



Changes to Psychological Risk Assessment Reports Sensitive

13th July 2022

The note provides guidance on several changes relating to decision-making by the Parole Board and the implications for Psychology Risk Assessment (PRA) reports, these include:

- the new Open Test for parole eligible Indeterminate Sentenced Prisoner (ISP) cases,
- the new Single Secretary of State View for all HMPPS parole reports,
- the Johnson ruling (JR) affecting determinate cases.

This document provides **internal guidance** for Psychology Services Group (PSG) and those who write psychology reports on behalf of the Secretary of State (SoS). It replaces previous guidance issued 'Open Test and Psychology Risk Assessment Reports – PSG Guidance V1 June 2022'.

This guidance is not for other report writers writing on behalf of the SoS such as Probation Officers. Separate guidance has been provided by EPSIG (Effective Practice and Service Improvement Group) for Probation Staff and others. The changes noted do however impact all those preparing parole reports on behalf of HMPPS.

1. Context

- 1.1 Psychologists routinely complete risk assessments with indeterminate and determinate sentenced prisoners for the Parole Board on behalf of the SoS. It is vital that Psychologists remain abreast of practice and policy changes which impact how reports are prepared and how evidence is provided to oral hearings. All Psychologist report writers should ensure they are familiar with the Parole Board Root & Branch Review (30th March 2022) ([Root and Branch Review of the Parole System - GOV.UK \[www.gov.uk\]\(https://www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/108441/Root_and_Branch_Review_of_the_Parole_System_-_GOV.UK.pdf)). This sets out the Deputy Prime Minister's plans for parole reform, including the issued 'Open Test' (Senior Leaders Bulletin – 1st June 2022) and the recently issued 'Changes to the Open Test and the Single Secretary of State View' (Senior Leaders Bulletin – 1st July 2022).
- 1.2 Judicial Review in the case of *Johnson* [EWHC 1282 (Admin)] handed down on 27th May 2022 has triggered a change for all determinate and determinate recalled cases being considered by the Parole Board. This has implications for parole report writers, including Psychologists writing reports on behalf of HMPPS.

1.3 This guidance document explains:

- What the changes are
- Which cases it applies to
- When it applies
- What you need to do now
- Further Considerations
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1.4 Guidance on how these areas impact reports written by HMPPS Psychologists and those on behalf of PSG is outlined in the FAQs of this notice and the 'HMPPS Parole Reform – Practice Guidance for Psychological Risk Assessment Reports V1 13th July 2022'.

2: What the changes are

The New Open Test

2.1 The new Open Test was implemented on the 6th of June 2022. It is relevant to ISP cases only. The test means that the Secretary of State (SoS), or an official with delegated responsibility, will only accept a recommendation to move to open conditions from the Parole Board when:

1. **the prisoner is assessed as low risk of abscond; and**
2. **a period in open conditions is considered essential to inform future decisions about release and to prepare for possible release on licence into the community; and**
3. a transfer to open conditions would not undermine public confidence in the criminal justice system.

2.2 As set out in Senior Leaders Bulletin (1st July 2022) part 3 will not apply to HMPPS report writers and the Parole Board. This is in line with the position taken by PSG from the effective date of the new Open Test (Open Test & Psychology Risk Assessment Reports – Guidance for PSG – June 2022). The subsequent changes introducing a Single Secretary of State view impacts how the Open Test is considered within HMPPS parole reports and requires careful consideration.

Introduction of the Single Secretary of State View

2.3 From 21st July 2022, the way that recommendations for release and open conditions are provided to the Parole Board will change. From this date, in all cases, (including all recall cases), the report writer will not present a recommendation around suitability for a move to open conditions or release. In addition, in some cases, the SoS will provide the Parole Board with a position. This is called the **Single Secretary of State View**.

2.4 The SLB notes:

HMPPS Report writers should prepare and write their reports in the normal way. Reports from HMPPS (COMs, POMs and, where relevant, psychologists) will still provide a formal risk assessment, based on professional judgement, but they will no longer contain the report author's final recommendation about the prisoner's suitability for release or open conditions. It is important for the report author to assist the Secretary of State in obtaining the factual information and, whilst they are no longer required to include a recommendation, their professional assessment in these cases remains essential for the purpose of determining the overall risk of the individual and of informing the decisions to be made by the Parole Board and the Secretary of State.

*In the most serious or high-profile cases, **the Secretary of State may choose to provide the Parole Board with a single Secretary of State view which takes account of all the evidence.** The Public Protection Group will agree with the Deputy Prime Minister which cases meet the criteria for a Secretary of State view, which are:*

- The nature and characteristics of the offending are particularly severe and risks damaging public confidence if the prisoner were to be released (e.g., where the victim(s) was a child or vulnerable; or cases with a sadistic or predatory motivation);*
- Cases involving multiple victims or where there is a history of serious offending, indicating a pattern or escalation of such offences;*
- Where the gravity of the offending behaviour indicates that, if further such offences were to be committed, the level of harm to the public would be particularly grave; and*
- Where a case raises issues in relation to victims' confidence more broadly in the parole system.*

Where a single Secretary of State view is provided, the Secretary of State will be represented at the hearing by either a Secretary of State Representative from the Public Protection Casework Section (PPCS) or by Counsel. In such cases, PPCS will work very closely with the report writers, who will very likely continue to appear as witnesses at the oral hearing.

- 2.4 Psychologists¹, as for all HMPPS report writers, are no longer able to make recommendations within PRA reports for the Parole Board, regarding suitability for release or open conditions, including ongoing suitability for closed conditions. Not all parole reviews will include a Single SoS view and therefore a SoS representative. The criterion for such cases is being considered and the SoS can decide on a case per case basis where a single view will be provided from the 21st of July 2022.
- 2.5 A key date for PRA report writers is the **14th of July 2022. All reports must comply with the change of approach from this date.** How this change impacts PRA reports and further information about the current timeline of change is outlined within the FAQs within this notice and the 'Parole Reform – Risk Assessment Guidance for PSG V1 - July 2022'.
- 2.6 Psychologists should include information within PRA reports to assist the Parole Board in making recommendations relating to the new Open Test. Neither reports nor oral evidence after this date can make a recommendation. Previously submitted reports which did include a recommendation do not need to be amended. Further guidance is provided in the FAQs of this notice and the 'HMPPS Parole Reform – Practice Guidance for Psychological Risk Assessment Reports V1 – 13th July 2022'.

¹ This includes Trainee Forensic Psychologists.

- 2.7 Report writers need to be aware that whilst recommendations for release and/or open **cannot** be made for any cases, panels may ask for additional information relating to risk judgements.

3 The Johnson Ruling for Determinate Sentenced Prisoners

- 3.1 The outcome of a Judicial Review (JR) relating to the case of *Johnson* [EWHC 1282] (Admin) handed down on 27th May 2022 related to the issue of the period of risk to be considered for determinate sentence cases. The Court found that the Parole Board's guidance on such cases contained an error in law and concluded that **“for decisions made on or after 27th May 2022, the period over which a panel is considering risk in all determinate sentence cases is indefinite”**.

The outcome of the JR goes onto state:

- *In light of the judgment, when considering whether the test for release is met in the case of a determinate sentence prisoner (on both initial release and after recall), panels need to bear in mind the following:*
 - *The statutory test to be applied by the Board when considering whether a prisoner should be released does not entail a balancing exercise where the risk to the public is weighed against the benefits of release to the prisoner. The exclusive question for the Board when applying the test for release in any context is whether the prisoner's release would cause a more than minimal risk of serious harm to the public.*
 - *The statutory test for release does not include a temporal element. The test is whether release would cause a more than minimal risk of serious harm to the public **at any time**. Therefore, consideration of risk goes beyond conditional release dates (CRD) and sentence expiry dates (SED).*
- 3.2 Assessments on risk need to be time bound and scenario based in accordance with the appropriate SPJ tools and guidance. It will be important to include, as far as is possible, risk scenarios outside of the 6-12 months, where possible, to provide assistance on this change in consideration. For further information, please see 'HMPPS Parole Reform – Practice Guidance for Psychological Risk Assessment Reports V1 – 13th July 2022'.
- 3.3 Whilst recommendations for open/release cannot be made following the Single SoS implementation, parole panels may still request additional information relating to the risk period judgments referred to in 3.1.
- 3.4 As part of the implementation of this new approach, all managers need to ensure there is a transition and compliance strategy to ensure reports are submitted in accordance to the requirements.

4 Which cases it applies to

- 4.1 The new **Open Test applies to all ISP cases** reviewed by the Parole Board, including those at the pre-tariff review stage as well as for recall cases. **Remember:** Terrorist and Terrorist Connected Prisoners are presumed to be unsuitable for open conditions, unless exceptional circumstances can be evidenced. When considering the risk

reduction and risk management plan necessary were the prisoner to be moved to open conditions, it is important to remember that only for exceptional reasons will the prisoner be moved there. It is however for the Public Protection Casework Section (PPCS) to determine whether the circumstances are exceptional.

- 4.2 The new **SoS Single View applies to all parole eligible cases** and therefore all parole PRA reports by Psychologists on behalf of HMPPS.
- 4.3 The **Johnson ruling is relevant for all determinate cases**, including extended sentences and those recalled on licence.

5 When it applies

- 5.1 The new Open Test applies from the 6th of June 2022 and was updated on 1st July 2022. You do not need to change PRAs that have already been submitted. You may receive directions for addendum reports from the Parole Board based upon this change and questions within Oral Hearings regarding this. **Remember**, the Open Test is for the Parole Board. Prior to the 14th of July 2022 you can comment upon a prisoner's suitability for open, after the 14th of July 2022 you can only comment upon their risk of abscond and how the risk can be managed in closed/open or in the community. You must not discuss suitability or make a recommendation.
- 5.2 The Single SoS view applies from 21st July 2022 to all parole reports. You do not need to change PRAs that have already been submitted. Within an Oral Hearing after the 21st of July 2022, you can discuss your recommendation you may have given within your report that was submitted only if was prior to the 14th of July 2022 (see below).
- 5.3 **In line with the PAROM1 change, any PRA report submitted on or after the 14th of July 2022 must not include a recommendation or comment upon suitability. This gives a 'lead in' time for PPCS prior to the formal rule change of the 21st of July 2022.**
- 5.4 The change to the risk consideration following the Johnson ruling applies to all cases from the 27th of May 2022. You do not need to change PRAs that have already been submitted but you may receive addendum report directions and may be questioned on this area in the Oral Hearing.

6 What you need to do now

- 6.1 With immediate effect;
 - I. PRA Reports should provide evidence to help the Parole Board apply the Open test (based upon the new criteria) and release tests;

- II. PRA reports submitted on or after the 14th of July 2022 must not contain a recommendation or a view as to suitability about release into the community, open conditions or staying in closed conditions;
- III. Reports submitted to PPCS or uploaded to the dossier after the 14th of July 2022 which include a recommendation, will require amending in line with the new rules;
- IV. PRA reports for all determinate cases, including recalls, from 27th of May 2022 should be assessed in light of the Johnson Ruling (see paragraph 3.1-3.4);
- V. You should prepare for questions relating to these changes in Oral Hearings, please see FAQs in this notice and 'HMPPS Parole Reform – Practice Guidance for Psychological Risk Assessment Reports V1 – 13th July 2022'.

7 Further Considerations

Wider Implications

- 7.1 Prisoners may express anger and despair that the services, interventions, or opportunities identified to help them demonstrate reduced risk are not available, or that they have completed such work and are not being progressed to open conditions. Psychologists should monitor and report any changes in presentation or behaviour and consider such factors within the risk assessment process whilst simultaneously recognising the frustration and confusion this change may bring. Report writers should remain mindful and take steps when interviewing to ensure safe systems of work are followed to safeguard both the report writer and the prisoner.
- 7.2 **Diversity & Inclusion (D&I)**
The policy relating to the new Single SoS View and the Open Test is owned by Public Protection Group who have their own D&I EA in place. PSG will ensure processes are in place, alongside the current GPP monitoring arrangements, to monitor and respond to the open test changes.
- 7.3 **Oral Hearings**
Further guidance on the Oral Hearing process is provided in 'HMPPS Parole Reform – Practice Guidance for Psychological Risk Assessment Reports V1 – 13th July 2022' alongside generic Oral Hearing training within the Professional Witness Training² (for PSG) which is now under review.

² Available on Kahootz in the Trainee Induction Folder within Psychology Services Group, HMPPS.

8 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)³

8.1 What about PRA reports that have already been written?

There is no requirement for additional PRA reports to be provided, where one has already been submitted, unless it is directed by the Parole Board or requested by PPCS.

Where an oral hearing is underway and reports have been submitted, Psychologists should be mindful that they may be asked about the case in the context of the new test at the oral hearing, particularly where the Parole Board is considering recommending a move to open conditions. Where the Parole Board direct an update, this must be provided however consider whether providing an update in the OH is sufficient. This can be requested via the SHRF process within PPCS.

Report authors can discuss report recommendations within an Oral Hearing after the 21st of July 2022 if the PRA report was submitted before the 14th July 2022.

8.2 What if I have an addendum PRA report to be submitted after the 14th July 2022 on a PRA report I wrote prior to that date?

You can provide an addendum report in response to the directions set by the Parole Board and in order to provide an updated assessment of risk. You cannot include within this a recommendation. Focus upon anything that has changed your assessment overall and the elements of the risk management plan required to manage that risk. You can discuss your recommendation from the original report in the Oral Hearing however, and if there is anything that has changed it.

8.3 What if I have a joint report to complete on a PRA report I submitted prior to the 14th July 2022 which include recommendations?

You can complete a joint report if this is directed and in conjunction with the external specialist. You cannot write your recommendations within the joint report.

8.4 What does it mean for OH attended after the 21st of July 2022?

Consider your professional assessment of the risks in the case and the plan in place to manage them, review the guidance in 'HMPPS Parole Reform – Practice

³ Please note HMPPS writers includes Psychologists writing reports on behalf of HMPPS.

Guidance for Psychological Risk Assessment Reports V1 – 13th July 2022' to help you prepare.

If you have submitted a report containing a recommendation before the 14th of July 2022, but the oral hearing occurs after the 21st of July 2022, you do not need to change your report and you can discuss your recommendation in the hearing. If there is information that has arisen that changes your recommendation, you are able to highlight this in the hearing.

For reports that do not include a recommendation as they were submitted post 14th July, you cannot respond to questions about suitability or recommendations for open conditions or release.

Consider who you need to discuss these changes with, including where possible the prisoner. We recognise this is not always possible.

8.5 Is there still a presumption that Terrorist and Terrorist Connected Prisoners are unsuitable for open conditions?

Yes. Terrorist and Terrorist Connected Prisoners are presumed to be unsuitable for open conditions, unless exceptional circumstances can be evidenced. Alternative options should be considered e.g., a Progression Regime. It is for the Public Protection Casework Section (PPCS) to determine whether the circumstances are exceptional.

8.6 How do I apply the new test?

This is a professional judgement and will depend on the specifics of the case. When reporting to the Parole Board, Psychologists must ensure that they are considering only information that helps the Parole Board apply the open test. Reports submitted on or after 14th July 2022, do not make a final recommendation or a comment upon suitability or answer whether it's essential for the prisoner to move to open conditions. See paragraphs 8.3 to 8.4 for further information.

8.7 How much evidence do the Parole Board need to establish whether someone is a low risk of abscond?

The new open test has not changed the process for assessing a prisoner's risk of abscond, and the assessment remains one based on professional judgement. This should continue to be completed in the normal way. As noted above, in terms of the amount of evidence the Parole Board will require, this will be different depending on the nature of the case. For further guidance, please see 'HMPPS Parole Reform – Practice Guidance for Psychological Risk Assessment Reports V1 – 13th July 2022'.

8.8 How do I assess whether a move to open conditions is “essential”?

Firstly, you cannot make a recommendation for open conditions in reports submitted on or after the 14th of July 2022⁴, you must focus on the necessary risk reduction and risk management plan and what is needed.

The Parole Board can only make a recommendation for open conditions if what is provided is essential to help manage and reduce risk further. It is not essential because there is nothing left for the prisoner to do in closed conditions. You should also consider how the prisoner can evidence their ability to act responsibly, comply with prison regimes and engage with sentence plan objectives within the closed estate where these are related to risk.

You may wish to consider how a prisoner will need to build family relationships, be responsible with work, and manage aspects of their life such as using public transport again or cooking for themselves. As part of this, it is also important to encourage active participation with their Probation Practitioners and family support networks to aid resettlement in readiness for release.

The new Open Test is to be applied by the Parole Board and not HMPPS report writers. The Parole Board can direct the release of ISPs from the closed estate. As part of the decision-making process for the Parole Board, the assessments provided will help to evidence the prisoner’s suitability for release into the community. Where there are opportunities for development within the closed estate, open estate, and the community, these should be clearly outlined within the report, including timescales for completion.

8.9 I have a high-profile case or noteworthy case and their risk management plan may be affected by this. Am I allowed to put this in the report?

Yes. You can consider how the prisoner’s risk is impacted as a result of their high profile/noteworthy status. You do not however assess whether a move to open conditions would undermine public confidence.

8.10 Should I apply the new Open Test for a move to open conditions as part of the Pre-Tariff Sift and Ongoing Pre-Tariff Reviews?

Pre-Tariff Sifts:

Yes. As part of the Sentencing Planning Review Meeting (SPRM), if a PRA report is being provided this must consider whether the prisoner meets the first two aspects of the new test for a move to open conditions. You must not make a recommendation after the 14th of July 2022.

⁴ For reports submitted prior to the 14th of July a recommendation for release or open conditions can be made.

In line with the current pre tariff sift policy, PPCS remain responsible for deciding whether the case should proceed to a pre-tariff review. Cases will only progress to a pre-tariff review where PPCS decide that all three of the criteria in the current test for open conditions has been met **and** that there is a reasonable prospect of the Parole Board recommending a move to open conditions.

There is no requirement for a further PRA report, where one has already been submitted, unless it is directed by the Parole Board or requested by PPCS. Where an oral hearing is underway and reports have been submitted, Psychologists should be mindful that they may be asked about the case in the context of the new test at the oral hearing, particularly where the Parole Board is considering recommending a move to open conditions.

Where the Parole Board direct an update of their report, this must be provided. For PRA reports submitted after the 14th of July and therefore cases heard after the 21st of July 2022, PRA report writers are not to discuss a recommendation within the Oral Hearing, even if asked by the Parole Board. The following statement, or words to this effect, can be provided:

“As part of the new parole legislation relevant for all HMPPS Report Writers, I am not able to put forward a view as to whether the prisoner meets the Parole Board test for release or meets the Open Test threshold. I cannot also comment upon their suitability for either of these options.”

The new Open Test should not be the reason for an ISPs removal to closed conditions, but it should be taken into consideration as part of the LISP 4 where removal to closed has happened and continued suitability is being considered.

8.11 Are HMPPS staff including Psychologists allowed to express a view about suitability for release outside of the report and oral hearing – for example, are we allowed to express a view in a MAPPA meeting?

Yes. You may discuss your professional assessment and views outside of the parole process, including in any kind of professionals meeting and including in conversation with the prisoner. It may be important to consider whether during these conversations, you should clarify that you are not allowed to repeat these views in reports to the parole board or as a witness in an oral hearing. This is important as there may be written information that goes into the parole dossier that references such discussions.

8.12 What should I tell the prisoner?

It will be important as part of the consent process and within ongoing conversations with the prisoner that this change is discussed. The standard consent form has been

updated (please see 'HMPPS Parole Reform – Practice Guidance for Psychological Risk Assessment Reports V1 – 13th July 2022') and information to prisoners is being planned via PPCS.

8.13 What if a parole board member or solicitor asks me for my view on suitability for release during the oral hearing or whether the risk management plan is robust enough to manage the risk on PRA reports after the 14th July 2022 (which do not include a recommendation)?

The Parole Board are aware of these changes and should not ask you to provide a view. If this does happen or if a legal representative asks you to provide a view, you must not provide it. Instead, please consider responding by politely explaining that you can no longer provide a view or recommendation in this case. Following the hearing, please inform your Supervisor, Manager or PPCS Caseworker so this can be flagged. The Parole Board will be aware of the rules and the panel should intervene if you are asked an inappropriate question by a legal representative:

“As part of the new parole legislation relevant for all HMPPS Report Writers, I am not able to put forward a view as to whether the prisoner meets the Parole Board test for release or meets the Open Test threshold. I cannot also comment upon their suitability for either of these options.”

8.14 Will solicitors be allowed to ask our opinion about release in an oral hearing?

The Parole Board rule changes do not impact on legal representatives for the person or specialists instructed on their behalf in the same way that they do HMPPS and Parole Board panels, so they could still ask this question in a hearing. However, the rule changes mean that you are not allowed to answer. The Parole Board are aware of this rule change and the panel should intervene if you are asked an inappropriate question. The polite response from an HMPPS witness should be to explain that you can no longer provide a view or recommendation in this case.

8.15 What language would constitute a ‘view or recommendation about the suitability of release or move to open conditions?’. How can I check whether what is in a report is allowed?

We have set out some examples of language within the ‘HMPPS Parole Reform – Practice Guidance for Psychological Risk Assessment Reports V1 – 13th July 2022’. We recognise that there may be uncertainty as this change is embedded. You can discuss your reports with your supervisor or Line Manager, as well as the ISP Team in PSG and/or PPCS Case Manager / Recall team who can help check whether the language in the report is within the policy. The policy outlining these changes will be available in due course.

8.16 What are the consequences if it is judged that a ‘view or recommendation’ was provided to the Parole Board?

It is possible that the decision by the Parole Board could be challenged by way of reconsideration, or an application made to set aside the decision.

8.17 Can PRA report writers express a view about the SoS view if asked in an Oral Hearing?

No. HMPPS report writers, including Psychologists writing reports on behalf of the SoS are not able to comment on the SoS view. The aim of the new process is to have a single SoS view within the parole review process. It would be counterproductive if a different view from report writers was expressed within the process. The role of the psychologist is to provide a risk assessment to aid the panel in making a decision.

8.18 Does the Parole Board know about these changes?

Yes, and HMPPS staff have been working closely with them to ensure that we can continue to deliver our PRA reports without disruption.

8.19 Do the legal representatives of the prisoner know about these changes?

Yes. They have received communication about the new process.

8.20 Are Framework Psychologists aware and will this change the QA template?

Yes. Framework providers and their associates have been briefed, the same policy applies to their reports and evidence within Oral Hearings. The QA template is currently being updated in time for the Single SoS view from the 21st of July 2022. All reports produced by Framework Psychologists must not include recommendations as to the prisoner’s suitability for release or open conditions from the 14th of July 2022. They are aware of the new Open Test and the Johnson ruling relevant for determinate cases.

8.21 Am I allowed to include in the report any views from the prisoner about their views on release?

Yes. Whilst you cannot provide your view, you can include information for the Parole Board that would assist, for example detailing discussions you have had with the

prisoner about their fears around coping in the community again if they have spent a significant period in closed conditions.

8.22 Will you be allowed to weigh up the pros and cons of release in your report? For instance, could you say, “if released at this time the advantages are... and the disadvantages are...” and then “if not released at this time the advantages are... and the disadvantages are...”?

No, this is very close to making a recommendation. Focus upon highlighting based upon the SPJ/s used as part of your risk assessment, the risk and risk scenarios within upon closed, open and community. For further information see ‘HMPPS Parole Reform – Practice Guidance for Psychological Risk Assessment Reports V1 – 13th July 2022’.

8.23 If they suspect what your professional view is about release from your risk assessment, how will they challenge that in an oral hearing?

Questions directed at HMPPS witnesses in the oral hearing about the risk assessment should focus on the risk assessment and not stray into an area where the witness is being asked to provide their view on suitability for release. The responses from the witness can always begin ‘I cannot provide a view on the suitability for release, but in respect of that question about risk....’. A witness can always ask for the question to be repeated, or to check the understanding of the question again by asking for further clarification.

8.24 What if you accidentally give your opinion about release in an oral hearing, how will they deal with that?

If this happens, try to correct it immediately. Apologise and say that it was a mistake to provide a view upon suitability or to make a recommendation as you are aware that you are not able to do this in accordance with the amended Parole Board Rules from 21st July 2022. Please try not to worry. After the Oral Hearing, discuss it with your Line Manager and flag to the PPCS case worker.

8.25 Does the new Open Test and the Single SoS view affect the GPP pilot?

No, none of the changes including the changes via the Johnson Ruling, impact the GPP Psychology Pilot. The PCA-N should continue to make a recommendation as to whether a PRA report would be of benefit for the forthcoming review. As per current guidance, this letter should not outline any view as to suitability to open conditions or release.

8.26 What will be the role of the SofS rep be? When will they be present? Who will they be?

Secretary of State Representatives (SofS Rep) are all qualified and experienced Probation Practitioners, who are based within PPCS. Representatives are allocated based on which PPCS Team the case sits within.

It is the role of the SofS Rep to represent the Secretary of State (SSJ) at parole hearings. The SoS rep will be present at the Oral Hearing for most cases where there will be a single Secretary of State View. However, in some cases, Counsel may attend to represent the SoS view instead. Where Counsel attend to represent the view a SofS Rep may also, on occasion, attend as an observer.

Counsel or the SofS Rep will make submissions in writing and in most cases via attendance at the Oral Hearing too. Written submissions will be available to all Report Writers and are added to the parole dossier. The role of the representative, whether it be Counsel or a SofS Rep is to provide the SoS view based upon a review of the case prior to the Oral Hearing. On most occasions, they will have met with HMPPS witnesses prior to the Oral Hearing to discuss their assessments, analyse the risk information and prepare for the hearing. As part of these discussions, they will raise any concerns or complexities and seek your input to ensure witnesses are as prepared as possible for providing their oral evidence. At the hearing, where necessary they may question the witnesses, to include the offender.