the professional reports and assessment tools in each individual case. Each panel weighs and balances the content of assessments in order to come to its independent judgement of the risks presented. The decision of the Board concerning release is based on the level of risk and the manageability of the *offender* and a panel will release where it assesses that it is safe to do so. As a consequence where there is little information or evidence on which a panel can safely assess the level or manageability of risk, it cannot make a decision to release the *offender*.

In each individual case the Board critically analyses the quality of the information before it in order to come to a decision and may further question the authors of reports and assessments to clarify, points where necessary



In this way the Board assumes a critical approach to all the information before it and preserves its independence in decision making.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop on the left and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jo Thompson/ Head of Quality Unit