

FTR56 Position Statement, 16 February 2026 – Victim Personal Statements and Applying to Observe a Parole Hearing

- Under the legislation currently in place, the Secretary of State has a statutory duty to refer the case to the Parole Board, and victims have a right to submit a Victim Personal Statement, apply to observe a parole hearing and apply for a hearing to be held in public.
- Therefore, the Public Protection Casework Section (PPCS) must and will continue to refer eligible FTR56 cases to the Parole Board up until the change in legislation is implemented on 31 March. Additionally, up until that date, there will continue to be standard recalls initiated on eligible determinate sentences and standard recall cases being referred to the Parole Board, even when they are to be re-released in one of the tranches.
- The Parole Board are very unlikely to review cases not yet referred, whether that be at MCA stage or at an oral hearing, prior to the offender's new automatic release date.
- With this in mind, we advise Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs) to inform victims that it is very unlikely that the Parole Board will review the offender's recall and therefore, very unlikely that a Victim Personal Statement would be considered. Equally, it is very unlikely that the case will progress to an oral hearing and that the Parole Board would grant an application to observe a hearing at this stage. Should the situation for a specific offender change, the VLO will be updated.
- To note, PPCS, on behalf of the Secretary of State, are still able to direct an eligible offender's re-release under the Risk Assessed Recall Review (RARR). This means that there may be some cases where an offender is re-released sooner than the new FTR56 date. However, you will be notified of this as normal, and the victim should already be aware of the possibility of RARR, as it is included within the recall stock letters on VCMS.

What to do if an offender, who is eligible for FTR56, is recalled between now and 31 March.

Follow the advice above. It is important to be transparent with the victim regarding the changes to recall. You can explain that they are entitled to submit a VPS; however, it is very unlikely that it will be considered by the Parole Board.

What to do if an offender, who is eligible for FTR56, has already been recalled and the victim has been notified of their right to submit a VPS and/or make an application to observe the parole hearing, but has not yet done so.

If not done so already, we would advise you contact the victim to update them on the changes to recall. You can use the stock letter (located on VCMS) to assist.

If the case has not yet been referred to the Parole Board, it is very unlikely that the Parole Board will consider this case prior to the release date detailed above. Therefore, whilst the victim has the right to submit a Victim Personal Statement and apply to observe the parole hearing, you should stress that at this stage, it is very unlikely that it would be considered by the Parole Board, or for the purpose of Risk Assessed Recall Review (RARR).

If the case has been referred to the Parole Board, and the victim was provided the opportunity to submit a Victim Personal Statement (VPS) for the Parole Board to consider, the Parole Board intend to conclude the parole review on the papers and will consider any VPS submitted.

What to do if the victim has already submitted the VPS and/or made an application to observe the parole hearing, and the offender is eligible for FTR56.

Contact should be made with the victim to ensure they are fully aware of the changes to recall. You can use the stock letter (located on VCMS) to assist. The Parole Board intend to conclude the parole review on the papers and will consider any VPS submitted. The HMPPS Victims Team will identify any cases where a victim observation request has been approved and liaise with the VLO. Victims should be informed that due to the changes, it is very unlikely that the Parole Board will consider this at an oral hearing and therefore, there will be no opportunity to observe.

What happens if there is an oral hearing listed between now and 31 March for an offender who is eligible for FTR56

The hearing will go ahead as normal. Victims should be made aware of the changes to recall and the impact of this. For example, should the Parole Board issue a 'no release' decision, because of the changes to recall, the offender will be automatically re-released 56 days after the decision is issued. This date will be confirmed to VLOs.

How will I know who is eligible for FTR56?

Prison and probation staff are in the process of confirming eligible offenders and calculating the release dates. You may have already received notifications from Probation Practitioners with the updated automatic release date, as and when they receive updates from the prison. The HMPPS Victims Team have provided a list of FTR56 cases where there is active victim contact.